

## A Seed Is Sown

Nethrodaya was born out of bitter experience. From childhood, I struggled with decreasing vision. Throughout school, I kept coming to terms with visual impairment. My years in college transformed me. Over time, I saw how others with visual impairment suffered.

After college, I joined a leading NGO in Chennai and grew to be a Project Officer there. The five years I worked there made me capable and confident. Then, in 2001, I joined the first batch of students for the Diploma program in Social Entrepreneurship at the Centre for Social Initiatives and Management (CSIM), Chennai. When the time came for my project work, I returned to the suffering of the visually impaired. The survey I did about the blind on Chennai's suburban trains was an eye opener. I resolved to do something about this problem that the affected as well as society had come to accept as inevitable.

- GOVINDAKRISHNAN



## How It Began

(Rs. 72/- in the pocket...and hope in the heart)

Blind, college-going students were willing to place their lives in our hands. Perhaps, they had nothing to lose. After all, life in the public hostels wasn't exactly a bed of roses.

But finding a place where they could live was difficult. Nethrodaya had to knock on many doors before one finally opened.

With that issue solved, Nethrodaya was born on October 2, 2002. Wishing us well on our journey were Justice M Karpagavinayagam, Shri MA Vellodi, Retired Foreign Secretary, and Shri PN Devarajan, our patron.

We started with a mere Rs. 72/- in our pockets but infinite hope that faith and truth would take us far on our journey.

Justice Karpagavinayagam continues to support us immensely by directing offenders in his court to pay their fines at Nethrodaya, as contributions. A Judge and Justice with a heart! Nethrodaya is forever indebted to him.







## FROM PROMISE TO PERFORMANCE

Our mission is to make a qualitative difference in the lives of the visually impaired. We are happy to record that we have made considerable progress in keeping our promise.

Our first objective was to set up a resource centre for the visually impaired. Today, Nethrodaya houses 20 blind, college-going students and 5 others on short stays. The following diagram lists the facilities provided at the resource centre. Nethrodaya is a unique, user-friendly resource centre and the only one of its kind in all of Tamilnadu.

We resolved to initiate programs that would empower the visually impaired, making them self-sufficient and productive. Our financial assistance initiatives support those pursuing higher education and those in need of funds to start small businesses. So far, Nethrodaya has advanced Rs. \_\_\_\_/- to \_\_\_\_ individuals.



## DATES FROM OUR DIARY

Special events add to the wellbeing and joy of Nethrodaya's residents. Events at Nethrodaya are open to others from the community of the blind and the participation we have received is amazing.

**Ringling in the New Year:** On December 30, 2002, we welcomed the New Year. Giving us company were actor Shri Surya, music director Shir Deva, playback singers Shri Unni Menon and Shri Jolly Abraham, Shri Rajeshwari, Assistant Commissioner, Traffic, and Dr. Giri Hanumantha Rao, businessman.

Residents of Nethrodaya presented a light music programme. Shri Unni Menon and Shri Jolly Abraham regaled the gathering with popular songs. The climax though was scripted by music director Deva, with his "Oonam, oonam, yaar oonam" song, as he drove home the message that disability is in the spirit and not in the body.

The evening also saw the birthday celebrations of Akash, Shri Unni Menon's son.





**Play Time:** On **March 16, 2003**, a volleyball tournament was sponsored by the Social Service Society, Avadi, was held for the blind. In contention for the trophy were Poonamallee Blind School, College Students Association of the Blind, Darshini, Loyola College and Nethrodaya. While Loyola College finished runner-up, Nethrodaya took home the trophy. Cheering the players were Ms. Jennifer Arul, Correspondent, NDTV, Shrimati Lalitha Srivastav, Secretary of the Social Service Society, Avadi, and Ms. Pallavi, animal rights activist.

**Health is Wealth:** On **July 12, 2003**, with the generous support of the Madras Medical Mission, Nethrodaya organised a camp for the blind, inaugurated by Commodore R S Vasan. To provide all details in emergencies, blood groups were identified for 175 participants and identity cards issued. Medicines for common ailments were also distributed.

Dr. Philomina Mariadoss and Dr. Sai Babu from the Madras Medical Mission were guests of honour.

## STRIKING A CHORD

With demand for Nethrodaya's services growing, we had to mobilise funds. Thus was born Sai Nethrodaya a set of 14 bhajans offered at the lotus feet of Bhagawan Sri Satya Sai Baba by his devotees. Produced by the Sai Kriti & Literature Trust, 1000 copies of the audiocassette were sold, bringing in much needed funds for Nethrodaya.



## FROM TRICKLE TO FLOOD...

Nethrodaya's progress is a direct outcome of support from wellwishers. From a trickle, support for Nethrodaya's work has grown into a flood, showing us that FAITH is the key that opens many doors. On the way, we have had some touching moments.

Swati, a Class VII girl, saved Rs. 25/- from her pocket money and donated it to Nethrodaya.

John, a volunteer, called us one day to say he could not read that evening for the students because his mother had passed away and he had to be there.

Such moments have left their permanent imprints in our hearts.

## ...THEY MADE IT HAPPEN

CSIM, Anna Nagar Times, BRIDGE, Lazar Charitable Trust, Tropical Technologies all of them came forward to support us when we were new. We thank them for the faith they have placed in Nethrodaya.

Housewives, students, businessmen and professionals have also made invaluable contributions to Nethrodaya. Our thanks goes to:

1. Mrs. Usha Srinivasan
- 2.
- 3.



## DREAMING THE FUTURE

In the future, Nethrodaya wants to build a short-stay facility in Chennai, to support the visually impaired people who come to Chennai for educational and medical purposes.

(Our success in the first year has given us the confidence that we can not only dream the future but also make it happen.



## WE NEED YOUR HELP

Dear Friend,

Nethrodaya needs your help. Here is how you could help the blind:

If you have some time to spare, you could

- ❖ Read lessons to the students/teach them various skills
- ❖ Record lessons on cassettes or CDs
- ❖ Assist students in the use of the internet

If you would like to give money or materials, you could

- ❖ Sponsor a meal
- ❖ Sponsor a student
- ❖ Sponsor salaries/expenses of staff at Nethrodaya



To visit us or get more information, please contact:

Gopi, Nethrodaya, 8, Spartan Nagar, Mogappair, Chennai 600 050. Phone: 044-2656 5012.  
E-mail: [nethrodaya@yahoo.com](mailto:nethrodaya@yahoo.com) Website: [www.nethrodaya.org](http://www.nethrodaya.org)