

## **Conference call with Gyanodaya Leprosy School Group**

March 25, 2007

10:30 CST

Attendees: Austin, Texas – Santhosh and Bharath  
Madison, WI - Kamal, Pallavi, Sathish and Sangeetha  
India – Padma Aunty.

### **Q&A with Padma Aunty:**

The immediate priority is retaining and attracting more teachers. Teachers are being under paid compared to the governmental standards. They currently have 7 teachers and will need more for future expansion of classes too. The school's inconvenient location also leads to a problem for commuting. School organizers are looking for donation that will support students' and teachers transportation to and from the school. School authorities are looking for either a van donation or share auto (will need 2.5 lakh investment). There was some discussion about approaching the local transportation authorities to propose an increase in frequency of trips and access to school; may be some time in the future.

The school authorities are also considering expanding higher classes from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> in the future. However, they would need to expand the infrastructure accordingly.

The school is a tamil medium school (English is taught as a separate language) and the first wave of students will be graduating next year.

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Part 2 : Conversation with school headmaster Mr Thangaraj and association secretary Mr Selvaperumal

Date: 03/25/2007 11:20 – 12:00 AM CST

Attendees: Austin, Texas – Santhosh and Bharath  
Madison, WI - Kamal, Pallavi, Sathish and Sangeetha  
India - Mr.Thangaraj and SelvaPerumal.

Question and Answers with the Principal.

1. How many students are studying in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade?  
Currently there are 15 students studying in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. 10 boys and 5 girls.

2. How many students are we expecting in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade when the school extends?  
The first year the school extends we expect the same 15 students from standard 8. We expect more students to join in the following years.
3. There was a person to take care of the girls and that person had resigned. Is there a new person hired?  
Since the school would be on summer vacation from April 20<sup>th</sup>, the plan is to hire the person after the school reopens the next academic year which would be June.
3. Do children in the hostel go home during summer holidays?  
Yes. There is no student in the hostel during that time.
4. If the school expands to grade 12 would the hostel be able to accommodate the additional students?  
The current hostel infrastructure could accommodate an additional 10 -20 students. The immediate plan is to expand the school upto Grade 10.
5. What would be the highest priority for funding according to Mr. Thangaraj?  
Teacher's salary and retention would be the highest priority.
6. Where do the teachers reside?  
Teachers reside in Chengalpat and Tambaram. They take the public transportation upto certain area and then they use cycles or other means to reach the school. This is the toughest part for the teachers.
7. Do teachers take additional tuitions?  
Teachers usually stay from 4:00 – 5:00 PM and take tuitions for the weakest students.
8. Where there situations where the teachers were not paid their salaries promptly?  
Yes, due to funding problems, there were situations in which the teachers were not paid their salaries promptly. This had caused a couple of teachers to resign as well.
9. Are there any chances of getting funding or special status from the government?

When the school was started, the government had got an agreement that they would not aid for teacher's salary or any special status for schools started after 1995.