

<p><b>Letter from the President</b> We were blessed with many opportunities to share our message this month in both the US and India.</p>	<p><b>Child Spotlight: Gokulraja M</b> Gokul, as we call him, has so much energy, we oftentimes wonder where it all comes from!</p>	<p><b>Postcards from the field</b> The Hanson's talk about some of the sacrifices that people have made to serve in India as volunteers.</p>	<p><b>Volunteer Corner</b> Shawn Bradley and his family visited our campus in India and they share their experiences for us here.</p>
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## President's Letter

March was a fun month on the American side, as well as in India. We were blessed with several wonderful opportunities to share our message with others. The Atlanta Interfaith Broadcasting Network awarded us the 2009 John Houston Allen Humanitarian Award for our work with the leprosy-affected. The ceremony was beautiful and was broadcast on the network. It will also be broadcasted three additional times the month of April. They put together a wonderful 6 minute video about our work, as part of the ceremony. As a result of this, many more thousands will get to hear our message.

I was also blessed in March to be able to speak to a class at the Marriott School of Business at BYU, in their school of Economic Self-Reliance. The enthusiasm of the students was infectious. Several of them are excited to get involved with us on a long-term basis. I will be speaking at Harvard on April 17 and on the evening of April 19. If you have any friends you would like to invite, please go to our website, [www.RisingStarOutreach.org](http://www.RisingStarOutreach.org) and check the front page for details. We find that word of mouth from sponsors and past volunteers is the best way to get people excited about learning more.



[kids@RisingStarOutreach.com](mailto:kids@RisingStarOutreach.com). Matt guarantees that your child will respond quickly.

We have exciting news about Padma. She has been named the 2009 Humanitarian of the Year by Enterprise Mentors. She will be in Salt Lake City on Oct 9 to receive the award. Wow! Padma in America! I'm sure we'll have several opportunities scheduled to hear her

speaking! She has also been invited by the Trivani Foundation to participate in their Celebration of Humanitarian work. She will be honored along with Desmond Tutu, the Dali Lama, and Mohammed Yunis. Pretty awesome! That ceremony will be on Sept. 15. We'll get you details as the date gets closer.

We've waited for years to be able to get Padma in front of American audiences. You can't possibly be with her without feeling inspired by her life of service. She radiates love. I'm hoping a lot of you will be able to take advantage of this opportunity to meet her.

Thanks for all you do to help bring the cause of the leprosy-affected to the world. As the message of the need gets out, there will be a significant response and calls for action to be taken. Together we are making a difference!

Becky Douglas

## Postcard from the Hansons in India: Angels Among Us

Rising Star Outreach is a magnet for good people who want to serve underprivileged people in some meaningful way. During these last few months, we have had many volunteers and visitors who have sacrificed to be at our Campus.

Teresa Claugus and Shyam Advani,

and Sarah Hughes and Matt Zabawa have all brought an added measure of joy to the campus with their loving service.

In March, Retired NBA star, Shawn Bradley, his wife Annette, and their four oldest girls were here to volunteer for a week. Needless to say, the second tallest man in America caused a considerable stir in India. The week started with a beautiful dinner at the Courtyard Marriott hosted by Karan Barry, the General Manager, and his wife, Shivi. It finished with five reporters from the leading Chennai papers, all of whom ran stories with photos, with favorable mention of Rising Star. In between, there were hundreds of photos, colony visits, devotionals, tutoring, and all of the activities volunteers usually have. It was a tearful farewell when they left. We made some great new friends.

That last Friday was our annual Sports Day with two big awnings, flags, a laid-out track, an Olympic Torch, and lots of ceremonies and athletic events. Shawn was the Guest of Honor. He spoke to the children about sports and life lessons. Marriott provided the lunch and we were joined by over thirty of the Marriott Associates. Jags and Caroline Jarwani, former Board member, and Dr. Balu and his wife Shanthu, current Board member, also came. Halfway through our next guests arrived. Sharon and Steve Thompson and two grandsons and Julia and Taylor Steed started their five-day stay.

During that week, Dr. Robert Montgomery and Jeleane spent a day and a night. Bob is a retired surgeon and he was so interested in our colony visit and the professional work of Drs. Kirby, Senthil, and Balu.

Finally, our son-in-law, Bob Tempest, brought his underground construction expertise to start work on our long-hoped for and tremendously needed sewer/septic system. The system was connected in the dark of night on March 26, 2009, and is now fully functioning.

### *Volunteer Corner: (By Matt Goodell)*

My name is Matthew Goodell. After volunteering at Rising Star this past summer, I knew I just had to get back here somehow, so I begged the directors to let me volunteer on a more long-term basis. Well, mission accomplished! I'm writing this from my new home for the next year (a.k.a. the Rising Star Outreach campus in India).

My main directive for the year is to improve the communication between (you) the spon-

sors and the children here in India to help you both develop a long-term relationship with each other. I hope to do this through letters, emails, pictures, and videos. Expect the website to be updated regularly. You'll see new bios of the children who need sponsors, videos from India, as well as lots of pictures. I hope that through the course of this year you will feel more connected to the child that you help provide for. I look forward to helping all of you send your love to these beautiful kids!

**SEND THE CHILDREN PHOTOS OF YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!**

Ways to keep in touch with the children:

Email the child you sponsor at [kids@risingstaroutreach.org](mailto:kids@risingstaroutreach.org)

Recent photos will be uploaded here:



[www.flickr.com/photos/risingstaroutreach](http://www.flickr.com/photos/risingstaroutreach)

Videos will be uploaded here: [www.youtube.com/user/risingstaroutreach](http://www.youtube.com/user/risingstaroutreach)

Contact me directly at [mgoodell@risingstaroutreach.org](mailto:mgoodell@risingstaroutreach.org)

### *Volunteer 2009*

Calling all Volunteers! Our 2009 India Summer Sessions are fast filling up. This summer promises to be one of the best yet, so if you're thinking of coming this summer get your applications in ASAP!

For more information, visit our website at [www.risingstaroutreach.org/volunteerinindia](http://www.risingstaroutreach.org/volunteerinindia)

Summer Dates:

Session I: June 1-15

Session II: June 17-30

Session III: July 5-11

Session IV: July 15-31

Session V: August 2-22

### *Volunteer Corner: (By the Shawn Bradley Family)*

Shawn: We have been trying to find a great service project for some time. Our friends had traveled to India as a family and worked with children of Leprosy patients, and invited us to attend a fundraiser benefiting Rising Star Outreach held in Salt Lake City this January. That night, after hearing the stories, Annette and I sought out Amy Antonelli and asked her if we could go to India. Within four weeks, we had arranged passports and visas in a series of small miracles (we received the final visa the day before we were to depart for India!) and were on our way. We arrived at Rising Star Outreach to a small sea of beautiful smiling faces and a storm of questions. "Hi Uncle, Hi Auntie, Hi Auntie, Hi Uncle". We were so touched, and even more so later when we learned this greeting is a beautiful form of respect and honor.

Much of Indian society and societies around the world still consider Leprosy patients and their children "untouchable". As such, simple touch on the hand or shoulder from us meant so much to them. These darling children need hope, and we were able to witness how Rising Star Outreach helps facilitate this hope! We worked, played, ate, laughed and cried with these children. When it was

time for bed they gave us a little foam mattress, while they slept on the floor. And yet, they were so grateful they had a smooth, clean surface to sleep on. I wondered about the circumstances that made hard concrete seem like a luxury. On our second day we traveled to a colony where some of the leprosy patients lived. We accompanied Dr. Kirby, who was starting a new program to teach the people how to care for their own wounds. Their living conditions were hard to imagine and even harder to describe. One thing I can explain, however, is the love these sweet people shared with us. They would close their eyes in peace as we washed their feet and hands to prepare them for the doctor. Their sores were very graphic and sometime hard to look at, but as my wife Annette said "Just at the moment when I didn't think I could handle it

any longer and was about to turn away, I would look into their eyes and everything would be all right." It is still hard for me to talk about without tearing up. One gentleman who walked on nubs as feet and had lost both of his hands along with his eyesight put his little stub on Amy's head and sang a blessing on is all. He said he knew God loved him because He sent people like us to help him. Incredibly humbled by his gracious compliment, I can only say that he is evidence that God loves us all. He and others blessed our lives in ways we'll not soon forget.

When I first saw him and others lined up to receive treatment I thought how helpless they were. Soon after we were finished we were shown to where several of the colonists attend an art school. These same people were setting up chairs and a make-shift table to share their art with us. They were serving us...the "healthy" ones. I then realized these people are not helpless, they simply need some help. Service brings people together and demands they develop love for one another. That is the way God would have it. I may never see many of these people again, but I will always consider them some of my truest friends!

Sincerely,

Shawn Bradley

Annette Bradley (mother): I had so many amazing experiences at Rising Star that touched my heart forever. The children at RSO left an image of love and acceptance, hard work and gratitude. I have never seen so many beautiful smiles and sparkling big brown eyes. I watched them work together everyday, doing "jobs", making sure everyone's hair was done for school each day, food dished up and served to each other, cleaning up, laughing, playing together, reading together, the list goes on and on. They were all so anxious to practice their English with us, and I have never been hugged and kissed so much. It was the best! For me to see people with so little (monetarily) and yet they are so happy and so loving, it really taught me a huge lesson about what really makes us happy. Our children all said to us "this is the best vacation we have ever had". I have to agree with them. We grew to love these sweet children and their families in mere seconds. They live in some very difficult situations, but my husband said something so profound to me, "they are not helpless, they just need some help". They have so much to offer and taught

us so much. They just need the chance. I cant wait to go back!!!!!!

Chelsea (age 14)One of my memories from India was when we came to the school and some of the kids came up to me asking me questions like "how old are you?, what is your name?, where are you from?". Later that week they would tell me "you run me chase", at first I didn't know what they meant, then I realized they wanted to play tag. We had a lot of fun playing together. The people have very little,



but were always smiling. It really touched my heart when they always smiled at me. They showed me what really matters in life. I love all the children here so much. I am so glad I got to experience this trip.

Ciera (age 13) While we were in India we went to a leprosy colony and helped to wash and bandage their wounds and give them their medicine. While we were there this sweet man who had leprosy, was blind, missing both of his hands was sitting next to Amy

and just talking talking talking, I actually thought he was singing to her. We later found out that he was blessing her and telling her that he knew he had leprosy, was blind, had no hands and no family, but that he was not mad at God, but that he knew God loved him because he sent good people to help him.

Charity (age 10) On our trip to India, we took a bus to Rising Star Outreach, when we got off the bus all of the children came up to us, they were so happy, and couldn't believe how tall my dad was. It was so cute to see their faces all smiling and they were asking us the same questions over and over, "what is your name, how old are you, where are you from?" The children were all so happy and smiling all the time. They all wanted my dad to pick them up so high, they were laughing and all wanted a turn. I thought that was so cute. It was really fun to be with all of their cute and smiling faces...

### Child Spotlight: Gokulraja M.

Gokulraja M. 6/12/01

Gokulraja (or Gokul as we call him around here) is a character. We all know someone like him; Someone that has sooo much energy that at times you are left wondering where it all came from. He'll run up to a volunteer and ask for a pen to practice his writing skills, then in the time it takes to find a pen, he's asked another volunteer for a game, then 30 seconds later he's running to join in the soccer game. Gokulraja is 50% energy, 50% excitement; 100% smiles, all the time. Because he's so happy in his personal world (of what you and I might be tempted to call) chaos, you can do nothing but smile and try to keep up. He has the cutest chubby cheeks and will indulge you when you are feel inclined to pinch them. Gokulraja loves playing with the older boys and has little problem

holding his own. But, when you can slow him down, he can also be quite helpful with chores. He is originally from the Villivakkam leprosy colony, but joined us this year at RSO along with his little sister Vanamalar. His excitement for every moment, keep us pointed towards what's most important.

### David Archuleta Story

"Archie" fans all over the world heard David Archuleta's call in a live blog in which he

challenged his fans to help the people served by Rising Star. And help they did! In March alone, they responded in an overwhelming way! His generous fan base came to the rescue with over \$15,000 for dental care for the children attending the schools of Rising Star Outreach of India and their families in the surrounding colonies

Since David's generous fans exceeded their original goal, they have now embarked on another project: funding the furnishings for the Peery Secondary School! The school is currently under construction, and if David's fans have anything to do with it, the furniture will be ready to go the day the school is completed. Amazing!



Donations are pouring in from six different countries all around the world – Japan, Malaysia, Canada, the Philippines, and of course the good ole' USA.

A fan site coalition initiated by [www.AngelsForaCause.com](http://www.AngelsForaCause.com) and many mini-fundraisers by major fans came together to make all this possible. David's fans appreciate his special gift of reaching their hearts with his amazing talent, and we are grateful to them for responding to this inspiration by reaching out with their hearts to the children and families of the leprosy colonies in India.