



**A Monthly Newsletter March 2010**

**Letter from the President**

*The education systems in India is explained and volunteers are always needed.*

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*This past month the school held a track and field day that proved to be fun for the kids and their families.*

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***Letter from the President***

February has been a great month at Rising Star Outreach. We had a number of people from the Eyre family join us as volunteers. The parents, Richard and Linda Eyre, have been working hard to help put together a training manual for the housemothers and teachers at Rising Star. We've needed a program to be able to teach our employees ways to nurture and encourage the children in their care, while providing appropriate discipline. The Eyres have presented us with our first training manual. It's wonderful!

As if that were not enough, they have left their married son and his wife, and their daughter and her two friends at Rising Star Outreach to begin the implantation. They've been full of enthusiasm and determination! It's been a wonderful experience to watch the change in the children, as well as in the leaders, as principles of kindness and encouragement are learned and followed.

**We LOVE it when families come to volunteer!** Having families come as volunteers is a fantastic thing! It creates a great closeness within the family, and a tremendous synergy with the staff and children at Rising Star. It's a remarkably

bonding experience for families.

It also gives our children at Rising Star a great example of what effective and loving families look like.

We still have some volunteer spots open this coming summer. If this is something you think you'd like your family to participate in, go to our website, and click the volunteer button. A world of incredible experiences, awaits your family at Rising Star Outreach this summer!

The Peery Matriculation School for Rising Stars is having a banner year. One of our sponsors wrote and asked what exactly a matriculation school was? I'm guessing that several of you may have the same question! Let me explain: in India there are three official levels of schooling. The curriculums and the end-of-year tests for each level are set by the Indian government. The highest level is Central Board. The middle level is Matriculation. The lowest level is State Board. When we applied for our certification there was a lot of discussion on what level we should be certified at. Our teachers and others thought that, given our children's backgrounds as first generation learners, they would be stretching just to do a State Board school. But after consulting numerous experts, we took a leap of faith

and decided they could handle a Matriculation level. So consequently, we got our certification at that level. We felt it was important to keep educational opportunities open to them after graduation.

You might sometime see us writing about the fact that our school is an English Medium School. Schools are either English Medium or local language medium (there are 46 major languages in India). Even though, substantially more difficult, again, we decided to pursue an English medium school. As a result, instruction is given in English and all class activities are to be in English. This has, once again, been a stretch for our students, but absolutely critical if they are ever to qualify for jobs with the multinational companies.

Finally, the word standard, is equivalent of the word grade, here in America. In other words fourth standard is the same as fourth grade. I hope this clarifies some different terminology.

*Becky Douglas*

***Sports Day***

Students, teachers, parents, and staff members gathered around the beautifully decorated track and school yard for an-



nual Sports Day. After much hard work and preparation, the students anxiously awaited the events portion of the morning. The parents were watching intently as the principal and correspondent spoke about sportsmanship and teamwork. The day began with the hoisting of the flag by the managing directors and the flag salute. Children were excited to perform exercises and participate in the running races.

towards the finish line. The opportunity to participate in an event such as this is extraordinary for many of these families. When the parents joined in the fun at the end, it was very enjoyable for all the spectators. Go Peery Matriculation School! See more photos of Sports Day at:



It was so exciting to see all of the families cheer their children on as they ran



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/risingstaroutreach/sets/>

### *School Update*

In September 2009, Peery Matriculation School became an accredited institution

in Tamil Nadu following the matriculation pattern of education. In a matriculation school, English is the language spoken. All of the materials are in English and the children learn English using full immersion. The curriculum will vary from school to school until tenth standard (grade). The tenth standard and twelfth standard exams are common throughout the entire state of Tamil Nadu.

The students are placed in particular standards (grades) based on ability and knowledge and not necessarily on age. As a result, some of the ten year olds are in third or fourth standard. The students are well-prepared before moving on to the next grade level. At Peery Matriculation School, the emphasis is placed on learning English. Research has shown that learning English with the appropriate accent will ensure a successful career for our students.

### *A Great Way to Change your Life* *Richard and Linda Eyre*

What a life-changing experience we had in January with Rising Star Outreach and the surrounding leprosy affected colonies in southern India.. We were there with our youngest daughter Charity and her two dear friends and our recently married son Talmadge and his wife Anita who have dedicated the first 9 months of their married life to humanitarian service. This school nestled among rice paddies and mango and groves in southern India is nothing less that astounding! It was built especially for children who come from leprosy affected colonies and would otherwise not have an education. It is directed by a visionary Indian born/ California educated principal named Radhika Kannan who has great vision and dedication to giving these children a great education which will lift them from poverty!

To see the beaming faces of about 150 beautiful children at the school, loving this wonderful opportunity to learn is one thing. Seeing the colonies where they came from and their parents and grandparents with no fingers, gaping wounds



on their toeless feet, eyes clouded with blindness and amputated limbs having lived with the stigma of leprosy for a lifetime, was another. Once we learned that the former "untouchables" love to be touched, to shake "hands", and be hugged, we knew we had experienced something that would change our lives forever. The picture of our youngest child beaming in a picture with a tiny leprosy affected mother who hasn't had fingers for thirty years is truly priceless. To travel with the 27 year old doctor sponsored by Rising Sta Outreach who meets with 600 leprosy affected patients in many colonies each month and who obviously knows their stories and cares for them with great love was both heart wrenching and wildly inspiring!

Thanks to Becky Douglas and her amazing Indian counterpart Padma - and a dedicated and diverse board both in India and the U.S. we loved learning first hand that a small group of dedicated people really can make an enormous difference in the world of the poorest of the poor! Helping that dream move forward is the job of volunteers! We enjoyed the beautiful new hostel just finished for volunteers who will find the opportunity of a lifetime working in the third world and actually being able to shower at the end of the day. Take your family! Send your kids who need to get out of their "bubble". If you can't make it this year sponsor a child. It is guaranteed to change lives forever, just as it has ours!

## Sponsorship Corner

The hardships facing the world's economy are not groundbreaking news; however, the admirable donations that sponsors and donors continue to give to the children at Rising Star are definitely noteworthy. Each month sponsors reach out from countries all over the world to make

a difference in the world of one child in India. Generous people from the United States, Canada, Australia, Germany, India, Hong Kong, and the United Arab Emirates all continue to help provide refuge from the dire education and sanitation conditions children at Rising Star would otherwise experience in leprosy colonies. Deborah Fisch is one sponsor who, like many others, has made the decision to find a way to sponsor a child despite growing financial challenges. She tells the following of her involvement:

"I began sponsoring Thrisha after I saw a program about the genesis and progress of Rising Star [and was] inspired by the commitment of moving a seemingly hopeless situation into many new possibilities for all involved. As a Spanish teacher for grades Kindergarten through 8th, I am moved and grateful for those who recognize the value of all children, of all people. In an attempt to cut down on expenses and save, I cancelled my sponsorship. Then when I stopped and truly considered the hardships and challenges Thrisha faces day to day with her bright

spirit of optimism, there was no way I could continue to walk away from her... So I'm back on board.

I see her face in the faces of my students. My monthly contribution to her well-being keeps me aware of our connectedness on this earth walk. I thank the dedicated and kind individuals of Rising Star, and although I've never met any of the other sponsors, I consider them sisters and brothers in our desire to make a contribution where it is so greatly needed."

This support from Deborah could not have come at a better time for Thrisha. Over the Christmas holiday break, her one year old sister unexpectedly passed away. Thrisha adored her and mentioned from her birth that she hoped she would also attend Rising Star when she grew up. It is especially in these moments that the love and support of sponsors help the children face the world with a spirit of optimism. The simple fact of knowing that there are people all over the world who care for them makes such an impact in each of these children's lives! Just as Deborah states, "there is always a way to make things work!" Thank you to all of the "sisters and brothers" who continue to find a way to give to the Rising Star family!



*Thrisha at her home in the Calgary Nagar Leprosy Colony with her baby sister-May 2009 & at The Peery Matriculation School For Rising Stars*

### *Child Spotlight*

This little boy is in need of a sponsor. Would you consider sponsoring him, or one of the other children still in need? Your love and support mean the world to these kids!



*Anbarasu P.  
07/27/2002*

Anbarasu is a quiet observer. When you look at him you can tell that his mind is always turning. If you give him space and time, Anbarasu can figure out how to do anything he wants. He is very creative, and everyone knows that he enjoys building things. In fact just last family day one of our three year old boys received a new play car; He immediately went to Anbarasu and asked him to build a road and a jump for the car race. Anbarasu is a great brother to all of the children here at Rising Star. He tries his best in school, and earns marks that reflect his efforts. He loves spending time with the volunteers, and is making progress with his English. He truly is a joy to have as a student, friend, and brother at Rising Star Outreach.