

The Akshaya Home



The dictionary defines home as a place of permanent residence, a social unit such as a family, a house or apartment, an institution for people needing special care or supervision, and a place where something flourishes. While the Akshaya Home is designed to meet all five of these definitions, it is foremost a place where care, love, and compassion will flourish—a place where shattered dreams are rebuilt and lost dignity restored.

Almost a decade ago, the seed for the Akshaya Home was planted in Krishnan's mind. As he cared for the destitute on the streets of Madurai, he was reminded again and again that while tending to the needs of the body was important, solace for the troubled mind was of even greater importance. He knew that only a building that communicated peace and a sense of belonging would ensure the full recovery of those whom society had cast aside.

Krishnan's dream began to take concrete form in June 2008. Initial progress was slow, in step with the flow of donations for material and labor, but things did move forward. Krishnan's efforts became more widely recognized and appreciated, and his CNN 2010 Top Ten Hero award triggered a surge of contributions. We believe that the

Akshaya Home will open its doors in the first half of 2012—a time of celebration for all involved.

Akshaya Trust, Krishnan, and the dedicated volunteers will find little time to enjoy the pleasure of this interim success, as there will be many new tasks to address. In addition to preparing and serving meals, Akshaya will begin to provide health care, security, and housekeeping. The work involved in administration and maintenance will swell. Some of the new challenges are hard to predict: they will be unique to the new members of the Akshaya family. This will all take dedicated people, time, and money. The coming chapter will be the most eventful in Akshaya's story. We all know that success hinges on a great effort, and we are determined to prevail.

Public donations, institutional awards, and corporate sponsorship have carried Akshaya Trust far in the last eight years. Krishnan's scrupulous management of the Akshaya budget, which ensures that no dollar and rupee is spent without considering the best interests of the people in need, has impressed Akshaya Trust's benefactors. The continued operation and future growth of Akshaya Trust depend on that generous support.

There are many ways you can contribute to the timely and successful opening of the Akshaya Home. For a thorough description of Akshaya Trust's financial operations, read *Managing the Donors' Gifts* (page 4). Then be sure to read *Support Akshaya Today* (page 4) to learn how you can extend a hand to the helpless on the streets of Madurai.



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Help



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Please
donate
today



Akshaya's Mission

Committed to the care of the helpless, forsaken, mentally ill, old, sick, roadside destitute living and dying on the streets of Madurai by providing healthy food, love, and opportunity to rehabilitate, thereby restoring human dignity.

synergy (n.)
the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.

New Wheels for Meals

Akshaya acts to bring care and nourishment to those in need on the streets of Madurai. The daily tasks of the Akshaya team are not easy, the day is long, and there are always more mouths to feed. Needless to say, the work becomes even harder when the delivery van becomes unreliable, when hard steering makes it a Herculean effort to pull over to the curb to distribute the early morning meal, and when repair bills start coming fast and furious. That was the state of Akshaya's van—the sole means of food distribution in June 2011.

Then, out of the blue, the AIMS India Foundation awarded

Akshaya Trust a donation of \$7,900. The check was hand carried by Latha Kalaga, Akshaya USA's Executive Director, to Madurai. She presented the donation to a very appreciative Krishnan on June 27.

The next evening, Latha joined Vidhya and Andrews, two of Akshaya's volunteers, to take delivery of the Maruti Omni purchased with the generous donation from AIMS. This three-cylinder van gets about twenty miles to a gallon of gasoline—quite good for its class. It's striking—and characteristic of the man—that Krishnan did not pick up the van. The founder wanted his trusted volunteers to have that pleasure. The gift from AIMS permitted him to offer his team a different sort of gift.



Krishnan distributing food from the new van donated by AIMS India Foundation

gratitude (n.)
the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

My Akshaya Experience

During June and July of this year my parents and I went on a long-awaited trip to India to visit our relatives. We stayed at my grandparents' house in Madurai for three weeks, during which I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to meet Mr. Krishnan of Akshaya Trust.

I had heard about Akshaya a few months before when Mr. Krishnan was selected as a CNN 2010 Top Ten Hero. I had read about the amazing help he provided to Madurai's destitute, and immediately I felt that I should also do something to help the people in my father's hometown. Unfortunately, I couldn't do anything to directly help people, but I thought I could at least donate to Akshaya Trust some of the allowance money that I had saved up.

Visiting Akshaya's kitchen, meeting Mr. Krishnan, and seeing the site for the Akshaya Home were great experiences for me. They taught me to be more responsible and more caring, and they made me appreciate the hard work and dedication of the people involved in Akshaya. The next time I go to India, I hope to spend more of my time doing something to help people.

– Raghav Renga



Needed for Akshaya Home

A growing list of items needed for the Akshaya Home will be posted and periodically updated on the Akshaya USA website. Visit the site often and see if there are items you may want purchased in your name through a donation. These are examples of the types of items needed:

- Air-conditioning unit for medical areas
- Bedding—linens, blankets, and pillows
- Blood pressure apparatus
- Chapathi dough kneader
- Chapathi maker
- Commercial laundry machine
- Cooking, serving, and eating utensils
- Cot side rails
- Cots—sleeping and medical
- Fans
- First aid kits
- Fully equipped ambulance
- Idli steamer
- Lightbulbs
- Mattresses
- Rice cooker
- Saline water stands
- Scale
- Scissors
- Stainless steel bowls
- Stethoscopes
- Stretchers—several types
- Vegetable mandoline
- Washbasins with stands
- Wheelchairs

Please
donate
today

Through the Eyes of a Volunteer

My first visit to Akshaya Trust to meet Narayanan Krishnan was in July 2010. The visit left me with a deep desire to return to India and assist Krishnan as he went about feeding the helpless homeless.

My desire became a reality when I landed in Madurai on the evening of July 28, 2011. Krishnan, his wife Harini, and his father picked me up at the airport. The warmth shown by the three of them was amazing. From the minute I stepped into Krishnan's car I felt I was part of the family. After arriving at Krishnan's home I enjoyed more warm hospitality and caught up on the events of the past year. As the evening progressed my host advised me that I should be ready by half past six the next morning to accompany him on the food distribution rounds. I was up at four—in part due to jet lag but mostly because of excitement. Finally I would serve at Akshaya!

As Krishnan took me through the streets of Madurai, I became acquainted with those whom Akshaya serves—the helpless homeless who live and die on the streets of Madurai. I remembered a few names from my last visit, so when I saw Pandi—he had moved from living in a section of concrete pipe to a stretch of pavement in front of what looked like an ATM kiosk—I called out to him. I asked if he remembered me. He looked up, and his eyes filled with tears—so did mine. The next man we stopped to serve had bandages all over his leg. Krishnan told me that that this poor man had been beaten by shopkeepers to drive him away from their stores.

Our morning's mission continued. We stopped and fed a pregnant woman, then a man who believes he is on his way to the Balaji temple in the state of Andhra Pradesh, nearly three hundred miles from Madurai, followed by a woman and her five-year-old son Karthik. This shirtless boy was so happy to see the food. I could not help but think of my children, who have so much—a home, two parents, clean clothes, and other "necessities" that are unheard of luxuries to the people we were serving. Perhaps—and this is my hope—once the Akshaya Home is inaugurated Karthik and his mother will find a place there, and Karthik's life will change for the better.

We traveled down street after street to deliver food and compassion—I saw the stark poverty and sadness that Krishnan and the Akshaya volunteers work so hard to eradicate. A grandmother who took the food blessed me at such length that Krishnan was in tears. Yet he was able to summon a joke, telling this dear woman that in spite of feeding her for ten years he had never received so many blessings.



Founder's Corner



I had no idea what to expect when I committed myself to help the homeless men and women of Madurai. How would they react? Would others join me? What would I need to do? I knew just one thing: compassion would lead me to success.

While the years since I first set out to feed my city's hungry have brought many challenges, I have been enriched

beyond my greatest expectations by the kindness and generosity showered on Akshaya Trust, my dedicated volunteers, and the many souls we strive to comfort. I will mention just a few of the things for which I am thankful:

- The needs of the homeless and hungry men and women of Madurai have been heard by the world. And the world has responded.
- Many of our donations come from children, some as young as four.
- Parents are raising their children with caring discipline, sharing with them the significance of their cultural heritage as well as the value of money.
- Many contributions made in the last few years, especially those from the United States, have enabled us to realize our great ambition: the Akshaya Home is nearly complete.

Soon the destitute people Akshaya has been caring for on the streets of Madurai will move into the Akshaya Home. They will be sheltered, fed, and looked after, but they will not be idle. Central to their rehabilitation will be the assistance they lend Akshaya—meaning themselves. Some will help with meals, others with cleaning, maintaining the gardens, assisting those in greater need than themselves. The residents of the Akshaya Home will soon be useful to society and to themselves, living, working, even dreaming with dignity. My own training in hotel kitchens will permit me to teach some to prepare spice mixtures, pickles and relishes, and a number of prepared foods. Others will be taught the skills of the tailor; they will, under supervision, produce a variety of crafts. All of these items will be sold, and we may hope that some of the residents will take on the roles of artisans or merchants. This process of rehabilitation will greatly improve their self-confidence and reduce their sense of inferiority.

Akshaya has proved that it can meet the needs of the destitute helpless people now living on the streets of Madurai. This will embolden those who witness our work to come forward, volunteering to train the residents to take on a wider array of responsibilities, callings suited to their abilities and temperaments. This work, the work made possible by opening a compassionate heart to the world, is a gift not just to the helpless and hungry—it is a gift to ourselves. To rehabilitate others is to lift one's own soul higher.

– Narayanan Krishnan

After distributing meals to about 170 destitute members of the Akshaya family, we headed to the produce market, where we met Mani, a volunteer, who stepped out of the crowd laden with bags full of the fresh vegetables needed for the afternoon and evening meals.

The next morning we went to the Akshaya Home—a true haven that will bring comfort, compassion, peace, and love to those who now lie uncared for on the streets of Madurai. The construction of the home moves forward in step with donations received. For the helpless homeless the day when they will move to their new rooms must seem like a lifetime away; for many of them, having a place to call home will be astonishing. If all goes well, the Akshaya Home should be completed by mid-2012.

Continued on page 4

Akshaya Home Construction Status

Block 1 2,500 s.f.
Medical clinic
Sponsor:
LIC Golden Jubilee Foundation, Mumbai
100% complete

Block 2 2,500 s.f.
Medical office, sick bay, resident dormitory
Sponsor:
Well-wisher, Madurai
100% complete

Block 3 2,560 s.f.
Resident dormitory
Sponsor:
Chandrasekar Memorial Block, Doha
100% complete

Block 4 2,560 s.f.
Resident dormitory
Sponsor:
Saahil Block, Singapore
100% complete

Block 5 2,700 s.f.
Special care facility
Sponsor:
Dallas-Fort Worth Community, Texas, USA
60% completed

Block 6 2,805 s.f.
Kitchen, dining, storage
Sponsor:
V RHYTHM Foundation, Malaysia
25% completed

Block 7 3,198 s.f.
Administration offices
Sponsor:
Tampa Community, Florida, USA
20% completed

Block 8 1,200 s.f.
Resident dormitory
Sponsor:
Donors from USA and India
80% completed

Security office 300 s.f.
Sponsor:
Donors from USA and India
100% complete

Entrance bridge
Sponsor:
DISHA, USA
100% complete



The Akshaya Home

at Melamathur, India

Akshaya's sponsors

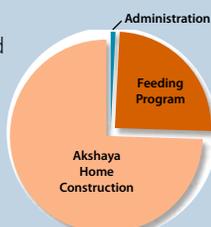


Managing the Donors' Gifts

Akshaya Trust and Akshaya USA are managed by a team of highly dedicated volunteers. As a result we are very efficient in providing a high percentage of donor's money to the intended beneficiaries. The breakdown of all expenses for the first half of 2011 is:

Akshaya Home Construction 74.5%
Feeding Program 24.7%
Administrative Costs 0.8%

This level of efficiency significantly helps us feed approximately 450 deserving people three meals a day and make notable progress in the construction of the Akshaya Home.



Through the Eyes of a Volunteer

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My visit achieved completion when I spent a few hours helping cook meals in the Akshaya kitchen. Washing carrots, slicing eggplant, and grinding coriander seeds assumed a special meaning after having seen the pleasure on the faces of those we fed the day before. It also added to my appreciation of the hard work undertaken every day of the year by the Akshaya volunteers—buying food, preparing and delivering meals, managing the office, reaching out to the world to spread the word—all the time giving support to each other, a crucial task as the emotions of their mission take their toll. This amazing and tireless group includes Vidhya, Andrews, Mani, Muthu, Ganesh, and Krishnamurthy.

My eyes and heart captured far more than my words can express. I can confidently say that for those who seek satisfaction and the emotional rewards of helping, there is no substitute for serving those who are as destitute as the help-less homeless.

– Latha Kalaga, Akshaya USA volunteer

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Support Akshaya Today

Akshaya Trust is 100% donor supported—all funds come from the hearts of our donors and sponsors, not from coffers of state agencies or programs. We have done much with the many donations, including the construction of the Akshaya Home and the provision of three meals a day to approximately 450 deserving people.

As we near the completion of the Akshaya Home, we will be faced with a new array of expenses, as described in *The Akshaya Home* article on page 1. Help us bring comfort and a sense of dignity to the poor abandoned people on the streets of Madurai. You can donate in many ways—select the one that best suits your wishes.

From North America

Donate to Akshaya Trust through Akshaya USA via PayPal.

Send a check to:

Akshaya USA
17359 E. Caley Place
Aurora, Colorado 80016 USA

Checks should be made out to **Akshaya USA**. Be sure your correct address appears on the check so a printed receipt can be sent to you. Also include your email address.

Gifting equities:

To gift equities, transfer them to the Akshaya USA account at Fidelity Investments using these details:

DTC# 0226
Account# Z69-216542

Akshaya USA is exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code - Public Charity.

From India

Donate directly through the Akshaya Trust website.

Akshaya Trust is registered in India: FCRA Regn No. 075940512 Min. of Home Affairs, Govt. of India I.T. 80(G) Regn. No. 108/2003-04 ITC Madurai 80(G) exemption C. No. 464/119/ CIT-I/2003-04 dated 7th October 2010.

Editor's Info

Akshaya Cares, the quarterly newsletter of Akshaya Trust, was designed by Venessa Lee and edited by Sam Gilbert. Many people dedicated to Akshaya's cause contributed photos and articles to *Akshaya Cares*—thank you all.

Your comments and suggestions are most welcome. Please send them to me at Editor@AkshayaUSA.org.

Contributions for future issues of *Akshaya Cares* are also welcome. Please contact me for more information regarding the submission process.

– Ed DiTomas