

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their continued support of the UM-St. Louis Tsunami Reconstruction Project. We have had numerous events since my last update (http://www.umsl.edu/~ccj/pdfs/tsunami_update.pdf), and I am eager to share them with you.



During the spring semester 2006, I worked with Mary Ann Coker, student coordinator of the project, to organize a “Sponsor-a-Student” campaign on UMSL’s campus. This event was Mary Ann’s brainchild, and proved to be an extremely successful means of engaging the campus community in our project. While in Sri Lanka in January 2006, I collected biographical information and portraits of the students at Andaragasyaya Vidyalaya, and during our campus event, UMSL students, staff and faculty had the opportunity to sponsor individual Andaragasyaya students. Within two days of our booth opening at the Millennium Student Center, all 54 Andaragasyaya students were sponsored. Thanks to Mary Ann, to Ellie Goedeker for beautifully designed banners, and to the student volunteers who worked with us, including Mark Berg, Jennifer Cobbina, Megan Garza, Jessica Johnston, Kim Martin, Brian Oliver, and Nicole Wolf. We used the funds raised to purchase school supplies, and encouraged our sponsors to correspond with the children they sponsored.

While we worked to raise funds in the spring, my partner Premila Gamage of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) continued to hold art and music workshops for the children at Andaragasyaya, bringing in prominent local artists and musicians, as well as foreign visitors.



art & music workshops, spring 2006



In addition, at Principal Jayaratne's request, we raised funds in the spring for a field trip to take place in July 2006. Our plan was to take Andaragasyaya's 4th and 5th graders to Colombo for a three-day trip, and Premila made all the local arrangements. Unfortunately, increased political instability and violence in Sri Lanka this summer forced us to reconsider our plans. Several weeks before the event, and in consultation with the Ministry of Education and parents, Principal Jayaratne decided it was best to cancel the trip. I contacted the primary donors—Marilyn Morton & her gang at Health Direct in St. Louis—and they conferred and requested that we hold a school carnival in lieu of the field trip. Though we were all disappointed by the field trip's cancellation and saddened even more by the cause, the Andaragasyaya School Carnival was a smashing success, and was especially meaningful because through it we engaged the entire Andaragasyaya community.

THE ANDARAGASYAYA SCHOOL CARNIVAL – JULY 2006

The Andaragasyaya School Carnival was held on July 30th. It was truly a communal effort. Much to our surprise when we arrived, Principal Jayaratne and the parents were decorating the school grounds with lovely huts woven from coconut fronds for the carnival. There was one for each class, as well as one for food distribution and another for additional seating.



Weaving coconut fronds



Class Hut

We had so many friends chip in to help with the carnival preparation and execution, including endless rounds of shopping, decorating, organizing games and prizes, running booths, and any and everything else that came up. Special thanks to my husband Puny, sister-in-law Rajivi, friends Mana Samarasinghe & Nilu Abeyaratne and especially their 5½ year old son Chahel (my most dedicated assistant!) and his friend "Akki," and our friend Prasana who came along to videotape the event. Even David, the driver we brought along, chipped in and worked all day, as did Ajith, the young man sent along to man the "bouncer." We were also joined by Premila, her friend Shanthie Fernando, and Edna Malkanthi from the SLLA. In all, around 250 people turned up, including the school children, their parents and siblings, and other villagers.



Chahel and Akki prepare decorations



Ajith helps Puny & Mana

Principal Jayaratne began distributing breakfast to children and their families at 9am. Even before that, many had arrived to help with last minute decorations and organizing. Then we set up the bouncer. The kids had no idea what it was, and initially were frightened to climb in. When Chahel and I heard the news, we quickly ran to the bouncer, climbed inside, and started jumping around. Then I said, “enda-ko!” (come!) and at once what felt like a zillion kids came pouring in. As Chahel later described, “it was like a tsunami wave of kids!” From that point onwards, they loved it so much that we had to deflate it for lunch (otherwise the kids wouldn’t come and eat!) and even for ice cream and cake in the afternoon.



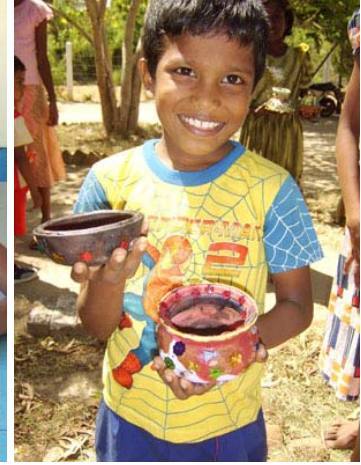
At around 9:30, a large truck from DSI Shoes arrived, filled to the brim with school shoes of various sizes. Slowly, slowly, group by group, children were brought into a classroom to be fitted for shoes. We had previously sent a tailor to the school, and he had measured each child and made school uniforms for all of them. By 10am, the festivities began, including an arts & crafts booth, ball-toss, pin-the-trunk-on-the-elephant, ring toss, tin can toss, piñatas and a duck pond. We had more than 500 prizes to give out, including jump ropes, kites, badminton sets, games, puzzles, coloring books, building blocks, and more.



Shoe Fitting



Arts & Crafts



Principal Jayaratne organized races throughout the day, including a bun eating competition, lime & spoon, and musical chairs. Parents were included in the games as well, including a hand-holding race for moms and dads, and a “pass the hat” version of musical chairs.



bun-eating competition



lime & spoon



pass the hat



balloon race



teamwork water game

Some of the principal's races were especially creative. With leftover balloons, he had a balloon popping race. Kids raced about 50 yards to a row of balloons, blew them up until they popped, then raced another 50 yards to the finish line. Then, to develop teamwork, children lined up in a row with a bucket of water on one end and a tin can on the other. Using cupped hands, the children passed the water down the line. The first team to fill the tin can won a prize.



Carnival Darlings...

The highlight of the carnival was an afternoon magic show, which was magical in more ways than one. We had been unsuccessful in our efforts to locate a magician in Colombo willing to make the 14 hour roundtrip to Kirinda. Then a week before the carnival, our friend Ramani called with exciting news: she had friends coming from England, one happened to be a magician, and they were traveling near Kirinda to visit the Yala National Wildlife Reservation on the same day as our carnival. With Ramani translating in Sinhala, Chris the magician had the children and parents mesmerized! He also happens to be a primary school teacher, and knows how to draw kids in and put on an interactive event. It was spectacular!



Mesmerizing Magic Show...

After the magic show, everyone had ice cream and cake, and then it was time to begin wrapping up. First was distribution of the children's school supplies. With \$20 per child donated by UM-St. Louis students, each of the 60 schoolchildren at Andragasyaya received the following:

School Uniform
Pens & Pencils
10 Exercise Books¹
Water Bottle

Socks & Shoes
Pencil Case
Crayons (grades 1-3)
Ball Cap² (boys)

Backpack
Erasers
Coloring Pencils (grades 4-5)
Umbrella (girls)



Distributing School Supplies

It was a team effort to distribute the school supplies in an orderly fashion, and my young pal Chahel once again chipped in to help. Then the fourth and fifth grade girls performed a costumed dance, we gave gifts to the teachers, and every child at the carnival was given a “loot bag” to take home with them. All that remained was for the children to sing the National Anthem, and the Andaragasyaya Carnival came to a close. It was a truly special event.



First Graders lead the National Anthem

¹ Donated by Thusitha Ranasinghe

² Donated by Riyaz and Nizreen Jafferjee

LANDSCAPES WITH LOVE – AUGUST 2006

The carnival was a spectacular event, but our work continues here in St. Louis. Utilizing the artwork produced by Andaragasyaya students during their art workshops, we held an exhibition at UM-St. Louis' Gallery Visio just before the fall semester began. Sponsored by UMSL's Center for International Studies, the Gallery Visio Student Association, and the Sri Lanka Library Association, proceeds from the exhibition are being used to build wall partitions between classrooms at Andaragasyaya. Special thanks to Bob Ell at CIS, Pat Johnson and the staff at the Gallery Visio, Ellie Goedeker from Student Life, Gloria Schultz, Mary Ann Coker, Linda and Mel Wilsey, Micha Nova, Jim Hartigan, and Eilene Dunkin for their efforts.



**Landscapes With Love: Artwork by Sri Lankan Children
Exhibition and Silent Auction**
August 8-August 17, 2006
Reception for the artists
Thursday, August 17 4-7pm



All proceeds benefit Andaragasyaya Vidyalaya,
a tsunami-affected primary school in Sri Lanka.
Sponsored by The UM-St. Louis Tsunami Reconstruction Project,
The Center for International Studies,
The Sri Lanka Library Association and Gallery Visio Student Association

ශ්‍රී ලංකා පුස්තකාල සංගමය
ஸ்ரீ லங்கா நூலகச் சங்கம்
SRI LANKA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



WHAT'S NEXT?

We're continuing to work with Andaragasyaya Vidyalaya, and our successes have snowballed! In September 2006, Premila gave a presentation on our project at the International Federation of Library Associations. Impressed with our accomplishments, the UK Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals donated £4,000 (nearly \$7,500) to the SLLA earmarked for Andaragasyaya. Financially, the project is now secure for some time, and Premila and I will continue to monitor the project and work with the school. Two specific goals are now before us:

1. Given our successes at Andaragasyaya, we have decided to expand the project to another school in Sri Lanka. The Macaldeniya Tamil Estate School is a small 60-pupil primary school located in the central hills of Sri Lanka. In selecting this school, we have moved away from tsunami-affected regions, but with a strong rationale. The Macaldeniya school is one of numerous small schools that serve the children of Tamil tea estate workers—the most impoverished, disadvantaged group in the country. We have the full support of Mr. Radakrishnan, owner of the Macaldeniya tea estate, and the cooperation of Principal S. Narayanasami. In the coming year, we will be raising funds for programming and school supplies for the school. I return to Sri Lanka in May 2007 for the inception of the new project.
2. I am continuing to work with Joel Glassman at UMSL's Center for International Studies to develop and teach a service learning course in Sri Lanka in July 2007. Our goal is to bring up to five students to Sri Lanka for the month, for educational programming and volunteer work at Andaragasyaya Vidyalaya and the Macaldeniya Tamil Estate School. For more information about the Sri Lanka Service Learning Course, please contact Carol Cradock at CIS (516-6983 or ccradock@umsl.edu).

To make an additional **tax deductible** donation, please send checks to:

UM-St. Louis Tsunami Reconstruction Project
Center for International Studies
366 Social Sciences Building
University of Missouri-St. Louis
St. Louis, MO 63121

I hope you appreciate seeing the continued impact of your generous donations. Thanks for all of your support!

Jody Miller



UM-St. Louis Tsunami Reconstruction Project • Center for International Studies (SSB 366) • St. Louis, MO 63121