

## UMSL Tsunami Reconstruction Project/Operation Teardrop Campaign Summer 2007 Update

Thank you for your continued support of the UM-St. Louis Tsunami Reconstruction Project. Since my last update (<http://www.umsl.edu/~ccj/pdfs/Tsunami2006.pdf>), we have had numerous successes that I am eager to share with you. This includes our continued involvement with Andaragasyaya Vidyalaya, the tsunami-affected primary school in Kirinda, Sri Lanka, as well as the expansion of our work to a new school: Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam, a primary school in the tea growing central hills of Sri Lanka (the Operation Teardrop Campaign).

### Continuing Efforts at Andaragasyaya Vidyalaya

You may recall that last year we held an exhibition at UMSL's Gallery Visio, in which artwork produced by Andaragasyaya students was displayed and sold. Funds raised at this event were used to install wall partitions between the classrooms at the Andaragasyaya Vidyalaya, the tsunami-affected school at the heart of the UMSL Tsunami Reconstruction Project.



*Dimuthu carefully begins painting his mural*



*Lakshika & Sachini*

In July 2007, at the request of Principal Kitsiri Jayaratne, we held a mural painting workshop in which Andaragasyaya students painted murals on the new wall partitions. Children from Grade 2 onwards worked in pairs to complete 18 large murals at the school. The result is beautiful—colorful, cheerful, and the best part is that the art belongs to the children themselves. The many art workshops my project partner Premila Gamage, of the Sri Lanka Library Association, has held for the Andaragasyaya schoolchildren have definitely been a great success!



*Niroshani applies finishing touches*



*Ishara and Prabodhya with their finished mural*



*brightly painted wall partitions*



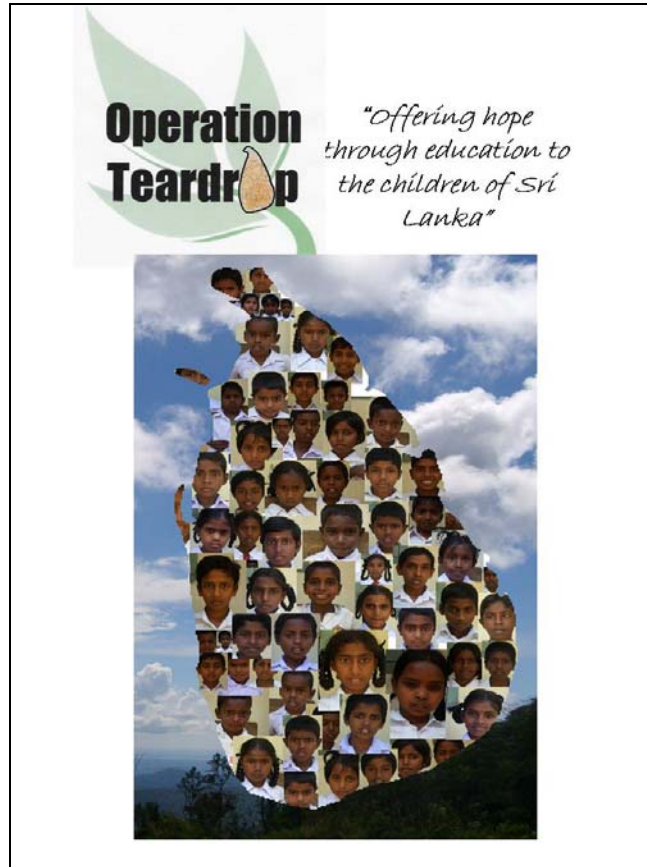
*back to school on Monday*

You may also recall from my update last year that through her numerous presentations about our Andaragasyaya project, Premila has secured long-term funding for our efforts there. Thanks to generous donations to the Sri Lanka Library Association, there is now ongoing support for work at Andaragasyaya, and we have been able to expand our own fundraising and programmatic efforts to a new school.

### The UM-St. Louis Operation Teardrop Campaign – Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam

Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam is a small 60-student primary school located in the central hills of Sri Lanka, near the town of Koslanda. 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. While Andaragasyaya students are primary Sinhalese, our shift to the new school allows us to directly assist the minority Tamil population as well. And thanks to the diligent efforts of students from the UM-St. Louis School of Business, our efforts so far have been extremely successful.

During the Spring semester 2007, I partnered with UMSL English Professor Lynn Staley and students in her Business Writing course. As part of their course assignment, Lynn's students designed and executed fundraising campaigns on campus, named our newly expanded project the Operation Teardrop Campaign, and designed our new logo and slogan:



Their fundraising activities during the spring and Lynn's continuing efforts during the summer raised approximately \$2,500. This allowed us to make great strides in beginning our efforts at Macaldeniya this summer. To accomplish our goals, we have partnered with Mr. G. Radhakrishnan, owner of the Macaldeniya Tea Estate, and Mr. Narayanasamy, Principal of Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam, both of whom are enthusiastic about our efforts.



*Roshanthan (grade 1)*



*Sashikala (grade 3)*



*Pakiyaraj (grade 1)*



*Selviananthi (grade 5)*

Here are the highlights of our summer activities:

*Expanded Teaching Staff at Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam*

When we began our work at Macaldeniya, we found a small estate school with just one permanent teacher on staff. Because the tea estate is so remote (approximately 15 kilometers to the nearest secondary school, and 7 kilometers to the nearest bus stand), the vast majority of children living on the estate are unable to further their studies beyond primary school. As a result, teacher Mr. Lambaran Vije—with the help of volunteer teacher Ms. Arumgam Shathiyavani—has been responsible for teaching 60 students aged 5 to 14. This summer, we made significant strides in improving the staffing situation at the Macaldeniya school.



*S. Narayanasamy Pillai Raju*  
*Macaldeniya Principal*



*S. Lambaran Vije*  
*Teacher*



*Arumgam Shathiyavani*  
*Volunteer Teacher*

First, working with Mr. Radhakrishnan and Principal Narayanasamy, we hired an English teacher. We received 28 applications for the post, and ultimately hired Mr. Zmoon Hussain Ajumain for the position. Mr. Ajumain is fluent in all three languages—Tamil, Sinhala, and English—and has spent many years conducting private English classes to children at multiple grade levels. He begins his post in September, after the August school holidays are completed. Mr. Radhakrishnan will provide the new teacher with accommodations on the estate, while the Operation Teardrop Campaign will be responsible for paying his salary of \$150/month. This is a great investment for the students: having knowledge of English will significantly improve their life chances and opportunities as adults.



*Mr. Ajumain*



*S. Shivagami*

Second, thanks to the generous commitment of staff at One-on-One Tutoring, we have funding to provide salaries to both volunteer teacher Shathiyavani, and a previous volunteer teacher, S. Shivagami, who volunteered at the Macaldeniya school for two years before she found it necessary to leave the estate to earn money. She is happy to be returning in a paid position at the school, where she will earn more than at her previous employment in a garment factory.

*Nutrition Program*

At the request of Principal Narayanasami, we have begun a program to provide the students at Macaldeniya with a large glass of milk and a snack each day. The cost of this program is approximately \$250/month, for which we will be seeking donations for ongoing support.



*Shalini and Thilageswary enjoy sweet buns*



*Pushpamalar and Mathushika*

*Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam has a Playground!*

In July 2007, thanks to the fundraising efforts of Lynn Staley, we were able to install a playground at the Macaldeniya school. The children are thrilled with the new addition!



*Ceremonially placing the first handfuls of sand during playground installation*



*Playground installation*



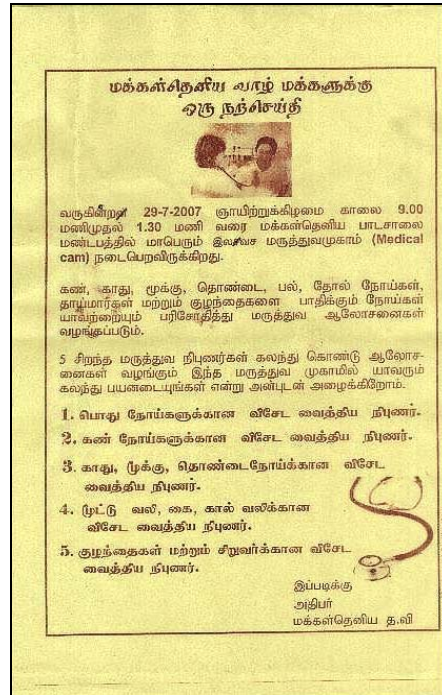
*Macaldeniya children enjoy the new playground*





Medical Camp for Macaldeniya Tea Estate Workers & their Children

On Sunday July 29<sup>th</sup>, we held a medical camp at the Macaldeniya school with the support of the Sri Lankan Ministry of Health, doctors from Badulla General Hospital, the Sri Lankan State Pharmaceutical Corporation, Business and Professional Women–Sri Lanka, Hamas Drugs, Mr. and Mrs. Radhakrishnan and their staff, Principal Narayanasamy, friends and family who volunteered, and Macaldeniya students. Principal Narayanasamy made fliers to promote the camp and his 5<sup>th</sup> graders delivered them door-to-door around the estate.



We served an estimated 350 patients, providing vitamins, basic medicine, and referrals. The State Pharmaceutical Corporation donated \$1,000 worth of medicine and sent along three pharmacists to package and distribute prescriptions. They worked tirelessly throughout the day.



*Olivia Weeraperumal and Janaki Gunawardena of BPW-Sri Lanka with SPC pharmacists Mohan Ranasinghe and Vipul Kumarasiri*



*Sujani Jayawardena of SPC and her spouse, who joined our effort as a volunteer*

Several health and hygiene related problems stood out. First, a number of the students have scabies. Principal Narayanasamy brought this to my attention on Saturday and asked that we ensure the problem was addressed at the health camp. We also purchased additional medical stocks for the principal to have on hand to continue treating the problem as it recurs.



In addition, many of the older estate workers have eye problems, including glaucoma, cataracts, and poor vision. Children and adults alike have dental problems, and hygiene is an ongoing concern because of estate workers' lack of money and transportation to obtain soap, detergent, disinfectants, and the like. We plan to continue working with our Sri Lankan partners in an effort to address these healthcare needs.

Five doctors, along with translators, were in attendance at the medical camp. They saw patients for pediatrics, women's health, eyes, ear nose and throat, and general health problems.



*Drs. R.M.S. Bandara (L) and P.A.N. Godakumbura (R) consult with patients*

Macaldeniya estate residents waited patiently in long queues for their turns to see the doctors and obtain their prescriptions. While they waited, they were each served a cup of hot tea with milk and sugar, along with bread, butter and jam. We purchased over 100 loaves of freshly baked bread for the occasion, which was sliced and prepared by volunteers from the estate.



*Waiting in queues...*





*Bread preparation*



*Distribution of hot tea*



*Enjoying a snack*



On the whole, our medical camp was a success, and provided a much needed service to the families on the Macaldeniya estate. Most importantly, it gave us significant baseline information for our future efforts to address the health needs of this community.



*From left: Principal Narayanasamy, Dr. A.K.M. Naleem, Dr. P.A.N. Godakumbura, Dr. R.M.S. Bandara, Dr. Tharinganu Yapa, Dr. P. Kiritharan and Janaki Gunawardena*

Children's Art Workshop

In June 2007, we had an art workshop at Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam, and the children produced drawings that I brought back with me to incorporate into our fundraising activities.



*First Grade Girls Show Off Their Drawings*



**Estate Homes**  
*By Gurukumar, Grade 4*



**Tea Estate**  
*By Thanaletumi, Grade 5*





*Third graders show off their drawings*

*Creating a Stimulating Learning Environment*

We also worked to make small improvements at Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam. In June 2007, we painted the school's desks and chairs in bright primary colors. At the suggestion of Principal Narayanasamy, we selected five colors, one for each grade. Several laborers from the estate also volunteered to assist, and the result is a cheerful and colorful environment.





My husband Puny Gunawardena did most of the sanding; our friend Mana Samarasinghe and his family came along to help out; and I also chipped in once the art workshop was completed. Principal Narayanasamy used remaining paints to brighten up the school's water tank and taps.



*Students pose in the now colorful classroom*



*Yogeswary has a wash*

On our numerous trips to the school, we also brought books, games and sporting equipment for the children.



*playing carom*



*Kalairaj at bat*

I would also like to thank our friend Thusitha Ranasinghe, owner of Maximus (Pvt) Ltd., a paper manufacturing company in Colombo. Last year, he donated exercise books (notebooks) to Andaragasyaya Vidyalaya. Likewise, this year he donated 500 exercise books for Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam, and has promised to continue doing so for the duration of our project.

### **What's Next?**

I'm pleased to report that Principal Narayanasamy informs me that attendance at Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam has increased from around 50% to nearly 100% since our programs began. He's extremely pleased to see the children more alert and eager to do well in school, and sends his thanks to all of you for helping him realize his goals for improving the school.

So where do we go from here?

1. We need your support for our ongoing programming at Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam! This year, we'll be raising funds to continue our nutrition program and the salary for Mr. Ajumain. We hope to find 40 generous individuals willing to commit \$10/month to sustain our efforts.
2. Lynn Staley and I will be working this semester with student organizations at UMSL to raise funds for additional programming at Macaldeniya. For example, we hope to hold a Sponsor-a-Student campaign to purchase school supplies for each of the children, patterned on the successful campaign spearheaded by student coordinator Mary Ann Coker in 2006 for Andaragasyaya Vidyalaya. Keep an eye out for our campus events!
3. Principal Narayanasamy is eager to install a computer room at the school. Estate owner Mr. Radhakrishnan has committed to build the computer room if we raise the funds necessary to purchase computers. For every \$300 we raise, we'll be able to purchase a basic computer system for the school. So that's yet another project we'll be undertaking this year.

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

UM-St. Louis Sri Lankan Educational Fund  
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. Thank you for all of your support!

*Jody Miller, Project Coordinator*

### ***OPERATION TEARDROP CAMPAIGN***

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