

## UMSL Tsunami Reconstruction Project/Operation Teardrop Campaign Winter 2008 Update

Thank you for your continued support of the UM-St. Louis Tsunami Reconstruction Project and Operation Teardrop Campaign. We had a very successful fall campaign, and accomplished much over the winter break! We concentrated our efforts on Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam, a primary school on a tea estate in the central hills of Sri Lanka. Here's what we've been up to:

### Pen Pal Programs and More!

Students at Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam now have pen pals in schools in Kirkwood MO, Iowa City IA, and Norfolk NE! In fact, Mrs. Swalina's fourth grade class at North Glendale Elementary decided being pen pals wasn't enough—they collected a suitcase full of goodies for me to deliver to their Sri Lankan friends. As a result, each student at Macaldeniya received their own Beanie Baby, and the school received books and first aid supplies. This semester, the entire North Glendale student body will participate in continued fundraising efforts!



*Mrs. Swalina's fourth grade class <sup>1</sup>*



*Macaldeniya students enjoy their presents*



<sup>1</sup> Photo by Rick Graefe, *Kirkwood-Webster Journal*

## Fundraising & Its Accomplishments

Thanks to Tau Sigma Honor Society and Professor Lynn Staley's Business Writing classes, who held fundraisers on UMSL's campus during the fall semester. Extra special thanks also goes to MoKaBe's Coffeehouse in St. Louis: our delicious brunch fundraiser on December 2<sup>nd</sup> raised \$2,000 for Macaldeniya!



*Jody & UMSL student volunteers Clifton Glore, Jodi Whitworth, and Amy Razeghi at MoKaBe's*



*Vice Chancellor Peggy Cohen (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) & friends*

*The CCJ Department shows its support*



Among other things, we used these funds to purchase school uniforms, socks, and shoes for each student at the school. In an effort to contribute to the local economy, we purchased the fabric for the uniforms in Colombo, and hired a local tailor (*left*) near Macaldeniya to stitch them.

Thanks also to our friends Javid and Imtiaz Hamid in Sri Lanka, who shopped for days to find affordable socks and shoes at wholesale prices. It was only due to their efforts that we were able to buy shoes for all of the Macaldeniya students, including the 17 students newly-enrolled for the 2008 school year.

## Dental Hygiene Project

Inspired by Mrs. Swalina's 4<sup>th</sup> graders, who expressed concern for Macaldeniya students' access to dental care, my amazing friend Marilyn Morton purchased a toothbrush and tube of toothpaste for each of the 80 children at Macaldeniya Tamil Vidyalayam. The vast majority of students had not used toothbrushes before, so Macaldeniya Principal Raja is holding daily lessons for a month to teach them proper dental hygiene before sending the toothbrushes and toothpaste home with them. The children are enthusiastic learners.



*Principal Raja holds his first tooth brushing lesson*



*Kaushalya & Madushika concentrate*



*Nirosha & Dhanukrishanthini have fun*



*Roshanthan gives his tongue a vigorous brush*

## Arts & Crafts and Other Fun

My CCJ/IWGS colleague Kristin Carbone-Lopez sent along arts & crafts projects for the students at Macaldeniya. Girls and boys both enjoyed making colorful bead necklaces during our January arts & crafts workshop.



*Yashotha at work*



*Sivashakthi*



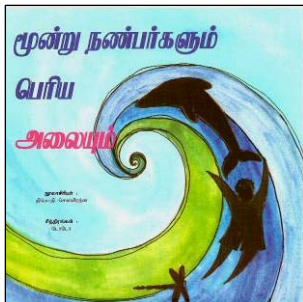
*Manivannan*



*Sashikala & Yashotha*



*From left: Mahakrishna, Priyadharshan, Gurukumar, Shathiswaran, & Jayakumar*



Thanks also to my CCJ colleague Finn Esbensen for donating calculators for each Macaldeniya student, and friends Ameena Hussein and Sam Perera of Perera-Hussein Publishing House in Sri Lanka for donating 100 Tamil language children's storybooks. As Sam explained, "every child should own their own book."

## Macaldeniya School Garden

Generous colleagues and gardening lovers Karen Heimer and Joe Lang at the University of Iowa—whose daughters participate in one of our pen pal projects—donated funds to create a school garden at Macaldeniya. Estate owner Mr. Radhakrishnan hired laborers to clear and terrace a large plot of land for the garden. Third-, Fourth- and Fifth-Graders will grow a variety of vegetables. Some of the harvest will be given to the young gardeners, and the balance will be sold at weekend vegetable fairs to raise additional funds for the school.



*Before*



*In Progress*

The project was still in progress when I returned from Sri Lanka in January. Lots of goats roam the estate and school grounds, eating anything in their path. Thus, before the children can begin planting, it's necessary to install a gate and fence. By the time I return in May, the first harvest should be at hand. We surprised Karen and Joe to thank them for their generosity by designing a gate in their names. When complete, it will be painted in bright primary colors to match the school playground we installed in the summer of 2007.



*Pesky but cute, goats regularly wander the school grounds*



*Macaldeniya garden gate, in progress*

## Macaldeniya Has Its First Computer

When I returned from Sri Lanka in Fall 2007, I requested donations to purchase computers for the school. Thanks again to Karen Heimer and Joe Lang, and to criminologist Jean Bottcher, for generous donations for the purchase of two computer systems and a printer. We purchased the first of these in January, and it was installed in Principal Raja's office. We are awaiting Education Ministry classroom repairs before making the remaining purchases.



## Art Workshop & Upcoming Gallery Visio Exhibition

**Save the dates!** From May 8<sup>th</sup> to June 26<sup>th</sup>, we'll be having an exhibition of Macaldeniya children's art at UMSL's Gallery Visio. In December, we held an art workshop for the Macaldeniya schoolchildren in which they were provided with mirrors and asked to create self portraits. This workshop was made possible by the generous donations of UMSL's Golden Key International Honor Society at Mary Ann Coker's initiative. Marilyn Morton also donated art supplies for the project, and Chakra (Pvt), Ltd—a recycled paper manufacturing company in Sri Lanka—donated handmade paper boards for the children's artwork.



*Selvianthi & Najeswari*



*Yashotha & Sashikala*



*Shathiswaran with his self-portrait*



*Sivashakthi with her self-portrait*



*Udayaraj*



*Yogaswary*



*Mohanraj*

While the older students created mixed-media self portraits on paper, the younger children drew their self portraits on fabric. These will be used to create one-of-a-kind quilts. Both sets of artwork will be available for purchase at the Gallery Visio exhibition.



*Chamili and Lakshika*



*Thilageswary & Dhanukrishanthani*



*Dhanoshan*



*Madushika*



*Dinesh*

In keeping with the spirit of Chakra (Pvt) Ltd.'s "green" goals, part of the proceeds from the exhibition will be used to create a recycling program at Macaldeniya. Children will receive educational training on the environment and will be given incentives to recycle at home and in school.

### What's Next?

We will continue to hold fundraising activities on campus this semester, and I'll send updates about these events as plans are finalized. In the meantime, we need further support to continue our ongoing nutrition program and other school activities. In addition, if—like many of the generous individuals you're read about here—you have a specific idea for a project or program you would like to fund at the school, don't hesitate to contact me to discuss it further. All of us can work together to make a significant difference in the lives of Macaldeniya's children.

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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