

## **THEO Speaks....**

*Monthly Newsletter from THEO (Foundation for children with special needs)*

*Issue No. 2 November 2011*

THEO is a registered Trust that aims to reach out to Special Children studying in Special Schools. It tries to fulfil their needs such as payment of school fees, hostel fees, expenses related to occupational therapy and physiotherapy, purchase and supply of orthopaedic aids and appliances such as crutches, splints, wheel chairs etc.

THEO also facilitates interaction between the special children and interested volunteers.

THEO speaks... is a monthly newsletter published to create awareness about the needs of special children and for reporting the monthly activities of the organisation.

## **Personality of the month**

This section is an attempt to familiarise personalities in the welfare field. The

personality of this month is Ms. Padma

Venkataraman, a well-known social activist.

The daughter of former President of India

Dr. R. Venkataraman, she has long been a

leading figure in the national fight against

leprosy and its resulting stigma. She is a Trustee

with Global Cancer Concern, India, Vice

President, WIA, Patron, Gandhi Peace

Foundation, Madras, Board Member,

Rising Star Outreach, Board Member- National

Forum.

Read on for an interview with

Ms. Padma Venkataraman:

1. Mam, tell us about yourself....

\* I was born and educated in Chennai.

I did my schooling at Children's Garden

Higher Secondary School and Triplicane

Girls High School. I majored in Economics

from Stella Maris College. Prior to my

partnership with Rising Star, I lived for many

years in Vienna, Austria.

2. Tell us about the work you are doing....

\* I have been active in grassroots work in

leprosy rehabilitation for more than 15 years. I

was Honorary Director of a FAO/All- India

Women's Conference Project for leprosy patients

in the 4000 strong Shahdara Colony in Delhi;

and worked with HOPE WORLDWIDE to

construct houses for 800 families there. For

over 5 years I was Honorary Director of a major

Tamil Nadu wide DANIDA-funded leprosy

rehabilitation project under the auspices of the

Women's Indian Association, Chennai. The most

important part of the project was the provision

of micro-credit to residents of 10 Government

rehabilitation homes and 31 colonies.

Subsequently a residential home and a school for

the children of leprosy affected people were also

constructed.

3. Any projects/dreams for future?

\* I would like to start a community based

rehabilitation project to prevent formation of

colonies among leprosy affected people. I would

also like to reach out to them in a major way

and initiate income generation activities for

them.

4. Anything you would like to say to the public?

\* Most of us think social work is time consuming

and meant only for a few. But all of us can do

our share. We can help the children of our

households with their studies. We can plant

trees. In many countries abroad separating

biodegradable and non biodegradable waste

started about twenty years back but in India it

is still to catch up. Rather than waiting for the

government to bring out any regulation in this

regard we can start doing such things voluntarily.

Thank you mam...it was great talking to you...!

