Vision-Aid presents a non-profit serving the visually disadvantaged

Madurai R Muralidaran’s Thematic Bharatanatyam presentation

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SHAKTHI
The Essence of Empowered Women

August 2nd, 2020
4 P.M

Presented by NewEngland Dance Teachers & students

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Our heartfelt thanks to the many artists who donated their incredibly colorful, expressive and beautiful paintings for the virtual auction to benefit Vision-Aid:
August 2020

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito and I would like to welcome you to this year’s “virtual” Vision-Aid Celebration.

Vision-Aid continues, year after year, to work relentlessly on behalf of the visually impaired. Vision-Aid’s dedication to the underserved in the Commonwealth is both inspiring and telling of its central mission to improve the lives of the visually impaired. This year, a group of sixty dance teachers and schools from across the Greater Boston area will be performing “Shakthi- The Essence of Empowered women”, produced by Sri Madurai R. Muralidaran.

Lieutenant Governor Polito and I would like to thank all of those joining online for supporting this worthy cause. Together, we can improve the lives of the underserved. Enjoy the show!

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Harvard Pilgrim Health Care is proud to support Shakthi - The Essence of Empowered Women.
Congratulations to Revathy Ramakrishna, Co-Founder of Vision-Aid, for being chosen as “The Woman of the Year 2019”

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Thanks to the leadership team and volunteers for your dedication and commitment to enable those who suffer from vision related disabilities in under-served areas.

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Sakti [Shakthi] means “power”; in Hindu philosophy and theology sakti is understood to be the active dimension of the godhead, the divine power that underlies the godhead's ability to create the world and to display itself. Within the totality of the godhead, sakti is the complementary pole of the divine tendency toward quiescence and stillness. It is quite common, furthermore, to identify sakti with a female being, a goddess, and to identify the other pole with her male consort.

The term Shakthi refers to multiple ideas. Its general definition is dynamic energy that is responsible for creation, maintenance, and destruction of the universe. It is identified as female energy because Shakthi is responsible for creation, as mothers are responsible for birth. Without Shakthi, nothing in this universe would happen; she stimulates siva, which is passive energy in the form of consciousness, to create. Ardhanarishvara, a Hindu deity who is half male and half female, is an iconic representation of this idea. The deity is equally male and female, illustrating that the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the universe is dependent on both forces.

Shakthi also refers to the manifestations of this energy, namely goddesses. Some goddesses embody the destructive aspects of Shakthi, such as death, degeneration, and illness, while other goddesses embody the creative and auspicious powers of Shakthi, such as nature, the elements, music, art, dance, and prosperity. Shakthi may be personified as the gentle and benevolent Uma, consort of Shiva, or Kali, the terrifying force destroying evil, or Durga, the warrior who conquers forces that threaten the stability of the universe. Worshippers of Goddesses often view their deity as the all-powerful Supreme Being, second not even to a male god. There are enduring goddess traditions all over India, especially in West Bengal and south India. Goddesses symbolising various aspects of power very often predominate in village culture. Village men, women, and children, when they pray for immediate needs, address a female, not a male.

**Program**

**Pushpanjali - An offering of flowers to Shakthi**

*Pushpanjali - Composed by Shri Madurai R. Muralidaran in Ragam Hamsanadham & Talam Tisra Dhruvam*

To set the energy of the mind; To save the energy of the body; To earn the energy from the almighty. To surrender to the supreme energy - All this and much more is the “Shakthi”

**Sri Saraswathi - The Embodiment of Knowledge, Music, Art and Learning**

Sri Saraswathi is a song in praise of the Goddess of Wisdom, Saraswathi, who is depicted as a beautiful woman dressed in pure white seated on a white lotus, symbolizing light, knowledge and truth, revered by Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Shiva the Destroyer.

Goddess Saraswathi’s four hands hold items with symbolic meaning — a book, a rosary or garland, a water pot and a musical instrument called Veena. The book she holds symbolizes the Vedas representing the divine, eternal, knowledge as well as all forms of learning. The rosary or garland of crystals, represents the power of meditation, inner reflection, and spirituality. The pot of water represents the purifying power to separate right from wrong, the clean from the unclean, and essential from the inessential. The Veena represents all creative arts and sciences and symbolizes knowledge that creates harmony.

*Sri Saraswathi - Composed by Shri Muthuswami Dikshitar in Ragam Arabhi & Talam Rupakam*

**Jathiswaram - The Pulsating Stream of Energy**

Jathiswaram is a pure dance piece that takes on the mood of the ragam in which it is set. The jathiswaram is often equated to the pulsating flow of a stream. No matter what obstacles come along the way, the flow might take a little diversion but will always come back and join the mainstream. The lyrical beauty of this music composition coupled with scintillating jathis and the choreography speaks to it all.

*Jathiswaram - Composed by Shri Madurai R. Muralidaran in Ragam Pantuvarali & Talam Jathi Dhruvam*

**Ulla Kumaralgal - The Irrepressible Spirit of a Young Maiden**

During adolescence, there are a number of cognitive, emotional, physical and attitudinal changes that provide the basis for personality development. Teenagers are in an important transitional stage where they naturally try to break free from their parents and seek out new ways of doing things for themselves. They never worry about their choice of friends. These self-built relationships can actually help them develop skills such as empathy, sharing and leadership, and have a positive impact on them in terms of academic motivation and aspirations. Maintaining an open dialogue is important at this age and it is crucial that an adolescent be able to talk openly about their new experiences and concerns. A young maiden shares her thoughts and feelings about the changes in her body and mind and laments that no one from her family understands or empathizes with her.

*Ulla Kumaralgal- Composed by Shri Madurai R. Muralidaran in Ragam Nasika Bhushani & Talam Adi*
Amma Kavithuvam - Ode to the Selfless Unconditional Love of a Mother

What can one say about the unconditional love of a mother towards a child? A mother is the epitome of selfless love and sacrifices and demonstrates with her every action the true meaning of love, compassion, and selflessness. The composer acknowledges the debt of gratitude one owes a mother by saying

"Mother, my very first show of respect is to you who gave me the gift of birth into this world.

Even when you forgot to eat, you would feed me; even when you forgot to sleep, you would play with me; even when you forgot your own needs, you would comfort me and even if you forget this earth, you have never forgotten me, your child.

For nine months you carried me in your womb, and with the purest affection you showered me with attention day and night; you nursed me with overflowing love, you rocked me to sleep with delight; you bathed me with care; you entertained me with joy.

All the world over, the word is the same: MA; For each human, their first word is: MA And the only way to come up in the life is through the support of: MA.

Amma Kavithuvam Composed by Shri Muralidaran in Ragam Karnaranjani & Talam Adi.

Shakthi Kavithuvam - Universal Mother, Epitome of Energy

Shakthi is about the energy that makes every aspect of life happen. It summarizes the whole activity that is life as the play of Shakthi. The lap where life flourishes is Shakthi. Shakthi also enables us to break the bondages of karma and liberate ourselves. The state of being with no suffering is Shakthi. The state of enlightenment beyond sleep is Shakthi. When love matures and sweetens, it is Shakthi. The fullness and fulfillment of masculine is Shakthi. When the sweetness matures, that is Shakthi. The divine which resides in the thoughts is Shakthi. Whatever work comes before us is Shakthi. The state of mukti, the end, is Shakthi. The finger which stops downfall is Shakthi. The one who spans the whole expanse of sky is Shakthi. Her highness who eliminates karma is Shakthi. The inner flame which shines from within is heart is Shakthi.

Shakthi Kavithuvam Composed by Shri Muralidaran in Ragam Vasantha & Talam Sankeerana Matyam.

Varnam - The Essence of the Empowered Woman

"O, woman, stand with your head held high and win the world with your single-handed determination." The powerful lyrics of this song affirm the ability of a woman to be emotionally strong under any circumstance. These motivational words are addressed to the heroine by her friends, who instill confidence in her to meet the challenges of life.

O, woman, what disturbs you and why do you feel disillusioned? Why do you suffer as if you have fallen into a furnace?

It's high time that you realize you are indeed a great and worthy individual. Even should the mountains of your life crumble, there is no need for you to feel shattered.

Your worth is priceless.

As a young girl, you roamed about blissfully, and then you grew up to be an innocent teenager. As a young maiden you entered and adorned the home of your husband, and you then became the loving and caring woman who reveled in motherhood.

Beyond all these roles, you act like a minister when advice is needed and serve as financial consultant when necessary.

You take on all these myriad roles effortlessly, with your inner beauty and charm untouched. Never let the senseless behavior of others dishearten or humiliate you. That is all the more reason to now stand with your head held high and conquer the world as an empowered woman.

You are intelligent, prosperous and determined. Others should fall at your feet.

O, woman! You are daughter, sister, wife and mother — in fact you are the mortal embodiment of Shakthi.

This piece is presented as a collaboration by the teachers and senior dancers. We hope that the message in this song reaches the heart of all the young women and girls we know, so that they approach their bright future with confidence and a sense of self-worth.

Varnam Composed by Shri Madurai R. Muralidaran in Ragam Aarabhi & Talam Sankeerana Jathi Triputa Thalam, a 13 beat cycle.

Thillana - Empowered Women Use Shakthi to Empower the Under Privileged

We conclude with a thillana, presented by danseuse Kavya Muralidharan along with some of our senior dancers. This rhythmic piece includes a verse in praise of Shakthi in the form of Goddess Lakshmi, who grants physical, emotional and spiritual prosperity to the world. May Shakthi empower each of us to help bring prosperity and peace to the world around us, and to empower the visually impaired to lead meaningful lives with independence and dignity.

Thillana Composed by Shri Madurai R. Muralidaran in Ragam Nalinakanthi, Talam Sankeerna Jathi Matyam.
Concept, Choreography, Music & Direction

Madurai R. Muralidharan is a well-known performing dancer, choreographer, composer, and musician, who has composed over 120 varnams, produced several dance dramas, composed Pushpanjalis, Alarippus, Jathiswarams, Mallaris, Varnams and Thillanas in all the 35 thalams and Jathiswarams in all 72 Melakartha ragas, unprecedented in the field of Bharathanatyam. His musical compositions, over the years have travelled the length and breadth of the world.

Kavyalakshmi Muralidaran, a child prodigy, completed her arangetram when she was 8 under the guidance of her parents, Gurus Madurai R. Muralidaran & Smt. Chitra Muralidaran. She has toured all over the world and given solo and group performances apart from performing at premiere dance festivals and prominent sabhas in India. She majored in Visual Communications in Chennai and feels honored to participate in Vision-Aid’s Production.

Artistic Directors

Jeyanthi Ghatraju, a Bharatanatyam dancer and choreographer with a mission to perform for charity, has been an Artistic Director of Vision-Aid productions since 2009. She offers online Certificate and Degree Programs in Performing Arts through her affiliation with Alagappa Performing Arts Academy through her dance school, Natyanjali, which celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 2019. She was awarded the coveted US Presidential Gold Service Award in 2013 and 2018 for her community service and is a recipient of Massachusetts Cultural Council grants in 2019 and 2020.

Sujatha Meyyappan is an acclaimed Bharatanatyam dancer, choreographer and Artistic Director of Kolam Academy of Dance in Tyngsboro, MA and Andover, MA. She has produced shows like Bharathy Natyam, Shivoham, Kavi Nrithyam, Venil Virsha, Omkaram and Velum Veikuzhalum. She has participated and co-produced fundraisers for many charitable causes including Vision-Aid since 2009. She is an active member of Tyngsboro Cultural Council serving the community.

Director of Vision-Aid Production

Thenu Raajan, the creative director, choreographer and instructor of Apsaras Academy of Arts in Bellingham, MA, has received accolades in India, Singapore and USA for her performances. She frequently performs for various charitable dance fundraisers including Vision-Aid. In 2011, Thenu Raajan received the Excellence award from Lokvani e-magazine for being a dedicated dancer in the New England area.

Marishakti Muthuswamy, is the artistic director of the Bharatanatyam school, “Anvita Natyalaya” in Newton, MA, received training in Bharatanatyam from Guru Sri Kalaimamani S.K. Kameswaran & Natya Tilakam Smt. Saroja Kameshwaran and has performed in many fundraisers, productions and temple festivals in India and in the US.

Hema Iyengar, an acclaimed Bharatanatyam dancer, is the Founder of Nritya-Anjali School of Dance and Co-Founder of Center for Arts and Wellness in Westboro, MA, with a vision to provide the community with a wider array of classical, applied art classes as well as wellness related services under a single roof. She works full time in a healthcare company, and has worked in Vision-Aid productions since 2009.

Dhanashree Karmakar is a Bharatanatyam teacher, dancer, choreographer, performing for the past 20 years. A full time Lead Montessori Teacher, she also founded Nritya Sadhana Bharatnatyam School of Dance www.dancedhanashree.com, to teach and preserve the heritage of Bharatnatyam. She has performed for several fund raising productions, Diversity & Cultural programs organized by the Office of Mayor of Boston.

Senior Dancers & Mentors

Adhithi Venkatesan, a rising senior at Nashua High School South, learns Bharatanatyam from Guru Sujatha Meyyappan and is an assistant teacher for the Kolam Academy of Dance. She has performed all over the New England Area, in temples and competitions and recently performed at the Dhimahi Festival in Chennai with her sister (Ananya) in 2018 organized by Guru Madurai R. Muralidharan. She is excited about her 5th Vision-Aid production!
Ananya Venkatesan, a rising junior at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, learns Bharatanatyam from Guru Sujatha Meyyappan and is an assistant teacher for the Kolam Academy of Dance. In 2018, Ananya successfully completed a margam in the Kanda Matyam Talam with her sister (Adhithi) at the Dhimahi Festival in Chennai under the guidance of Madurai R. Muralidharan. She is excited about her 7th Vision-Aid production!

Anjanadevi Govindaraj, a rising senior at Nashua High School North, has completed her Bharatanatyam & Mohiniyattam arangetrams in 2017 with her Guru Sheetal Dwaraka. Post arangetram, she has been taking advanced lessons from Guru Jothi Raghavan at the Nrityanjali School of Dance and has been performing in her productions. Anjana has participated in national dance competitions and the Chennai music and arts festival. She is proud to perform in Murali Sir’s productions for Vision-Aid for the 5th year in a row!

Chitanya Gopu completed her Master’s degree at Carnegie Mellon University and is working in environmental engineering. She completed her arangetram in 2013 with Sripriya Nararajan Moorthy and is now an assistant teacher at her dance school Abhinaya Natyashala. She has been involved with Vision-Aid productions since 2010, and is excited to be a part of the production as well as helping the younger dancers learn and improve.

Neha Pillai is a recent graduate from the University of Massachusetts Amherst with a double major in Actuarial Science & Statistics. She completed her arangetram in 2012 under the guidance of Guru Jeyanthi Ghatraju and obtained a certificate in Bharatanatyam from Alagappa Performing Arts Academy. She joined the Vision-Aid family in 2010 and is thrilled to be a part of the production this year.

Priyanka Joshi, a rising sophomore at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, is pursuing a degree in biomedical engineering. She completed her arangetram in 2019 under Smt. Sripriya Natarajan Moorthy's tutelage, and is now an assistant teacher at the Abhinaya Natyashala. Priyanka is so excited to be working for the amazing cause of Vision-Aid since 2017 and loves helping the younger dancers with their pieces.

Shilpa Narayanan, a recent graduate from the University of Connecticut with a double major in Biological Sciences & Psychology, works in anesthesia clinical research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. She completed her arangetram in 2013 and continues to learn from Guru Sujatha Meyyappan. Shilpa began her Vision-Aid journey in 2012 and has performed at
With Best Compliments from
Vision-Aid began its work with a modest set of services in one location in India in 2004 (In Vizag). By 2020, thanks to support from many donors and volunteers, programs now span across 11 different locations in India, offering a wide range of much needed services in some of India's largest vision-care settings and blind schools with many of the beneficiaries being from the poorest segment of society.

Vision-Aid has developed an innovative resource center model which can be implemented at scale, as more funding becomes available and we hope to keep expanding the network of resource centers in coming years, with your help and support.

Our Mission
Vision-Aid's mission is to enable, educate and empower the visually impaired to lead their lives with independence and dignity.

Our Vision
Vision-Aid's vision is to facilitate the creation of a network of resource centers in every major eye hospital and blind school in India. (The leadership team fully realizes that the long-term vision outlined here is an ambitious one in terms of its scope and reach but with your support we will do it!)

Vision-Aid Programs at work across India

Vision-Aid's innovative work and model, including low-cost assistive devices, have received National and International awards including:

- 2019 Woman of the Year award to Vision-Aid Co-founder Revathy Ramakrishna
- 2019 Derek Bok Public Service award to Vision-Aid Founder Ramakrishna Raju
- NASEOH BJ Modi Award
- India NGO Award
- NCPEDP Universalized Award
- IIT Kharagpur Distinguished Service Award
- Rockefeller Bellagio Award
- NASSCOM Finalist Award(s)
- DSIR TePP Innovator Award
- DSIR PRISM Innovator Award

Vision-Aid programs at work in 2020 – Featured Partners
(for a full list please visit www.visionaid.org)

Visakhapatnam, Telangana
(Vision-Aid programs started 2004)
Vision Aid Charitable Services Society (VACS) in Vizag is the flagship partner for Vision-Aid USA. It operates a center in Dwarkanagar, Visakhapatnam, offering 4 comprehensive courses in Computer Applications for the visually impaired. The Vizag team also offers training camps in surrounding blind schools and delivers online classes that are streamed to several remote locations. VACS also researches and assembles low cost assistive devices and has won several national awards for its innovative inventions – the Camera Mouse, Camera Cat and Vision Wand. In 2019, VACS added a new residential scholarship program wherein visually impaired students can stay for six-months in a residential setting for deep skills training.

Chennai, India (Sankara Netralaya)
The Vision-Aid Resource Center at Sankara Netralaya, Chennai was launched in December 2018, and is off to a flying start in both the low vision functions which operate inside the main Sankara Netralaya facility in Chennai, and a dedicated resource center in Shenoy Nagar which offers a range of comprehensive interventions.
Agra, Uttar Pradesh (Vision-Aid programs started 2018)
Vision-Aid started work in Agra with the Lui Braille Blind school, where a new computer center was installed, solar power was provided for the whole school and spoken English classes were taught. In 2020, Vision-Aid is setting up an independent resource center in collaboration with the Radha Swamy Blind School in Agra. The center will offer a range of comprehensive services to the visually impaired in the Agra-Mathura region. The center is generously supported with a grant from the Vivek and Vandana Sharma Foundation of MA, USA.

Berhampur, Odisha (Vision-Aid programs started 2015)
Milton Charitable Foundation for The Visually Handicapped is a volunteer-driven, non-profit working for the welfare of the poor and down trodden, visually handicapped children and adults. Their center is located at Berhampur of Ganjam district Odisha. Starting in 2015, Vision-Aid began delivering courses in computer education to students at Milton School. Vision-Aid also supports vocational skills like candle making and incense sticks making for the blind.

Madurai, Tamil Nadu (Aravind Eye Hospital)
In January 2019, Vision-Aid launched the Vision-Aid National Resource center for the visually impaired in the main campus of Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai. Aravind is the world’s largest eye care provider, with a global reputation for providing highest quality care to the poorest segment of patients in a sustainable manner. The new national resource center has 7 rooms and offers a wide range of interventions customized to visually impaired of all ages – from infants to seniors.

Mangalore, Karnataka (Vision-Aid programs started 2013)
Seva Bharathi, a non-profit volunteer-driven service organization was set up in 1991 to help people in distress. Vision-Aid works with Seva Bharathi’s Roman & Catherine Lobo School for the Blind to offer computer training to school students as well as other local visually impaired residents in the area.

Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh (Vision-Aid programs started 2017)
Vision-Aid started specialized computer training programs at Nethra Vidyalaya, a non-profit, which provides education for blind in India and is a part of the Jeeyar Educational Trust (JET). Nethra Vidyalaya provides educational programs from primary level to high school, junior & senior college, where hundreds of blind students are being trained every year. Vision-Aid and Nethra has established a new training facility where Nethra’s students learn from Vision-Aid’s standardized computer curriculum as well as take advantage of Vision-Aid’s specialized education in Computer Programming and Spoken English.

A big thank you to Pranav Gill for donating a BMW Cruise Bike for the Virtual Auction to benefit Vision-Aid.
New Programs in 2020

**Lachman Dass Gupta Vision-Aid National Resource Center at Shroff Eye Hospital, Delhi**
The Shroff Eye care system is a powerhouse for eye care in the Delhi and Uttar Pradesh regions of India. In 2019, Vision-Aid joined forces with Shroff to set up a state-of-the-art National Resource Center with a comprehensive range of programs for persons with vision related disabilities. Shroff is providing a dedicated space and qualified staff. Vision-Aid is providing Shroff with the funding, equipment, devices and training and expertise to establish the first phase of a Vision-Aid Tertiary-level National Resource Center at Shroff. Work started in late 2019, and will resume in 2020, once the COVID pandemic has passed. These programs will offer high quality, free and subsidized rehabilitation as well as devices for an estimated one thousand visually impaired persons in the first year alone. This center is being established in the loving memory of Mr. Lachman Dass Gupta, by his children Ram and Meetu Gupta of Carlisle, MA, USA.

**Dr. R.S.Ayyar Vision-Aid Resource Center at CECF, Pune**
Community Eye Care Foundation (CECF) of Pune is a large, well established NGO serving the eye care needs of a large segment of the community in the Pune and Western Maharashtra regions of India. In 2020, Vision-Aid will join forces with CECF to setup a state-of-the-art primary resource center with a range of valuable core programs from the Vision-Aid model for persons with vision related disabilities. CECF will provide a dedicated space and qualified staff. Vision-Aid will provide CECF with the funding, equipment, devices and training and expertise to establish the first phase of a Vision-Aid Primary Resource Center at CECF. Work will begin in 2020, once the COVID pandemic has passed. These programs will offer high quality, free and subsidized rehabilitation as well as devices for an estimated one thousand visually impaired persons in the first year alone.

**Webinars**
To mark the momentous global “Right to Sight” Vision 2020 initiative, Vision-Aid presented a unique, online “Best Practices” webinar series in the spring and summer of 2020, focusing on several important topics in the field of Vision Impairment, Low Vision and Vision Rehabilitation. The webinar brought together experts from many locations around the world to offer best practices and share experiences in these different domains. When we started this series in March 2020, we had fewer than 25 registrations and by the end we had over 20 experts who shared their knowledge, and over 500 participants from 175+ different organizations and 15 countries who attended the series.

**Digital Accessibility Testing (Program started in August 2019)**
In summer 2019, Vision-Aid launched a program to train visually impaired students from all over India, in the field of Accessibility Testing, through its online academy. This is a field which has the potential to help students find jobs in the IT sector in India, and demand for the course has been very strong. The first batch of students graduated in December 2019. As proof of the value of this training, the Digital Accessibility Testing Team already has a paid contract to conduct accessibility testing for a client’s website. Vision-Aid will be launching a new Digital Accessibility Testing Center in fall 2020. This center will offer a comprehensive range of resources for Digital Accessibility Testing, following leading international standards, trained and certified staff and state-of-the-art processes, technology and tools to deliver the highest quality results for our customers. The center will also offer employment to graduates of Vision-Aid’s training programs.

**Residential Scholarship program**
Vision-Aid is excited to announce a new initiative for under-privileged visually impaired students in India – A scholarship created in the loving memory of Dr. Badar and Mariam Maskati of Mumbai. The scholarship fund to cover all the costs for such students (such as travel, technology needs, assistive devices, including a smartphone, board, lodging and training), to undergo extensive residential skills training for 6 months in the field of Computer Applications, Mobile Technologies, Coaching to help them succeed in Banking and Government sector exams and Spoken English/Soft Skills. The scholarship fund will enable, educate and empower the 10 selected visually impaired students starting in July this year. The scholarship awards are offered on a merit-cum-need basis. These scholarships are intended for visually impaired students from rural, semi-urban and under-privileged backgrounds that are likely to succeed in this rigorous training program and reach their full potential. Initially, the target area is the greater Visakhapatnam (Vizag) region, but is likely to expand to other areas, where Vision-Aid operates centers.
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Pushpanjali - An offering of flowers to Shakthi

Aanya Challuri is a rising 5th grader and a student of Guru Sujatha Meyyappan. She is very excited to be a part of her 1st Vision-Aid production. She was inspired to learn Bharatanatyam when she watched a Vision-Aid production 3 years ago.

Aarna Mahadevan, a rising 3rd grader, started learning Bharatanatyam at the age of 5 from Guru Sujatha Meyyappan. This will be her first year participating in a Vision-Aid production and she is really excited to be part of it.

Anamika Nair, a 5th grader, has been learning Bharatanatyam for the past 4 years. A first timer with Vision-Aid, she is able to participate because the production is remote this year. She is thrilled for the opportunity, especially to pair with her cousin, Avantika.

Anika Nambiar, a 4th grader, has been learning Bharatanatyam from Guru Sripriya Natarajan Moorthy. Dance being her passion, she is delighted to participate in a Vision-Aid production and all the artists to support a noble cause for the 2nd year in a row.

Avantika Nair, a 5th grader, has been learning Bharatanatyam from Guru Sripriya Moorthy for more than 5 years now. This is her first time with a Vision-Aid production and she is very excited to be part of this group.

Kaiyal Kumaran is a rising 4th grader who enjoys and learns dance from Smt. Kalpana Balachundhar. She also loves tennis and singing and is very proud to participate in her 2nd Vision-Aid production.

Prisha Nambiar, a rising 6th grader at the Ashland Middle School, has been learning Bharatanatyam dance from Hema Iyengar of Nritya-Anjali School of Dance. She hopes to carry her enthusiasm into her 3rd Vision-Aid production.

Sanvi Reddy has been learning Bharatanatyam for 3 years, with the recent 2 years under Guru Sripriya Natarajan Moorthy. This is her first year in a Vision-Aid production and she is very excited to be part of this production.

Sri Saraswathi - The Embodiment of Knowledge, Music, Art and Learning


Aarya Atale, a 6th grader from Lexington, is really passionate about dance and learns from Smt. Kalpana Balachundhar. Some of her other interests include art, swimming and animals. She has come a long way in the field of dance which is now an indispensable part of her life. She's looking forward to the Vision-Aid 2020 performance!

Adhiti Hariram, a rising 6th grader, has been learning Bharatanatyam for 6 years - initially from Mrs. Neena Gulati and currently from Smt. Kalpana Balachundhar. Singing is her other passion. She is very happy to be part of Vision-Aid's production for the first time.

Ashvitha Eyalarasan, a rising 7th grader from Lexington, learns Bharatanatyam from Smt. Kalpana Balachundhar of Chandra School of Dance. She is also a pianist, softball player and loves reading. She is very excited to be participating in her 2nd Vision-Aid production.
Eesha Gangal, a rising 8th grader in Lexington, has been learning Bharatanatyam from Smt. Neena Gulati at the Triveni School Of Dance. She is excited to participate in her first Vision-Aid production and appreciates the opportunity to dance for a good cause.

Gayatri Chaturvedi, a prospective 8th grader, has been learning Bharatanatyam from Smt. Sripriya Natarajan Moorthy for over 6 years and is excited to participate in her first Vision-Aid production. She also enjoys Hindustani classical singing and horse-riding.

Harini Jeyaraman, a rising 5th grader, has been learning Bharatanatyam from Smt Sujatha Meyyappan for the past 3 years. She is excited to participate in her first Vision-Aid event. Harini loves baking, painting, and gymnastics.

Katya Scaria, a rising sophomore at Framingham High School, has been learning Bharatanatyam from Smt. Sripriya Natarajan Moorthy for over 9 years. She is very excited to be participating in her first Vision-Aid production.

Gayatri Chaturvedi, a rising 7th grader, has been learning Bharatanatyam from Smt. Sripriya Natarajan Moorthy for over 6 years. She enjoys playing the piano and baking desserts. She is very excited to be part of a Vision-Aid production for the first time.

Siddhi Talekar is a devoted Bharatanatyam student of Mrs. Neena Gulati at the Triveni School of Dance for the past 6+ years. This rising grader is overjoyed to join a Vision-Aid production for the first time and dance for a cause.

Jathiswaram - The Pulsating Stream of Energy

Abhilasha Banka, Amal Balachundhur, Chetana Yella, Kaavya Kumaran, Praksitha Rajasekaran, Sheethal Udupa, Sonia Lakshmanan, Vaidehi Moorthy, Viritha Reddy

Abhilasha Banka, a rising freshman at Lexington High School, has been learning dance for 8 years from Smt. Kalpana Balachundhar. She also enjoys outdoor activities, baking and field hockey and is very excited to be participating in her 2nd Vision-Aid production.

Amal Balachundhur, a rising 6th grader in Lexington, learns dance from his mother, Smt. Kalpana Balachundhar. Amal is very passionate about music and arts.

Chetana Yella, a rising fifth grader, learns Bharatanatyam from Smt.Sujatha Meyyappan. This is her first time participating in a Vision-Aid production and she had an amazing experience with Murlidaran Sir & Kavya Murlidharan. She also loves to sing and read books.

Kaavya Kumaran, a rising freshman at Winchester High School, enjoys learning dance from Smt. Kalpana Balachundhar. She also loves volleyball and gymnastics and is very excited to be in her 2nd Vision-Aid production.

Praksitha Rajasekaran, a rising 8th grader at Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School, learns dance from Smt. Thenu Raja-jan. She is also proud about placing 6th nationally in a French Contest and travelling to Calgary, Canada as part of a student conference.

Sheethal Udupa, a rising 6th grader, learns Bharatanatyam from Smt. Sripriya Natarajan Moorthy. She enjoys playing basketball & reading books. She has won several Math contest awards. She is excited about participating in her 1st Vision-Aid production.

Sonia Lakshmanan, a 7th grader at Winchester High School, learns dance from Smt. Kalpana Balachundhar and enjoys performing. Sonia has a Black Belt in Taekwondo, and leverages demanding physical training for Taekwondo to build stamina for dance.

Vaidehi Moorthy, a rising freshman, learns Bharatanatyam from Smt. Sripriya Natarajan Moorthy. She is grateful to participate in her 6th Vision-Aid production under Guru Muralidaran.

Viritha Reddy, a rising freshman, learns dance from Smt. Kalpana Balachundhar. This is her 2nd time performing in a Vision-Aid production. She also enjoys drawing and playing volleyball.

Ulla Kumarargal - The Irrepressible Spirit of a Young Maiden

Arya Swamy, Ashmita Boopathy, Disha Surajiwale, Janya Utkarsh, Lara Scaria, Neha Rajesh, Nishi Manikandan, Shefali Bakre
Arya Swamy, a rising junior at North Andover High School, has been a disciple of Smt. Jeyanthi Ghatraju for 11 years. She has also completed a certificate program in Bharatanatyam from Alagappa Performing Arts Academy.

Ashmita Boopathy, a rising eighth grader at Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School, is a student of Smt. Thenu Raaajan. She is thankful to have this wonderful art in her life and this is her second year participating in a Vision-Aid production. She enjoys playing tennis and volleyball.

Disha Surajiwale is a rising senior at Billerica Memorial High School, and has been learning Bharatanatyam from Guru Ranjani Saigal for the past 13 years. This will be her 4th time performing in a Vision-Aid production.

Janya Utkarsh, a rising at Lexington High School, learns Bharatanatyam from Smt. Kalpana Balachundhar. She also enjoys playing volleyball, participating in theatre, and singing. A member of an all-girls a cappella group and an honors chorus at her school, she is very excited about her first Vision-Aid production.

Lara Scaria, a recent graduate of Framingham High School, will be attending Brandeis University in the fall. She learns Bharatanatyam from Smt. Sripry Naataraj Moorthy and is very excited to be participating in her first Vision-Aid production.

Neha Rajesh, a rising Sophomore at North Allegheny School, Pittsburgh PA, has been a disciple of Smt. Shobhitha Ravi for the past 7 years. She enjoys playing the flute and competing in track and field. She has performed in multiple dance events and is very excited to be participating in her 1st Vision-Aid production.

Nishi Manikandan, a rising senior at Hopkinton High School, has been learning Bharatanatyam from Smt. Thenu Raajan. She loves to cook and bake and also enjoys drawing and painting. She is very excited to participate in her 3rd Vision-Aid production!

Shefali Bakre, a rising freshman at Burlington High School, learns Bharatanatyam from Guru Anandini Chandrasekhar. She has performed in many cultural events and has won 1st place in the Natya Rana dance competition. She is also the reigning Miss India Teen Massachusetts, and a proud Vision-Aid ambassador, and avid supporter of this great cause.

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Amma Kavithuvam - Ode to the Selfless Unconditional Love of a Mother

Aashna Diddee, Adilakshmi Gollapudi, Anjanadevi Govindaraj, Archita Nemalikanti, Bhargavi Devarajan, Mihika Abraham, Nikita Minocha, Pooja Kawatkar, Shirin Bakre, Shivani Shah, Tarika Sridhar, Sijie Wang

Aashna Diddee, a rising 10th grader at Westborough High School, learns Bharatanatyam from her teacher Hema Iyengar. She has also taken classes from Kavya Muralidharan and Shilpa Bhaskar. She is very thankful to have been a part of Vision-Aid productions for the past 4 years and is proud that she is able to help people through her dancing.

Adilakshmi Gollapudi, a biotechnology graduate and mother of two little ones, has completed a Bharatanatyam course from Kalakshetra Institute, Chennai,India. She continues to learn from Smt.Sangeetha Prasanna. She is very passionate about teaching and has trained her students to participate in various cultural events. She also enjoys Indian folk and Bollywood style of dancing and has performed widely. She also enjoys learning Carnatic music.

Anjanadevi Govindaraj’s bio is available in the Senior Dancers and Mentors section.

Archita Nemalikanti, a rising junior at Hopkinton High School, learns Bharatanatyam from Guru Sripry Natarajan Moorthy. She enjoys science research, participating in robotics, and playing the bansuri flute in her free time. She is very excited to participate in her 2nd Vision-Aid production.

Bhargavi Devarajan, an Electrical Engineer and mother of two little ones, is performing after a hiatus of five years. She is currently a disciple of Smt. Sripry Natarajan Moorthy and is thrilled to be participating in her first Vision-Aid production.

Mihika Abraham, a rising freshman at Northeastern University, learns Bharatanatyam from Guru Deepa Rajesh and completed her arangetram last year. She is so thankful for the opportunity to continue her dance education while supporting Vision-Aid. Mihika has also been teaching and choreographing Bollywood dance for the Performing Arts of New England since she was 14 years old.

Nikita Minocha graduated last year with a degree in Communications and a minor in Hospitality Administration. She learnt Bharatanatyam from Guru Ranjani Saiyal and did her arangetram in 2013, when she dedicated her performance to Vision-Aid. Nikita’s dance journey continued in college, where she was on Dheem, Boston University’s competitive classical dance
team. As a creative writer, she is fascinated by the power of words and their ability to inspire and invoke change.

Pooja Kawatkar, a rising senior at Lexington High School, learns Indian classical dance from Guru Neena Gulati. She did her arangetram in 2018 and continues to dance at multiple charity and cultural events. She also participates in different styles of dance, like Bollywood and Bhangra. She is excited to be performing in her first Vision-Aid production.

Shirin Bakre, a biomedical engineering student at Boston University, is an avid Bharatanatyam dancer and disciple of Smt. Ranjani Saigal. Shirin wants to raise awareness for good causes though her skills in this artform and thus funded a charity of her choice on the day of her arangetram, instead of receiving gifts. She has been dancing in Vision-Aid productions since she was 12, and at 20 she still finds a great deal of joy dancing and helping to Enable, Educate and Empower the visually impaired.

Shivani Shah, a rising senior at Newton North High School, has been learning Bharatanatyam from Guru Hema Iyengar and plans to complete her arangetram soon. An avid collaborator with charitable organizations, she is very grateful to be a part of Vision-Aid’s production.

Tarika Sridhar, a rising Sophomore, is very passionate about Bharatanatyam. She has been learning from her mother Guru Hema Iyengar since she was 4 years old and is also taking advanced training from Kavya Muralidharan and Shilpa Bhaskar. Tarika has been a part of Vision-Aid productions since she was 5 years old and is grateful to have been able to help Vision-Aid through her passion.

Sijie Wang is currently training in Kalakshetra style Bharatanatyam under Smt. Sangeetha Prasanna in Acton MA. She has studied with many famous teachers from India. She is a lover of dance and has studied many different dance forms. This is her first time participating in a Vision-Aid production after hearing great things about the annual event from her peers and her guru.
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