

SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE

"It is your good fortune that you have become doctors. Sacrifice is the hallmark of a true doctor. So, doctors should have the spirit of sacrifice. They should be compassionate and considerate towards the poor." *Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, January 19, 2001.*

In January 2009, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, a spiritual leader who teaches the highest ideals of truth, right conduct, peace, love, and nonviolence, welcomed the participants of the Sri Sathya Sai International Dental Conference conducted in Prashanthi Nilayam, India. The theme was "Perio-Systemic Link" and among the presenters were AzDA Members Krishnan Bala, DDS (Private Practice in General Dentistry, Sun City) and Kris Volcheck, DDS (Director, CASS Dental Clinic for Homeless Children and Adults, Phoenix).

Dr. Bala is Consultant Oral Surgeon to the Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital founded by Bhagavan in 1956. What began back then as a two-bed clinic is now a state-of-the-art 100-bed hospital capable of seeing up to 1,000 patients per day. Bhagavan has also established two additional specialty hospitals where cardiothoracic surgery, orthopedic surgery, neurosurgery, ophthalmology, urology, and cardiology are performed. Patients, who hail from socially and economically disadvantaged situations, are never charged for professional or hospital expenses. All of this is made possible by the thousands of healthcare professionals who volunteer.

Bhagavan's endeavors also include an educational system comprising primary and secondary schools and an accredited university with three campuses offering undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral

degrees. Tuition is free and admission is open to all qualified applicants regardless of race, religion, or economic standing. Students are required to take courses on morality and spirituality and to devote several hours each week to some form of community service. The Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation provides healthcare around the globe through medical camps and clinics. In 2007-2008 nearly 300 camps were conducted in 28 countries where some 157,000 patients were treated in cardiology, dentistry (including a dental clinic for blind children in Laos and a dental camp in Oregon), dermatology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, neurology, nutrition, OB/GYN, speech therapy, audiology, veterinary medicine, and more. Permanent medical and dental clinics have also been established in Vietnam, Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, El Salvador, Malaysia, and the U.S.

The Dental Conference

Dr. Bala, who has volunteered at the Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital for two weeks per year for the past 14 years, was Program Chairman for the dental conference "with the blessings

The Sri Sathya Sai International Dental Conference last January in India concluded with a tour of the Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital and an audience with its founder, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba (far right in orange robe). At lower left in green shirt, Dr. Kris Volcheck; directly behind him, Dr. Krishnan Bala.



of Bhagavan," he noted. He is also a longtime volunteer at the CASS dental clinic, currently supervising third- and fourth-year dental students every other week. He invited Dr. Volcheck to accompany him to India for the dental conference and together they presented a seminar on "Service in Hometown USA."

Explained Dr. Bala: "With barely any funding, a few volunteers, and in a relatively short time, Dr. Volcheck built from scratch a full-service, state-of-the-art, eight-operator dental practice that serves the disadvantaged. It was valuable for our international audience to hear how he did that, what he learned along the way, and what his vision is for the future. Keeping volunteers engaged and committed can be challenging, and Dr. Volcheck is a gifted motivator. His talk was very well received." The conference also featured presentations on global healthcare, providing dental care to remote populations, oral diagnosis, and dental materials.

Back to India

As this edition of INSCRIPTIONS was going to press, Dr. Bala was packing his bags for India again. "One of the driving forces of our work there," he concluded, "is putting into practice

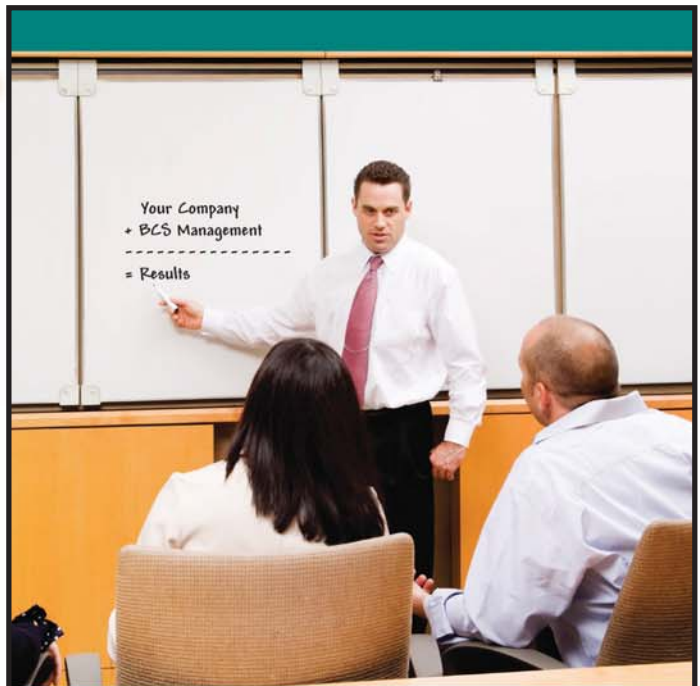
what we learn. Education and information are useless if not shared and transformed into good deeds. Sure, the conference helps attendees become more clinically proficient. But just as important, it opens them to new ideas, new methods, new viewpoints, and new feedback.



Dr. Bala supervises third- and fourth-year dental students at the CASS Dental Clinic for Homeless Children & Adults in Phoenix.

"I'm good at dentistry, but not much else. So, I use these gifts to serve mankind. I try to see the good in everyone and whenever I am able to do that, I am transformed. It can be difficult, especially if someone is behaving in a manner that makes them seem anything but good. I am not the most diplomatic guy. Just ask my wife! I spend time trying to discover what is inside of me that I can change for the better. Criticism is a favor. It's how we react to it that usually causes the problems. Bhagavan teaches us to be content with what little can be got through honest labor and to eagerly serve others. He says it's the most powerful of all the tonics known to the science of health and I have seen the evidence of that in my own life many times. I encourage my fellow members to give back... anywhere, anytime, to anyone. The rewards are many and they are greater than you can imagine."

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-- Albert Camus

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