

# Akshaya Today

*2011 – nine years of serving the helpless*

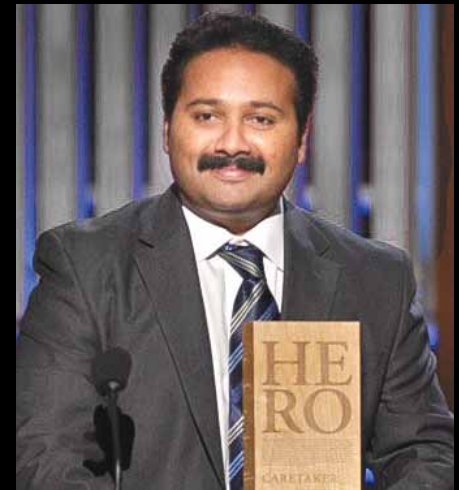




Being a CNN Top 10 Hero means many things, but most important of all it means being recognized for unwavering dedication to an unselfish cause and commitment to those amongst us that are in need. The cause may vary significantly and those served may be of many diverse cultures, races, nationalities and social standings – the important considerations are the need and the dedication to the need.

CNN received 10,000 Hero nominations in 2010. The nominees came from over 100 countries and were dedicated to a broad spectrum of causes. CNN then conducted a careful in-depth review of the many nominees and narrowed the selection down to 24 finalists. This final group included one from India – Narayanan Krishnan from Madurai. Krishnan is the founder of Akshaya Trust, a charity dedicated to helping the destitute and helpless on the streets of Madurai.

A Blue Ribbon Panel made up of globally recognized athletes, activists, entrepreneurs, artists, innovators, actors, authors and musicians, everyone a humanitarian in their own right, was then charged with the task of selecting the CNN 2010 Top 10 Heroes. Having started with 10,000 nominees which were then narrowed down to a field of 24, the panel's task was not easy. With careful consideration CNN announced the Blue Ribbon Panel's decision – **Narayanan Krishnan** was selected as one of **CNN's 2010 Top 10 Heroes**.



## A message from Krishnan

Nine years, 1,700,000 meals and a lifetime of experiences ago I started feeding the helpless homeless of Madurai, in southeast India. I was 20 years old and a one man army fighting hunger and desperation.

In those nine years the one man army became a group of volunteers helped by donors from all walks of life – rich and poor from around the world. My goal and the goal of the volunteers is to transform Akshaya Trust so it becomes a movement in 2011 – a movement that will be copied by many to serve the desperate helpless around the world.

Together we must set aside thoughts of caste, creed and color as we extend our hand to help those in need. Our time on Earth is limited and how we use that time is our choice. In our quest to give pleasure to ourselves and others we would do well to consider the joy of giving.

“We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty.”

*- Mother Teresa of Calcutta*



# Those Akshaya Serves

It is difficult to understand why in a world of plenty there are so many that suffer from the lack of food, shelter and love. With so many desperately in need it is also very difficult to determine who to help when your resources are very limited.

With careful consideration, Krishnan decided that Akshaya Trust would direct its limited resources towards helping those that can't help themselves – the destitute, mentally ill, elderly and frail that are uncared for and existing on the roadside. It is painful to Krishnan and the Akshaya volunteers to exclude many asking for help, but it is necessary due to the limits of Akshaya's resources. Care is given to assure that none of Akshaya's resources are devoted to beggars and others that are capable of fending for themselves.

Akshaya provides nutritious, tasty food and much more. As time and resources allow, the destitute are provided personal care such as bathing, haircuts, shaves, clothing and the like. With an importance that is almost as high as food, Akshaya generously gives compassion, dignity and love to those it serves.

In 2012 Akshaya looks forward to establishing a very important milestone in its short history – the opening of the Akshaya Home in Melamathur on the outskirts of Madurai. On that day many of those served by Akshaya will have not only shelter but a home that is theirs.

This very appreciative lady is Muthammal. She is about 65 years old and has been served by Akshaya for approximately eight years.

When Krishnan found her eight years ago she was sleeping in a drainage ditch. She has two sons and a daughter but the sons abandoned her on the roadside and took her house. Krishnan and the Akshaya volunteers are now the only caring people in her life.

She asks for nothing, but Akshaya gives her two or three meals a day and loving care. Some of the destitute receive less than three meals a day because they move around and can not be found as the meals are being delivered.

Take a moment to ask yourself, "What would I do if she were my mother or grandmother?" You would most likely answer very quickly – "I would help in the best way I could." Think then of how much the Akshaya Home would improve Muthammal's life.





Murugan is about 65 years old and has been served by Akshaya for approximately eight years. His wife died and he has no children. He is left destitute on the streets of Madurai without a home or money.

Akshaya found Murugan on the roadside with a fractured leg and hip. Medical care was quickly administered and Murugan's wounds have healed but he has been left disabled and can't support himself. His existence depends solely on the nourishment and care offered by Akshaya.

A place in the Akshaya Home will give Murugan the comfort being surrounded by people that care for him and knowing he is protected from the hazards of a roadside existence.

Kamatchi is between 65 and 70 years old and has been under Akshaya's care for approximately eight years. She has no money or home. Her children took her on a travel tour to Madurai and left her behind when they returned home.

She has many health problems including a hormone imbalance, significant back pain, an unknown skin disease, and leprosy that has resulted in the loss of her toes. In addition she is often bitten by dogs (note the cut on her nose). She has also been badly treated by other people, including being beaten by shopkeepers to drive her away from their businesses. Such beatings have cost Kamatchi the use of her right eye.

Akshaya provided her with a makeshift bed to ease her back pain until she can be moved into the Akshaya Home. The Home will protect her from the horrors of a roadside life and provide medical help for her many health problems.





Priya is 13 years old. She is left early in the morning on the streets of Madurai to beg for money.

As Priya matures she may become exposed to further risk. This will not be a simple situation to resolve as there are many legal and moral issues to be addressed. Priya's situation is desperate and urgent.

This type of situation will be substantially easier to resolve once the Akshaya Home is opened.

Although his name isn't known to Akshaya he has been gratefully receiving the love and nourishment given by Krishnan and the volunteers for approximately nine years.

He carefully sets aside some of his food for the ants, insects and other small creatures around him. It is obvious he has much compassion for others. He declines food if he is not hungry, telling the volunteers to, "Give it to others."





She was very depressed when Akshaya found her. She was also starving and had started to eat garbage. She is now eating three meals a day from Akshaya.



Boopathy is not greedy and seeks only his basic needs. He gives Akshaya any money he receives from strangers. "I don't need it," is his only comment.



It has been almost eight years since Akshaya found Suburamanian sleeping in a garbage bin with garbage over and around him. Krishnan and the Akshaya volunteers dug him out and have been providing support to him since then.

The best that can be determined by Akshaya is that Suburamanian has mental problems due to fall and head injuries, and his family abandoned him.





Akshaya has been giving Padma roadside support for approximately seven years. Very little is known about her background other than she is one of the many destitute and helpless people that have come under Akshaya's care.

Padma suffered a bad leg fracture when crossing the road in December 2010. She was taken to the hospital and received medical care but could not be admitted to the hospital due to legal issues. Although Akshaya has been providing Padma prescribed medications she continues to suffer much pain.

The Akshaya Trust has given Padma fresh cloths and provided personal care within the limits of what is feasible in the roadside environment.

His severely deformed legs make it impossible for him to walk. Instead he drags his body along using the strength of his arms.

Akshaya doesn't know his name but it has taken him under its care for seven years. During that time Krishnan and the volunteers have learned that he is a person of principle and determination. He lives on the roadside and considers the area he is in to be his responsibility. Often passersby will discard trash from their cars with no regard to those at the roadside. He quickly drags he body to the trash and removes it. This in spite of the fact that it is a substantial task for him to move and he is placing himself in harms way. His response when asked why he removes the trash is, "Let me do something!"





Akshaya Trust has not been able to determine any of Pandi's background but has taken him under its care for approximately nine years. Although he trusts and relies on Akshaya he will not communicate with others.

If Pandi's meal is late he quickly resorts to eating garbage refusing food offered by anyone other than the Akshaya volunteers.

Pandi is mentally and physically ill. His diseases are undefined – he has infections and many leg wounds, most likely insect and vermin bites. A place in the Akshaya Home would put him in an environment where at least some of his infections could at least be controlled if not cured.

There are many challenges when caring for people living on the roadside, with personal hygiene being an important one. Personal hygiene plays a very important role in restoring the well being of the people Akshaya Trust serves. Such care helps improve the comfort and raises the individual's self-esteem. It is also an important factor in the effort to improve the individual's overall health.

Krishnan, with the support of the Akshaya Trust volunteers, provides personal care for the destitute and helpless to an extent that many of us would find difficult or impossible to do. This includes bathing, giving hair cuts, shaving and changing clothes. The difficulties are many but the care is given whenever possible, depending on the extent of care needed and the reaction of the individual receiving the care.

The completion of the Akshaya Home will greatly facilitate providing personal care to those in need. It will significantly help Krishnan and the volunteers when providing care that many of us would find impossible to do.



# Preparing and Serving Nutritious and Delicious Food



One of the most devastating physical hardships faced by the deserted helpless is hunger. Facing days without the hope of having even the smallest morsel of food destroys all hope of salvation from a life of misery. The body's basic functions struggle to continue, the mental processes become confused and the pain can not be measured.

To combat roadside hunger for the helpless, Krishnan and the Akshaya Trust volunteers have prepared and delivered three meals a day every day of the year for nine years – that equals over 1,700,000 meals. Akshaya is now feeding approximately 450 deserving people a day.

Once the Akshaya Home is completed and functioning the task of feeding those in need will substantially change. Food preparation will be more efficient and the drain on resources to distribute the food will be virtually eliminated.





Cooking three meals a day for 450 people would be a major task for a well staffed restaurant with the best of equipment. For Krishnan and the volunteers at Akshaya Trust it is a routine done three times a day with minimal staff, very basic equipment and in less than an hour for each meal.

All meals are prepared using ingredients from local markets that are selected for freshness, nutritional value and taste. They are then combined according to local recipes with spices, rice, lentils and other appropriate ingredients. The recipes are also selected based on their appropriateness for a meal that is delivered and served on the roadside to people in many separate locations.

Here we see Krishnan adding vegetables and rice to the mid-day meal while volunteer Mani is preparing rice with vegetable subji.



# A Home for the Helpless



The Akshaya Home has not been designed to be a shelter, institution or place of confinement. It is to be a place of refuge, a place of comfort, a place of compassionate and loving care. It is to be a home when home is defined as a place for a family.

When completed, the Akshaya home will be able to provide many of the essentials of life we take for granted when we are secure in our home and surrounded by our family:

- Three meals a day of fresh tasty food to give nourishment and comfort.
- A clean and comfortable bed.
- Accessible clean bathing and toilet facilities.
- On-site medical care will be provided or made available off-site if beyond the scope of the Akshaya Home Medical Clinic.

Akshaya will also work with secular volunteer groups to provide social programs aimed at giving the residents a sense of community.



Waiting for the Akshaya Home



Krishnan and Contractor Mani



Blocks 1, 2, 3 and 4

Construction projects need many things to make them a success – a good design, proper materials, able craftsmen, financial support and good management. Good management like good materials is an important element of a project budget. Contractor Mani is a very good construction manager who is providing his expertise to Akshaya Trust at no cost.

The heart of the Akshaya Home project consists of four blocks. Block 1 houses the medical clinic and patient rooms. Block 2 includes a sick bay and doctors' offices as well as dormitory areas. Blocks 3 and 4 are devoted entirely to male and female dormitories. Other blocks include the dining room, special needs facility, administration and security.

Care has been taken to be sure the Akshaya Home is being built in a very cost effective manner. The goal is to make it a refuge for the helpless homeless for generations to come. Many factors have been taken into consideration to assure this goal is met. The initial construction costs are obvious factors, while the operations, staff, maintenance and repair costs will be the main budget factors in the long term. With these important factors in mind the Home is being constructed using durable, low maintenance materials of high quality. This approach will assure that the Home can be effectively operated and maintained with minimum staff and recurring expense.

The Home has also been designed so that future expansion can be done when needed at minimum expense and interruption to ongoing operations. Each of the four basic blocks can support an additional level. The columns have been extended above the roof level thereby negating the need to disrupt the initial construction when adding the second level.

The Akshaya Home is a place for today's helpless homeless and with appropriate support will be able to address tomorrow's needs as well.



Security station and well



Dining room foundations



Special Care Facility

The Special Care Facility will be dedicated to the individuals that for a variety of reasons may be at risk to themselves or others and therefore need to be reasonably isolated. The facility will be able to support up to thirty residents.



Special Care Facility open area

The individual rooms of the Special Care Facility are accessed by a covered walkway and will create a peaceful atmosphere. This type of an environment has been planned to help establish an ambience that will be calming and reassuring to those residents that have high levels of anxiety or fear.

The design of the Akshaya Home takes local flooding caused by seasonal rain into consideration. The plan raises the ground floor level above the anticipated flood level. The adjacent grade level is then elevated to the floor level by filling in the area between the building and the retaining wall as shown in the photo to the right. The lower grade level between the retaining walls will be landscaped to give a peaceful ambiance to the area. The raised grade adjacent to the building will be a covered paved walkway connecting the four building blocks.

The concrete strips on the ground are the foundations for a bridge between the building blocks. The bridge will give the Akshaya Home the ability to efficiently and safely move residents between the residential areas and the medical clinic.



Retaining wall for covered walkway



Connecting bridge foundation



Woodwork fitting and installation



Craftsman fitting a marble floor tile



Floor tile ready to be polished

The proper installation of quality building materials is a basic step in creating an efficient and easily maintained facility. These photos show the care being taken to assure the marble floor tiles and wood doors and shelving are properly installed and finished.

The construction of the Akshaya Home Medical Care Facility is nearing completion. The installation of the medical equipment will be the next step once the construction and associated site work is complete.

Once the air conditioned, equipped and staffed facility is ready for occupancy it will provide comprehensive medical care to all residents of the Akshaya Home. This will include oxygen and medications for those in need as well as 24 hour care given by qualified doctors and nurses.

The Medical Care Facility's sick bay will house those residents that must be isolated from the rest of the population and need supervised medical care.



Triage and emergency care area



Sick bay area



Medical clinic corridor to patient rooms



Medical clinic patient room

As in all aspects of the Akshaya Home design, attention has been given to the use of design concepts and materials that will facilitate the care of the residents and keep operating and maintenance costs to a minimum.

Examples shown here include lavatories that are accessible outside the toilet area and toilet and shower areas that are fully tiled for efficient hygienic maintenance. Other considerations include easy access to patient rooms, ease of visual observation of patients, marble tile floors for durability and ease of cleaning, adequate storage cabinets, and well placed windows for light, ventilation and a peaceful view.



Patient room lavatory



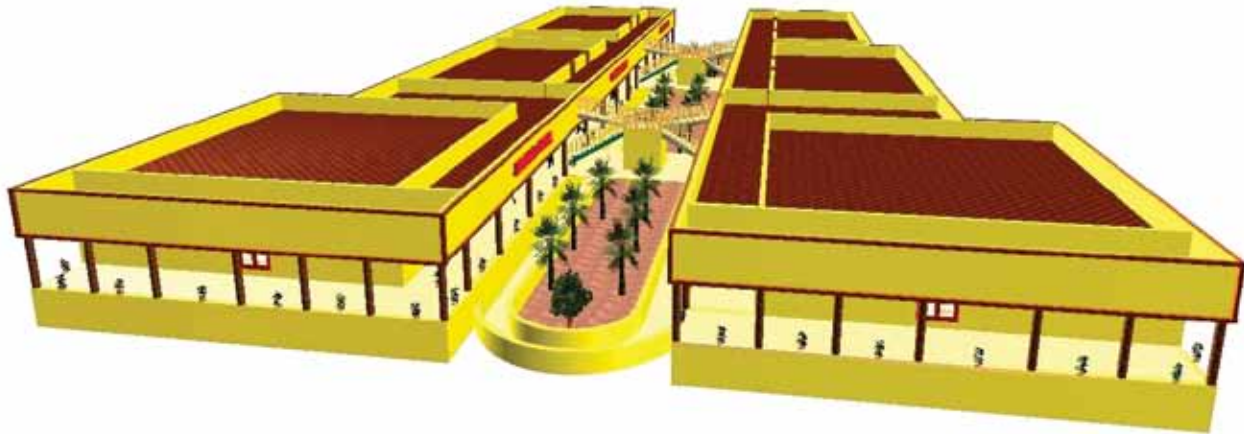
Patient room toilet



After having spent years existing on the roadside it will be an unimaginable luxury to have a bed in a place that is protected from the weather and dangers commonly experienced in the open. It will then be nearly miraculous to awaken from a physically comforting sleep and have your emotions soothed by a pleasing view of the green countryside and rolling hills as seen from your window.

Such a miracle will be an everyday reality for the residents of the Akshaya Home.

**AKSHAYA HOME AT MELAMATHUR**



The Akshaya Home residential area

# Akshaya's Helping in H.E.L.P. Trust

9, West 1<sup>st</sup> Main Street, Doak Nagar Extension, Madurai - 625 010, India

E-mail: [mduakshaya@gmail.com](mailto:mduakshaya@gmail.com)

Telephone: +91 (0) 452 4353439 / 2587104

Website: [www.akshayatrust.org](http://www.akshayatrust.org)

Cell phone: +91 (0) 98433 19933

FCRA Regn No. 075940512 Min. of Home Affairs, Govt. of India I.T. 80(G) Regn. No. 108/2003-04 ITC Madurai  
80(G) exemption C. No. 464/119/CIT-I/2003-04 dated 7th October, 2010



## Akshaya USA

17359 E. Caley Place, Aurora, Colorado 80016 USA

Telephone: 303.995.8967

E-mail: [info@akshayausa.org](mailto:info@akshayausa.org)

Website: [www.akshayausa.org](http://www.akshayausa.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/AkshayaTrust](http://www.facebook.com/AkshayaTrust)

Exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code - Public Charity

© Akshaya Trust 2011. All rights reserved.