



beyond boundaries



"I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do."

– H. Keller



I am a native of Kannur district in Kerala. Problems in my life forced me to come to Bangalore. I live with my sister, and through her friend I came to know about Threads of Life (TOL). I had no idea about tailoring, but through TOL, I started learning stitching. I will go back to Kerala and set up a small tailoring unit. I thank YuvaLok for giving me this opportunity to learn tailoring in this institution.

– Naseema



Meet YuvaLok



Since 1993, YuvaLok has served as a gateway to intellectual growth and socioeconomic mobility to families in the city of Bangalore and to some parts of Karnataka state. Our mission has always been more than just a statement—we have prepared young people for college, provided jobs and offered opportunities for whole communities to live and work in dignity.

YuvaLok Foundation was started by Sam and Beulah Rajshekhar. Their dream was to give kids an opportunity to fulfill their highest potential. This meant education first.

Today, **11** YuvaLok schools serve the educational and nutritional needs of **1,400** children.

Moving beyond



In urban India, young people have often been called “techies” or “millennials,” signifying their promise and upward mobility. Sadly, however, the educational opportunities that open doors for economic advancement have been largely confined to the middle class.

At YuvaLok, we believe that youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, too, can reach a higher level, if only given the opportunity. For the past 21 years, we have focused on educating at-risk young people, ensuring their nutrition and preparing them to thrive beyond their school days.

When we began our work, we encouraged our students to aim at least for a high school certificate. But now as the years keep going by, we find ourselves crossing boundary after boundary. Our students are reaching towards goals beyond high school graduation—including college and professional qualification. YuvaLok has set the trend and will not stop taking our young people to greater heights.

Children who are HIV-positive are sometimes rejected by society. We are happy to say that they are vibrant part of our student body and are well cared for by one of our NGO partners.

“We have consciously brought up the number of girl students to 44 percent and will continue to aim for a boy-girl ratio of 50:50.”

Crossing boundaries of geography, we opened a new school (in partnership with Prasad Educational Society) in a tribal area in southern Karnataka state. The 48 students come from homes in the dense forest, and range from 6 to 18 years of age. An 18-year-old young man now attending the school never had the opportunity to study before.

As an employer, YuvaLok believes in going above and beyond in encouraging and supporting our staff. Most of them need more than sustainable jobs. They need care, equipping, and empowering when they face trying circumstances like illness, family issues, supporting their own children for higher studies, and so on. Read the story on Page 6 to learn about Siddamma, one of veteran staff members, and Page 8 to meet Selvi, one of our dedicated teachers.

Organizationally, one of our highlights this year was the setting up of the YuvaLok Advisory Council. This is a group made up of distinguished professionals. Their expertise and experience has already begun to make a difference in the effectiveness and management of the organization. More than that, they have demonstrated their interest in the work and

supported us financially and in other ways. With their guidance, we will build on past successes to create an even stronger future for YuvaLok, a future in which more underprivileged young people will receive proper education, pursue careers, and be empowered to take greater leadership roles in the community.

Thanks to all our committed donors, members of the YuvaLok Board of Management, the Advisory Council, the Leadership Team, and all the staff members and volunteers who have made the achievements of the past year possible. I would like to especially acknowledge the valuable services that my wife, Beulah, has rendered as co-founder. She was responsible for developing the YuvaLok schools at Hennur and Kannur, and has been an active classroom teacher. Though she will continue to be part of YuvaLok informally, Beulah has opted to retire from active service.

YuvaLok looks to the future with confidence, holding firmly to our mission, motivated by our students and the community, and most of all, guided by our commitment to honor our Almighty and compassionate God, who is the very Foundation of our service.

Yours sincerely,
Sam Rajshekhar
Executive Director

Leading beyond

Meet Vanishree



“Yes, the boys do listen to me,” affirms Vanishree, a student captain at YuvaLok High School. Part of her duties as a leader include managing the students when a teacher has to step out momentarily. Winsomely and confidently, she aims to serve as a role model in studying, discipline and punctuality.

Having been at YuvaLok since Standard I, Vanishree will graduate from Standard X in 2015. Her goal: “I want to get distinction. Then I hope to study to become a doctor. I like to help people. For instance, when a small girl fell and hurt herself, I wiped her leg. Then I held her hand and took her to the bus stop.”

About her experience at YuvaLok she says, “YuvaLok is my home. I call my teachers as my second mothers. They encourage me. If I think I can't do something, they say, 'Come on, come on! You can.' They are an inspiration to me and have taught me to motivate myself. They've also taught me that a leader is someone who thinks first of others.”

Progressing beyond

Meet Pawan

When Pawan's mother died, his family sent him to Bangalore from his native village to live with his grandmother. She enrolled him in YuvaLok when he was in 5th Standard, but Pawan wasn't too keen on studying. "I would leave the house in my school uniform, but then I'd bunk class. When I did go to class, I was very naughty. My teachers were friendly—but strict," he recalls. "They told me that this was not right."

By the time 8th Standard rolled around, Pawan had developed a love for maths and had decided that he wanted to take full advantage of the opportunities at YuvaLok. "No one else in my family is educated. I want a better future for myself. I'm lucky to study in this school." His message now to fellow students is: "Don't miss a single day in school. If you miss a day, you never get it back."

These days, long before the school bell rings, Pawan rises at 4:30 am to deliver newspapers for his part-time job. Then he studies for half an hour before coming to school. Along with maths, he especially enjoys playing at the school volleyball court, and as team captain is known for his smashing abilities. After school, Pawan studies from 6 pm – 8 pm, till his grandmother comes home from her work as a seamstress to give him his dinner. In his free time, Pawan is attending a Telos computer course because he aspires to become a software engineer.



Building lives

Meet Siddamma



Siddamma walks with purpose across the YuvaLok High School campus. As the housekeeping supervisor, she is responsible for the smooth functioning of services for students, faculty, staff and guests. The school children call her “Auntie” and the teachers and staff honor her seniority by calling her “Akka” (big sister).

Siddamma first started working on this property some 20 years ago—carrying sand and bricks on her head. Shobha Louis, a member of the YuvaLok Management Team, took notice of the young construction worker's character: “We could see her sincerity, her trust worthiness, her ability to understand things and her willingness to work hard.”

Siddamma had never attended school, and like many village girls, was married at a young age.



“Any work I like,” smiles Siddamma.
“Whatever God gives me to do,
cleaning toilets or anything, I do it
for His children with joy.”

When her husband abandoned her, she left her village in rural Karnataka, along with her sons, to find work in the city of Bangalore. And her building work brought her to YuvaLok.

After the construction of our school was completed in 1999, we invited Siddamma to join the team as a cook. Over time, she proved a capable manager and a warm host. She taught herself to read Kannada and learned conversational English. Meanwhile, her sons studied at YuvaLok, and today they have decent jobs.

While some people work from 9-5, Siddamma is available 24/7. Ask Siddamma if she ever takes leave, and she laughs. “We do make her take some holidays,” clarifies Shobha.

Grounded by hope

Meet Shantha A. Cheriyan



“At YuvaLok, children are duly respected and cared for as individuals, and not just names or numbers. Here children are nurtured and instilled with traditional values, such as integrity, compassion, respect and patriotism, paving the way for true and lasting success.”

Outside headmistress' Shantha's office, a teenage boy waits. He's not wearing his school uniform, because he's come to YuvaLok High School today just to collect his leaving certificate. His parents, discouraged by his poor behavior, had recently decided to end his academic career and send him back to stay in their family's village.

“This boy came into my office, hands hiding his face, telling me he would be leaving school. But what will happen to him? I am ready to keep him here,” she explains.

For the past 13 years at YuvaLok, Shantha has seen both ups and downs in her role as a teacher and headmistress. While some choices made by the students and their families are disappointing, Shantha is grounded by the hope that time spent instructing and nurturing the children is never in vain, and that investing in relationships is always worth the effort: “The children tell us their problems and what they are facing,” she says. “They show so much love toward us.”

As she retires in 2015 from her post at YuvaLok, Shantha reflects fondly on the children, parents and teachers she's interacted with through the years. “Just as YuvaLok has grown and changed over the past 13 years, so have I. I've grown in patience, perseverance and prayer. The learning never stops.”

Moulding citizens

Meet Selvanayagam



Selvanayagam recently received a phone call from one of her former students. “I remember my first day of school at YuvaLok,” the student said. “I barged between you and another teacher, and you corrected me. You explained that I should say, ‘Excuse me’ or that I should walk around. You didn’t shout. The way you spoke registered with me, and I have never forgotten it.”

A social studies teacher at YuvaLok since 2005, Selvi is intentional about teaching character and good citizenship even as she instructs her students in Indian history and civics. “Every day I want my students to have some ‘take away’ to use personally and with their family,” she says. “When families change, society will change.”

Because many pupils struggle with spelling and comprehension, Selvi spends some time in each session helping them develop these skills, which are the foundation for thinking and communicating effectively. “When I was a girl, I had an English teacher who helped me, and because of her, today I can speak well,” she says.

Armed with skills and confidence, Selvi’s students can help change the world. “I encourage my students to be bold, to say what they think, and to do so respectfully. They should never be scared to fight for what is right and implement what is good.”

Investing time

A tradition of volunteerism

We want our students to see themselves as change-agents who can have significant influence in their homes, neighborhoods, city and nation.

To that end, YuvaLok as an organization has sought to model a culture of community service by collaborating with area schools and community-based organizations. We also seek to create leadership development opportunities for our students, faculty and staff, continuing the long-standing tradition of YuvaLok volunteerism.

We salute and thank all those volunteers from India and abroad who have shared their time and talents with YuvaLok.



- During the last year we have had seven students from International Federation of Medical Students Association, the Netherlands. It was a mutual and valuable learning experience both for our students and volunteers.
- Graham and Iris Sheath from the UK were able to share their expertise with our teachers, especially in teaching methods and developing lesson plans.
- Gerard Meester from the Netherlands is a dear friend of YuvaLok. During his short stay at YuvaLok he shared his musical skills with our students. It was great to have him at our annual staff conference.
- Students of Marnix Gymnasium, Rotterdam organized a 10-day activity program, which is always a treat for our kids. This time we were privileged to have the principal, Miss Stytia de Leeuw, with us.
- At the end of the year, we enjoyed a visit from the staff and students of the University of Southampton, UK.

Highlights from 2013-14

For 21 years, YuvaLok has been an anchor institution playing a vital role in the progress and transformation of Bangalore.



Our flagship school in north Bangalore, **YuvaLok High School**, had **500** children on roll, and this year graduated its eighth batch of 10th standard students.

A record number of students (37) were in Class X, and eight top-achieving students secured a first-class pass on the state board exam. Congratulations to the students and their teachers; the best is yet to come!



Kannur School serves the children of families who migrated to Bangalore to work as laborers in a rock quarry outside the city. Presently, we offer classes in nursery – Std. 3, and we are adding one class each year as the children grow. Having begun four years ago with 50 students, the school today has 150 students.



Our record of performance at YuvaLok High School is constantly improving. Fifty percent of our graduates are continuing their education in college (Grades 11 and 12), and all the others have found respectable employment.

College scholarships are available for students who have the aptitude and desire to continue their education.



In the Chamrajnagar district of southern Karnataka state, YuvaLok partners with **Prasad Educational Society** to operate four rural schools and one school for tribal children.

There are no government-run schools near the students' homes, and their families find it difficult to afford private education. Prasad Educational Society is bridging the gap and helping children in Chamrajnagar develop healthy minds and bodies.



YuvaLok continued to support four **Pragathi Schools** serving **120** children in the slums of south Bangalore. Along with serving young children, this school caters to the needs of older children who previously could not go to school because they had been taking care of their younger siblings while their parents worked.

Now both the small and the big children have a safe place to study.



Our **Anna Vahini Food Program** provides a daily breakfast (a nine- grain porridge) and hot lunch to children at YuvaLok High School. The Anna Vahini vehicle delivers warm meals to the students at the Kannur School, as well as to one of our "Community for All" partners, Alamba Trust, an organization working with young adults with permanent disability.

Beyond words ...

Thanks, team!

Unlike profit-driven schools, YuvaLok is a coalition of people and partners bonding together to each do their part to make the dream of quality education a reality for children who would otherwise not have this opportunity.



We acknowledge, first of all, the parents of our students. They have realized the value of education and have participated in raising support for their children from their employers.

We appreciate the corporate partners who are investing in the future of this nation by giving towards the education of less-privileged children:

Target has partnered with us financially for the past five years and we are happy that their employees have taken time to volunteer their services every year. YuvaLok High School has been possible with their support.

Thomson Reuters staff members have consistently volunteered their services and their visits are much anticipated by our students.

YuvaLok received over Rs. 1 crore in grants during last year to support the great work done by our staff.



Several organizations are also vital partners in this work:

- YuvaLok Child, Netherlands has been standing by us and making it possible for us to serve mid-day meals to our kids.
- MTCF has been a strong backbone for our work, helping in mid-day meals and providing infrastructure and transport. This year, MTCF and YuvaLok Child, Netherlands helped in adding a new school bus to transport the younger children to and from school.
- Gerard and Friends from Maassluis, Netherlands gave scholarships to 28 students, sponsoring their college education.
- Students and staff from Marnix Gymnasium, Rotterdam, Netherlands, are always enthusiastic about YuvaLok. Their fundraising activities are commendable.
- Thanks to Timpany Foundation for their partnership in educating underprivileged kids.
- Special thanks to Times Foundation, Hermiens Helping Hands, Mead Johnson, Alpha India and AKID Australia for their ongoing partnership.
- We also recognize all of the individual friends from India and from the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and other places around the world who have stood graciously with us in the last 21 years.
 - Hearty thanks to Mike and Avril Fanner for their long association and ongoing support.
 - Thanks to John and Pam Cavness—longtime friends and faithful supporters of YuvaLok.
 - We are especially grateful to Philip Woodburn, Ed Melicor, Melvyn Sawyer, David Osamba, Joey Khoo, Mike Holland, Max Agoundoukua and Varsha Samson.

Borders yet to cross



Improving teacher effectiveness

Academics, teaching and support of our students are at the very heart of what we do. We are determined to consistently improve our services and effectiveness. Therefore, this year we made concerted efforts in employing qualified and experienced teachers. We are on the lookout for a few more people for leadership positions in various departments.

Welcoming children with special needs

There are also kids with learning disabilities. We might not have the facilities to provide special education to these kids, but then where will they go? By partnering with other organizations we have tried to bridge the gap for this very special need.

Providing alternatives to academics

Apart from education, it is also important to impart life skills to those who may not want to study for various reasons. We consider it our duty to enlighten the kids about useful skills they can learn together with their academic studies.

Preparing students for life after school

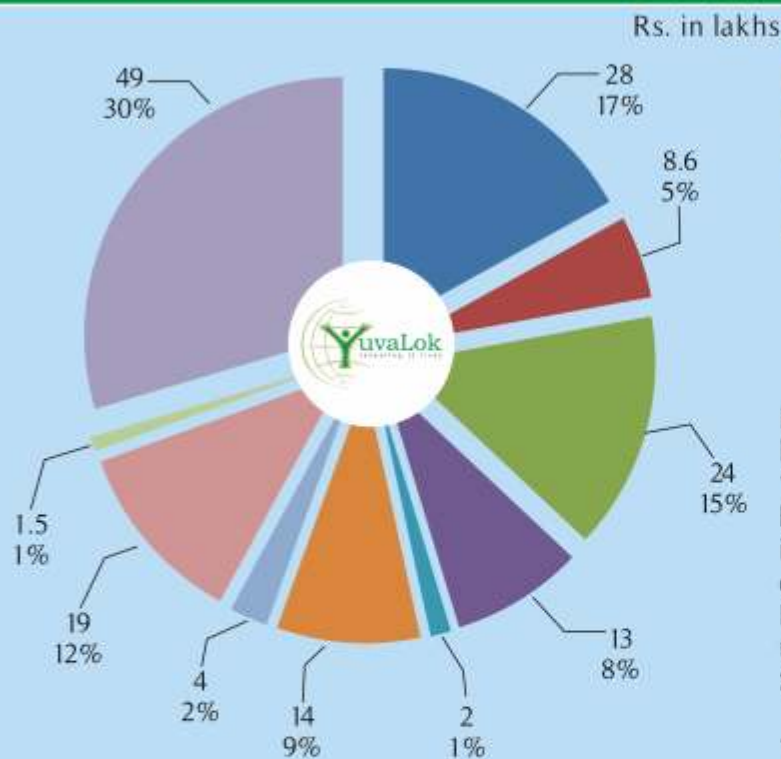
Intrinsic to our mission is supporting our students in their educational experience from entry to successful exit. In order to help YuvaLok students fulfill their educational and career goals, we are trying new approaches to address some of the biggest challenges they face.

Our kids today need not simply education, but quality education. We would like the children of our society to grow in an environment where they will acquire knowledge, moral values and information that will take them up the ladder of success.

We welcome your partnership as we continue, by God's grace, to cross any barrier that would impede the boys and girls in this land from flourishing.

Viji Raghavan
Chairperson

Finance



Besides investing in individual students' lives, YuvaLok Foundation sponsors "Community for All" programs that are helping families and communities flourish in the city of Bangalore and across the country. One such program is "Threads of Life," which trains young women in tailoring skills both in Bangalore and in Srinagar, Kashmir.

"Community for All" also sponsored a blood donation camp in Bangalore, which served as an awareness program to help people see how the simple act of giving blood can help people in distress.

In the state of Orissa, we supported relief projects after Cyclone Phailin, and provided scholarships to help deserving students continue their education in college.

Let's look beyond boundaries

Will you choose to?

Would you like to help children from less-privileged backgrounds overcome obstacles so that they can become the best they can be? Your financial gift will have an immediate and purposeful impact in providing quality education to young people who live in slums or communities with limited educational opportunities.

And when you volunteer at YuvaLok, you impact not only the students' lives, but countless others who will be touched by the students' influence.

We invite you to participate in the transformative work happening at YuvaLok!



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