

November 23, 2007

Dear Universal Awakening Community,

I am writing to you with the hope that you will become a part of the Emerge story, a story that has become a part of me I never knew I could live without. Two and a half years ago, on a Tsunami-relief trip to Sri Lanka, I witnessed a reality I was not equipped to handle... a reality where young women age 10-18 were cast out of their own families, denied the right to formal education, and locked away for their own protection due to pregnancy resulting from rape or incest. I founded the Emerge Bead Program as a way to provide the tools these girls needed to become confident, respected, self-reliant members of society. Over the past two years, the program has enabled more than 40 girls to express themselves creatively while generating money for their futures.

In many ways the story of Emerge is just that, a story. It is not the story of me, but it is a story I have shaped and a story I tell. I am not Sri Lankan and I am not a young mother. The story, in fact, has grown far beyond me, though it remains rooted my belief in the fundamental value of all human beings: the belief that they should have options in their lives, including the opportunity to pursue something they find meaningful and the ability to passionately work to create a beautiful future. It also stems from my belief in community, which I see as a foundation on which all people thrive and grow, benefiting from the synergistic power of connection.

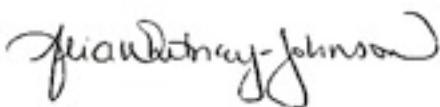
Beading brings these girls together and does so much more. I have seen this simple exercise give a voice to girls who have been literally silent for months. I have witnessed the program provide an individual set of communication and financial skills that will support these girls in their future communities. I have watched it plant the seeds of self-respect and human worth in the women of Sri Lanka. It is, I have found, so much more than a story.

The story begins with an idle thought in a post-Tsunami volunteering trip, and it is far from over. While in many ways it is the product of incredible serendipity, it is ultimately the result of the powerful definition of fundamental human needs instilled within me by my parents. The telling of this story has enabled Emerge to become what it is today: a nonprofit organization with a name, a talented team of students, a logo and a clear mission. In the telling, this story has become a reality.

This January, the Emerge story is growing, as three of us head to Sri Lanka to make the Emerge Bead Program sustainable as well as to investigate the next steps for impact, growth, and longevity. A summary of our goals for the trip follows this letter and details of Emerge can be found in our brochure.

I ask you to take part in this story, this future, where each of these persevering young women will have the tools and capacity to emerge into her own. Emerge is a program of Universal Awakening and therefore all gifts are tax-deductible and will be counted towards the 2007 tax year if made before January 2008. Together, the Emerge story will continue to grow.

Happy Holidays,



Alia Whitney-Johnson, Director
Emerge Global



January 2008 Sri Lanka Trip: Sustainability + Growth

Trip Dates: January 1-29, 2008

Developing Emerge's long-term value and sustainability:

- **Build board of advisors** in Sri Lanka--board will include individuals in many fields in Sri Lanka: business development, child rights law, non-profit/foundation development and sustainability, construction (planning and execution), and child psychology
- **Establish Emerge as a legal entity** in Sri Lanka--will enable Emerge to have bank accounts in Sri Lanka to support future expansion
- **Increase product profitability and sustainability**--identify local supplier to lower the price of supplies; develop itemized catalog of products and supplies for discussions between Sri Lanka and the US
- **Capacity building of Bead Program Coordinator**--jewelry workshops, photography lesson with the digital camera, explain process for uploading photos taken for easy communication with donors and Emerge team in the US; provide and get feedback for past 6 months of work
- **Business plan development**-- currently identifying an individual from MIT's business school to work on business plans; during January trip, collect any needed information for the business plan
- **Develop a database and long-term distribution network**-- develop system to support girls after they leave Ma-Sevana, their current home, if they choose to stay connected to Emerge
- **Develop mentorship program with local business women**-- aim to connect girls to inspiring local women who can offer practical knowledge as well as future support; also aim to connect the program to Ceylinco Grameen Micro Lending institution
- **Establish a scholarship fund**--fund will be available to each girl when she leaves Ma-Sevana in addition to her earnings through the Bead Program to launch her future ideas; need to sort out logistics of eligibility, amount, and how to integrate into the known or unknown schedule of each girl's individual court trials

Expanding Emerge's reach and impact:

- **Host jewelry workshop with new group**-- experiment with program scalability by incorporating a group of handicapped and abandoned teenage girls who are training in our partner organization's Vocational Training Center; girls currently make drawstring bags to hold the jewelry and have wanted to learn to make the jewelry itself; girls from the Bead Program at Ma-Sevana will be the teachers of the workshop that will expand the Bead Program to incorporate approximately 15 new girls



- **Develop the network needed to successfully expand and sustain Emerge**-- Due to lack of facilities, many minors are kept in the prison system for their own “protection” as they testify in court against the man who raped them, often their own father. They often live in prison for years before being released. Emerge is now launching its next project: a community with homes, a school, and a women’s cooperative for sexually abused teenage mothers in Sri Lanka. In order to successfully sustain and expand the Bead Program in addition to developing this community for the more than 60 teenage mothers being housed in the adult prison system, we will meet with the following organizations, looking for information, partnerships, and potential project advisors:

- Ceylinco Grameen Micro Lending Institution
- National Child Protection Authority
- Lawyers for Human Rights Development
- Prison system
- Girl Guide Association
- International Center for Ethnic Studies
- Women In Need (WIN)
- Voice of Women
- SAVE the Children
- SOS Villages

Interested in learning more?

For general information about Emerge, see our website: www.emergeglobal.org

For information regarding the upcoming trip, contact Alia Whitney-Johnson: alia@emergeglobal.org

Interested in contributing?

Checks should be made payable to “Universal Awakening” with “Emerge” in the memo and mailed to: Emerge, c/o Universal Awakening, PO Box 17578, Asheville, NC 28816

