



A Welcome from Horizon to Guests

News from LearnAid

LearnAid, Kuwait
learnaid@yahoo.com

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LearnAid

- Helps deserving learners—those striving to improve themselves even when resources are limited
- Nationality, educational level, profession, ethnic group, religious orientation, etc. unimportant for membership
- Welcomes voluntary financial contributions, computers and peripherals (used/new), books for learning English, and ideas to further *LearnAid* goals.

Members of *LearnAid* are now partners in the MicroScholarships project of HorizonLanka. At the moment we help 14 students at Mahavilachchiya by giving them a small sum of money every month.

Horizon School started its 'scholarships' scheme a few years back. A small number of students, who

MicroScholarships from LearnAid



Horizon students who receive MicroScholarships through *LearnAid* (Left to right: Aruni, Wathsala, Anusha, Dulika, Udeshika, Iresha, Nuwan and Hasintha; Absent: Nadeeka — Pictured in August 2004)

A Compaq Pentium 4 to HorizonLanka

Just before the summer break *LearnAid* received three computers through

almost brand new. We took this computer to Sri Lanka and gave it to the

had been recommended as deserving by the teachers, had found sponsors who gave them KD 2 to 3 a month. At the time that *LearnAid* heard of the

scheme 10 children were awaiting someone to help them. Members of our group came forward, and some offered to sponsor

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Horizon Kids accept the P4 Compaq donated through *LearnAid*

Mr. Victor Ramanan, Manager/Contracts of Raith Engineering & Manufacturing Co. in Kuwait. Victor had arranged for us to get them from his firm. One of the computers was a Compaq Evo Pentium 4 with 16" Compaq monitor,

Headmaster of Horizon Academy, Mahavilachchiya on 7th August 2004. We sent the monitor at a later date. The other two computers (Apricot and Mitsubishi) were PIIs, and we donated them to two Sri Lankans resident in Kuwait.

Horizon's Internet Tower

Horizon Kids used the Internet to open the eyes of the world to what they could do. Their web page served as the main link between the project and those outside the village. Interestingly, the children nor the entire community of Mahavilachchiya had a telephone facility. So, how did they design and maintain a web site?

From the very start and for the next five years, the kids designed the web pages at the Horizon in the village. Then someone took the computer files by



Internet Tower at Horizon

public transport to Anuradhapura, and uploaded

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Activities of LearnAid

LearnAid aims to help deserving learners to further their education. We assist individual children as well as projects that show promise. Before we offer help, the prospective recipients need to show that they are committed to improving themselves through learning, and that they have taken concrete steps towards this goal.

HorizonLanka at Mahavilachchiya, a remote village 40 kilometres

Northwest from Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka, receives a major portion of our help at present. It runs the Horizon Academy and a number of other schemes to raise the living standards of the community. The academy and the village itself lack most of the basic facilities.

Over the past three years we have given Horizon a PIII computer, an HP scanner, a brand new Acer laptop, an almost new Compaq Pentium 4 computer, and nearly 250

books. We have helped 14 Horizon children to buy used computers under its *Digital Butterflies* Project. We now provide the necessary funds for 12 children to receive a monthly allowance of money through its *MicroScholarships* project that was launched recently.

In January 2004, we gave Horizon LKR 66,149.00 for its Internet Tower project. Ours was the first contribution for its construction.

HorizonLanka at Mahavilachchiya, Anuradhapura



Web site of HorizonLanka

- Non-profit community development project
- 200 children attend classes in English, Computer literacy, Math, and Science
- Departments include those for academic affairs, ICT, vocational training, agriculture, marketing, community services, environment, cultural affairs, and research & development
- www.horizonlanka.org - website of project, designed by children

Weekend with HorizonLanka Kids

I arrived at Horizon in the afternoon on 7th August. This was my third visit to



Session on lesson planning for Virtual School

the school. The kids greeted me with the warm Horizon smile, making the drive from Kandy worth the effort.

The red and white tower for the Internet stood majestically close to the Dream Computer Room. The Internet is beyond

MicroScholarships...

(Continued from page 1) the children even on a long-term basis. The money helps the children buy schooling needs as well as items of clothing.

One aspect of the scheme is that every child has to grow at least 10 teak plants. Cultivation is second nature to the kids, and in just twenty years teak is ready for timber.

the reach of most Sri Lankans today, but the children in rural Mahavilachchiya have access, and that too on a 24-hour basis. There is no doubt they are very fortunate.

The Dream Computer Room had been formally opened in April. It was buzzing with activity. The number of children had risen close to two hundred, I was told. The room had been furnished with the bare essentials and the few computers I saw had a sea of heads near each.

After lunch, I started the lesson that I had planned to do on database design. I explained some of the concepts of databases, and introduced *FileMakerPro* and the basics of its use. The kids grasped its key elements within the two short sessions I did.

The teachers and the parents held a meeting in the evening. This was to discuss the planned visit to the e-Society Exhibition to be held in Colombo the following week. I, too, was invited, and felt honoured to be present.

While speaking to Deepal, one of the teachers, the topic of the Virtual School came up. This led me to doing a session on lesson planning for distance learning the next day. The Computer Room was occupied, and I gladly conducted my lesson in the open under a large tree. Some teachers and the senior students attended it.

Horizon is six years old today. The weekend spent there gave me first hand knowledge of the set up.

Introductory Course on Computer Skills

We conducted a short introductory session on computer use on 23rd July 2004 for the benefit of those in Kuwait who had received computers from *LearnAid*.

Not many in Sri Lanka can match the achievements of Mr. Wannan and his Horizon Kids. The new tower rising above the harshness of the dry zone is a fitting tribute to their resolve and the strength to achieve the impossible, turning a deaf ear to the many pessimists.

—Gamini Premadasa

Books to Horizon Kids

The Horizon Kids received the books that we had sent them recently. We



Horizon gets LearnAid books

are grateful to Trico International (Fwd) Ltd of Kuwait and its Manager Mr. Jayantha Kannan-gara, who arranged to ship the books to Sri Lanka at no cost to us.

Horizon's...

(Continued from page 1) the pages to the Internet. All that changed in June this year. Today the kids at Horizon have Internet access 24 hours a day. No more is the need to go 80 kilometres up and down to get connected to the worldwide web.