



# FFEIT NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue No. 21, July 2019

## NOTE FROM THE MANAGING TRUSTEE



Dear Friends,

The Foundation For Excellence has come a long way - 25 years in fact! An important milestone to celebrate as we embark on this new phase of growth and sustained impact.

During this 25 year journey, FFE has touched more than 20,000 lives directly and has awarded in excess of 56,000 scholarships to students throughout India amounting to Rs.160 Crores in scholarships alone.

FFE's Founders, Dr. Prabhu Goel and Mrs. Poonam Goel, continue to fund and support FFE; they are backed by the growing network of our donors- individuals, corporates, Foundations and FFE's own alumni whose steadfast support has helped grow this organization. FFE's strong base of volunteers throughout India continue to be an important part of our growth story. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank each of you for your support and participation in FFE's journey and look to your continued patronage.

Through collaboration and sharing with FFE's growing base of NGO partners, FFE has also been able to support more students with a genuine need. What was formerly a Scholarship granting non-profit- one that focused on helping socially disadvantaged youth who were academically bright- has today emerged into an organization that is transforming the lives of talented, gifted, high potential students from financially constrained backgrounds through Scholarships while also preparing them for the work-force of tomorrow. 2 new initiatives- the Skills Training Program (combined with technical upskilling) supported by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF), and the Mentoring program are expected to enable FFE scholars to use their technical acumen effectively in their interaction with others and become 'workforce' ready. This edition of the newsletter provides a glimpse of what these new initiatives mean to our scholars and mentors.

All of these programs have been implemented successfully by FFE India Trust's 27-member team, under the able leadership of Sandhya Manoj, FFE's COO. Managing scale and growth, while also supporting FFE's US office is indeed commendable; my grateful thanks to her and FFE's dedicated team for making this possible.

FFE remains committed to its mission to empower our scholars and to enable them to become leaders and role models in their communities as well. I look forward to hearing your ideas and seeing more creative approaches to preparing FFE's scholars to fully participate in the global economy of tomorrow.

Sudha Kidao  
Managing Trustee  
FFE India Trust

## News & Events

### I. Community Outreach

#### Mentorship Program

FFE's In-House Mentoring Program was launched in September 2017. The one-on-one mentorship program of 8-10 month duration aimed at providing essential career-relevant skills through a curriculum framework. Over 200 scholars are currently being mentored by professionals from many of FFE's corporate partners including Amazon India, Amdocs Development Centre India LLP, HP PPS India Operations Pvt. Ltd., Intel Technology India Pvt. Ltd., Boeing International Corporation India Pvt. Ltd., Axtria India Pvt. Ltd. and Robert Bosch Engineering and Business Solutions Limited. 30% of the scholars from the mentorship program have gained employment, undoubtedly a fulfilling experience for both mentors and mentees alike.

#### Mentor & Mentee Testimonials



*"This Program is an excellent effort from FFE, creating a platform to help shape career goals and aspirations of young scholars who will be the next pillars for the country. The mentoring program was very good, considering the fact that my mentee got placed in*

*a premier company. My mentee has the potential to achieve his goals because he always likes to put his best foot forward, to engage himself in learning what he doesn't know or in the areas where he needs to develop more. My best wishes to him always."*

*Vijaya Kumar Buntupalli (FFE Mentor)  
Program Manager  
Intel Technology India Pvt. Ltd.*

*"The mentoring program is a very innovative idea and I want to thank FFE for giving me a wonderful opportunity to take part in this program. The curriculum is well designed, covering all the soft skills you need in a corporate environment and the timing for each session is sufficient. Also, there are many examples and methods for maintaining that skill. After completing this course, my communication skills improved a great deal. This program also helped me bag both the internship (in my 3rd year) and placement (in 4th year). In one word, this program is excellent.*

*Vijay, my mentor, was always very approachable and treated me like a friend. He helped me a lot through this program. He explained every session with*

*interesting examples and gave guidance whenever I sought his advice. Vijay was very helpful, especially during the placement season, by giving me ideas on how to crack interviews. He fulfilled all my expectations from the mentoring program.*

*I am now placed at Dell EMC and look forward to a successful career ahead."*



*Satya Krishna Tellakula (FFE Mentee)  
4th year Engineering scholar  
National Institute of Technology, Rourkela, Odisha*

#### Skill Development Program

In its third year of implementation, the FFE Skills Training Program funded by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF), had nearly 2000 scholars enrolled, at the end of FY 2018-19.

The skill development program included 3 cohorts of Engineering students. The first cohort (FY 2017-18) of 1000 second year Engineering scholars, who completed their English and Aptitude training, based on performance, either enrolled into a Hi-touch (intensity) English program or an aspirational course (Coursera), for the next year (3<sup>rd</sup> year), based on their midline score. 480 third year Engineering scholars enrolled for Coursera Online Courses, which commenced in October 2018, while 501 students who required additional training in English, enrolled in a hi-touch (intense) English program.

The second cohort (FY 2018-19) of 900 second year Engineering scholars, commenced their English training programs under Hello English and Kings Learning, in August 2018. After completion of this course, students began an app-based Aptitude training in February 2019 with 390 students under FACE (Focus Academy for Career Enhancement) and 312 students under *Pariksha*.

A grant from Sundaram Asset Management Company Limited, towards FFE's skill development program, enabled special mock interview sessions for 63 final year Engineering scholars, to help prepare them for placement interviews. In March 2019, the grant also enabled 142 medical scholars studying in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year to enroll in the English training program.

A new cohort (FY 2019-20) of 1348 second year Engineering scholars are expected to complete their baseline AMCAT tests on July 15<sup>th</sup>. This cohort will begin their training from August 2019 onwards.

## Trainee Testimonials



*“Coursera platform provided me an opportunity to learn certain courses which are in demand today. The courses were very good. I took Cisco Networking Basics specialization which included 5 courses and it covered almost all the important topics of*

*networking. In college, I had networking as a subject and I used to find it difficult, to understand the concepts. Hence, I never enjoyed the subject. But after taking up the courses in Coursera, I slowly started to like the subject and my curiosity to learn more in depth increased. This helped me complete my entire specialization very quickly. I am really glad that I got this opportunity. Thankyou FFE.”*

*Sinchana N*

*3rd Year, Computer Science Engineering  
NMAM Institute of Technology,  
Karkala Taluk, Karnataka*

*“I wholeheartedly thank FFE for giving this opportunity to learn new courses. Nowadays programming is necessary, despite the stream in which we're working in. The*



*courses in Coursera will help me adapt to upcoming technologies. Coursera provided enough time to complete assignments and worthwhile study materials (videos), thus offering the best teaching course. The Coursera team helped me whenever I got stuck with assignments and provided solutions in the form of examples. I chose the specialization – ‘Python for Everybody’. I learned to code with Python. I am sure that this course will add strength to my resume. Last but not the least, coding is a joy and the Coursera course helped prove it.”*

*M Hemanthkumar*

*3rd Year, Mechanical Engineering  
Coimbatore Institute of Technology  
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu*

*The Coursera Program which was provided by FFE is really a helpful program for students like me who always wanted to learn new skills. The specialization - ‘Machine Learning with TensorFlow on Google Cloud Platform’*



*kindled a new interest for machine learning. I also hope that the skills learnt from this specialization in Coursera, will help me in my campus placements. Thank you FFE for giving me this opportunity.”*

*Gudipati Pranay Deep*

*3rd Year, Biotechnology  
Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee  
Roorkee, Uttarakhand*

*“FFE has helped me and my family by giving me the scholarship, for the last 2 years. This helped cover my education expenses and hence my parents were able to afford educating my sibling. Currently in my 3<sup>rd</sup> year of MBBS, I have undertaken the English training course by Enguru. Prior to this training, I hesitated conversing in English, in front of my classmates and friends. This training course has helped me a lot and has given me the confidence in conversing and understanding the language with ease. It has also helped me take part in seminars and conduct workshops.*



*It is an honour to be supported by this great organization, which helps needy students fulfill their desire, to pursue their higher education. I will always be grateful to FFE!”*

*Samiksha Ambule*

*3rd Year, MBBS  
B.J. Government Medical College  
Pune, Maharashtra*

## II. Awards and Achievements

### FFE Awarded GuideStar Gold Seal of Transparency

For the third consecutive year, FFE was awarded the prestigious ‘Advanced Level - GuideStar India Gold’ award, for demonstrating transparency in the

public domain – sharing tax returns filed within the due date, audited annual accounts and auditor’s reports submitted to the tax authorities (for the past 2 years).



GuideStar India is India’s largest and most reliable online information repository with more than 9000 NGOs. FFE was presented its first Gold Award in Mumbai on 27th September 2016.

GuideStar India facilitates donations to causes and organizations across the country. While any voluntary organization can register itself on the GuideStar website, awards by GuideStar are possible only after the organization has qualified through a rigorous diligence process.

### III. Voice of Scholars

#### I. Current Scholar

Mannem Muni Preetham  
Tirupathi, Andhra Pradesh

Mannem Muni Preetham is a final year Electronics and Communication Engineering student from National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK) – Surathkal. Preetham received a placement offer from Samsung Semiconductors India and will be joining the company this summer.



*“I completed high school in my hometown, Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh. In Class 10, I scored 9.7 CGPA and 98.70% in Class 12. My parents were very happy when I secured a rank of 2,864 AIR in JEE MAINS. Unfortunately, fees of IITs and NITs were hiked that same year. My father works as a two-wheeler mechanic and my mother is a homemaker. They*

*struggle every day and earn an income of Rs. 54,000, a year. Considering my family’s financial situation, I had no idea how we would pay the fees. Fortunately, a relative told us about the FFE scholarship program and I applied for the same.*

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I am grateful to FFE for accepting my application and helping me pursue my education. Thank you Indus-AWOO for being my donors through the Indus-AWOO FFE Scholarship Program.

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*When I joined college, it was a new experience for me, as it was the first time I left home for an extended period. I had the opportunity to meet people from all over the country. The faculty in my college were helpful and I also did quite well in my course. At the beginning of the third year, we had internship exams from various companies who came to recruit final year students. I received a 3-week internship opportunity with Samsung Semiconductors and having done well there, this translated into a pre-placement offer. I accepted the same as Samsung is one of the core companies for Electronics and Communication Engineering.*

*I am grateful to FFE for accepting my application and in helping me pursue & complete my higher education. Thank you Indus-AWOO for being my donor through the Indus-AWOO FFE Scholarship Program.”*

#### II. Alumnus

Ranjith Kagathi  
California, USA

FFE alumnus Ranjith Kagathi is a senior software engineer at Google’s headquarters in California, USA. He was an FFE scholarship recipient from 2001-2005, while pursuing his undergraduate degree in Electronics and Communications Engineering from Karnataka Regional Engineering College (REC Surathkal) now known as NITK-Surathkal (National Institute of Technology, Karnataka).



*“When I was in high school, my father ran a book store and my mother was a housewife. My father managed to support our family of 4, but I realized I’d need financial help to study further. My high school math teacher knew I was worried about paying the fees, but convinced me not to concern myself about that and to focus on studying. I managed to score*

10th rank in the Karnataka Engineering entrance and 18th rank in the Medical entrance exam, from over 150,000 applicants.

Local politicians such as the MLA visited our house and congratulated me. I received many promises of financial aid but unfortunately, they were hollow. I began losing hope. That's when one of my high school seniors introduced me to FFE and I was thrilled to receive a scholarship for all 4 years of my college education. FFE's support allowed me to focus on my studies. I graduated at the top of my batch with the university gold medal. It was one of the most satisfying days of my life but even more, it was a proud moment for my parents.

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After graduation, I joined a startup in India and then moved to USA to work for Qualcomm. Now I am a tech lead in Google's Augmented Reality team and recently got an opportunity to speak at Google's annual developer conference ([Click here to watch Ranjith](#))

I am currently fulfilling my commitment to FFE to pay back by sponsoring two scholars. I am very happy that one of them recently graduated and accepted a well paying job offer. Not long ago, I was on the other side and I can imagine how much this must have meant to his family. FFE not only transformed my life but also enabled me to transform others' life through their platform."

## IV. Volunteer Speak

Mr. V Hariharan Iyer  
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

Mr. Hariharan Iyer has been associated with FFE for nearly twenty years. He has close to four decades of experience in Quality Management, working at M/s Century Textiles (Mumbai), leading 100% cotton composite textile mill in Asia. Mr. Iyer currently lives in Ramanathapuram, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.



Mr. Hariharan Iyer graduated in Textile Technology in 1967 from Institute of Textile Technology, Trivandrum, and Kerala. Shortly after receiving his college degree, Mr. Iyer joined M/S Century Textiles

& Industries Ltd (Textile Division). In 2003, he retired as Quality Assurance Manager. A few years before his retirement, Mr. Iyer also started lending his expertise as a Senior Consultant on Quality Assurance (QMS and other Quality related areas) to various organizations and continues to provide consultancy services, even after his retirement. He acquired additional diplomas in Quality Management & Textile Technology and is actively associated with The Quality Circle Forum of India (QCFI) and National Center for Quality Management (NCQM). NCQM also awarded Mr. Iyer a Fellowship in recognition of his achievements and contributions in the field of Quality Management.

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*I am glad and proud to be a part of FFE, and its efforts towards providing scholarships to deserving students across the country*

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Mr. Hariharan Iyer was introduced to FFE by Mr. M. Ragupathy (Retd. ADG, Bureau of Indian Standards Institution), who along with his wife Mrs. Aparna Ragupathy are long-time FFE volunteer facilitators and supporters. Almost 20 years ago, Mr. Ragupathy used to be a mentor for Mr. Iyer. After nearly 20 years of being associated with the Trust, Mr. Iyer says, "I am glad and proud to be a part of FFE, and its efforts towards providing scholarships to deserving students across the country."

## V. Donor Feature

Ms. Divija Lahe  
Advisor – Dell Giving  
Dell Technologies, Bangalore

*"It has been a pleasure for us to be associated with FFEIT. Through our project, we were able to support scholarships for 50 academically bright Engineering students from economically deprived societies.*

*Recently, the students that we have been supporting over the last 4 years have graduated and it is truly exciting for us to realize the impact that we were able to create on the students through the project.*

*FFEIT has been transparent in reporting impact and project indicators, which has helped us to track the students' progress. They also support the students through a mentorship program, which has added value outside of the scholarship to the students. It has been a great journey and it is wonderful to be associated with FFEIT's work in the space of education."*

## VI. Employee Highlight

Jennifer Jegam

Senior Executive - Skills Development & Placement



Jennifer joined FFE India Trust as a Project Coordinator in November 2017. Jennifer has played different roles at FFE; as part of the Scholarship Team, Jennifer was responsible for reviewing and processing scholarship application forms. Jennifer then moved to the Alumni team, where she was actively involved in alumni fundraising, building the FFE Alumni database and co-organized Open House events across the country.

In April 2018, Jennifer joined the Training Team as a Senior Executive. Her main role consists of managing the skills development program funded by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF), which provides training programs to 2nd, 3rd and 4th year engineering students. She also manages training programs funded by Sundaram Asset Management Company Limited. Jennifer is also responsible for maintaining FFE's alumni placement database and assists in providing donors with scholar/alumni placement and employment profiles. Jennifer also coordinates between the FFE scholars and the corporate partners, for the various internship programs offered.

Prior to working with FFE, Jennifer worked as an Oracle Consultant with Wipro for three years. A software engineer, Jennifer holds a B.Tech degree in Information Technology from Anna University – Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Jennifer is a classical dancer and an avid traveler, who enjoys exploring new places.



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