IT and Public Health in India

It all began in the fall of 2004 when seven Indian students sat in a classroom in Hinjawadi, India and listened to their first College of Public Health lecture. Those students graduated in August 2006 earning a Master of Public Health degree with a concentration in Global Health Informatics, a unique 2½ year endeavor between USF’s College of Public Health and the International Institute of Information Technology (I²IT) in Pune, India. Deepti Shukla (shown here at right) said, “The two years with USF were [an] excellent experience.”

Within days of graduation, four of the seven students obtained jobs—three with CalSoft, a US-owned firm based in Channai, India—and one student with DataMonitor, a UK based firm, based in Kerala, India.

Three of the four students are aiming for public health positions in India, where the country is just beginning to build a public health infrastructure. One student, Parag Borkar (shown here on left), is a 2006 graduate of the College of Public Health, and currently works in New Delhi, India as a Health Project Officer with the Canadian Red Cross. Parag writes that he recently returned from Sri Lanka after completing the “Master Trainer” course for the “Be Safe!” program. The Sri Lankan Red Cross Society in association with the Canadian Red Cross Society conducted the “Be Safe” Master Trainer course, a course designed to help prevent sexual and physical abuse in children ages 5 – 9. Professionals were trained in child abuse, prevention strategies, handling disclosures of abuse and as facilitators of training programs on these issues. Parag writes, “I am very happy to be certified as a ‘Master Trainer’ for this program which deals with a problem we are facing worldwide…..Now, I have [an] added responsibility… I have to work on incorporating this program in various other projects in India. I am sure I can do that with the expected results. I [wanted] to share my happiness for this achievement with you.” We here at the College congratulate Parag!

Sad News Regarding another of our I²IT Graduates

Unfortunately, very sad news came about Vinod Gopalakrishnan (pictured at left), an I²IT alumnus who had written to us in January, 2007, about a wonderful job he was to begin with the CDC Global AIDS Program in India. Vinod was to be a consultant IT specialist with responsibility for development of a patient information system for India’s General Hospital of Thoracic Medicine, the largest AIDS care centre in India. He was killed in a motorcycle accident in India. Our deepest condolences have been extended to Vinod’s friends and family.