

Gayen

Gayen begins his day at dawn, when he has to get out of bed and quickly get ready for school. He lives in a place called St. Claire situated in the central hills, which is home to one of the most beautiful waterfalls of Sri Lanka (approximately 130 km East of the Capital City, Colombo.) From St. Claire, he takes the bus to Hatton and from Hatton another long bus-ride to Maskeliya (a total of 25 km.s). From Maskeliya he walks a half-mile distance to where the Tea Leaf Vision Centre for Professional Development is situated. The whole journey takes approximately 2 ½ hours.

He is a new student at the Tea Leaf Vision, Centre for Professional Development. He heard about Tea Leaf Vision, through the principal of Highlands College of Hatton, where the Tea Leaf Vision staff members did a promotion at the beginning of the school year. During the this first term, Gayen has been working hard at school and has improved quite a lot in his spoken English.

He comes from a lower middle class family, struggling with the ever-rising cost of living in Sri Lanka. His father is a field officer at St. Clair Tea Plantation. His mother is a housewife. After struggling much with many of their financial problems, somehow the three children in the family completed the their school education. His older sister has recently started working for the “Tea Castle” of St. Clair, where a lot of tourists visit. His older brother has just joined the Hatton National Bank as a trainee, where he does not get paid much as he is in his training period. The family is able to just meet their basic needs, however, there is no surplus money to pay for young Gayen’s bus fare of approximately Rs. 150/= (approximately £ 0.83) each school day.

However, he did not give up. He came to the Tea Leaf Vision Centre for Professional Development to take the placement test in written and spoken English. During the interview, he expressed his desire to study English and explained about his financial difficulties at home. Seeing his commitment, and his diligence to endure hardship to achieve his goal, The Tea Leaf Trust reached out to help him financially to meet his travel costs. As he is a good artist, he paints pictures during the night after completing his homework and school assignments, and sells them to the tourists in front of the “Tea Castle” and other shops, to buy books and stationery for school. He also gives some money to his family.

Gayen is a diligent student of Tea Leaf Vision, who works hard from dawn to dusk each school day. At the school, he is learning English Speech and Grammar, I.T., Business Studies, Success & Ethics. He said that he is getting good English knowledge from the school. Gifted with many talents, he designs garments too. His passion lies equally on holding a good job in designing garments or becoming a teacher. He would like to teach English and History to G.C.E. O/L (National Level Examination at Grade 10) students. Motivated by the “Success & Ethics” lessons, he believes that the English knowledge he is receiving from Tea Leaf Vision will be the channel through which all of his other talents will be realized and that one day he will be in the upper levels of the social ladder.

Through the timely assistance of the generous donors of Tea Leaf Vision, struggling and talented youngsters like Gayen are helped to make a difference in their lives.

\*\* Student’s name has been changed to protect his identity. Exchange Rate :- SL Rs. 168 = £1 approximately.