

## **AKSHAYA PATRA WINS AWARD FROM THE TECH MUSEUM**

*2009 Tech Awards honors international innovators for applying technology to benefit humanity*

(SAN JOSE, Calif.) November 23, 2009 – The Akshaya Patra Foundation was honored Thursday night as a winner of the 2009 Tech Awards in the education category. The Tech Awards, presented by Applied Materials, Inc., is one of the premier annual humanitarian awards programs in the world, recognizing technical solutions that benefit humanity and address the most critical issues facing our planet and its people.

The cash prize winners were announced during the awards ceremony held at a formal gala in San Jose attended by more than 1,500 people, including Silicon Valley industry giants, eminent philanthropists and political leaders. Nobel Laureate and former Vice President Al Gore was also honored during the ceremony with the 2009 James C. Morgan Global Humanitarian Award.

“I am honored to accept this award on behalf of the 1.2 million children that we serve daily,” said Madhu Sridhar, Akshaya Patra President and CEO during her acceptance speech. This remark was met to a thunderous applause. “I would also like to recognize the contributions of all those who work in the kitchens, who wake up at 2:30 in the morning to cook delicious meals for these children. They are the real heroes.”

Akshaya Patra, the world’s largest NGO-run midday meal program, provides freshly prepared, wholesome meals to over one million underserved children daily in over 6,000 schools. This meal is an incentive for children to come to school, stay in school and provides them with the necessary nutrients they need to develop their cognitive abilities to focus on learning. The program is a strategic intervention aimed at unlocking the vicious cycle of poverty and hunger.

“The Laureates’ awe-inspiring innovations are a powerful incentive for us to consider our individual responsibility to contribute to positive change around the world,” said Peter Friess, president of The Tech Museum, said. “Tonight we have seen what happens when we harness the very best of ourselves with the express purpose of developing innovative ideas for a more promising future.”

The awards program honors 15 innovators annually alongside the recipient of the Global Humanitarian Award. Laureates are selected by a prestigious panel of international judges organized by the Santa Clara University’s Center for Science, Technology, and Society, and made up of Santa Clara University faculty as well as leaders from educational and research institutions, industry and the public sector around the world. Since The Tech Awards was founded nine years ago, Applied Materials has partnered with The Tech Museum to celebrate the awardees’ extraordinary inventions and to bring increased visibility to their pioneering efforts. Each of the five Tech Awards categories is sponsored by a major corporation or foundation. They are: Economic Development (BD Biosciences), Education (Microsoft), Environment (Intel), Equality (Swanson Foundation), and Health (Nokia). Other major sponsors include Polycom, SAP, Genentech and KPMG.

After accepting the award, Akshaya Patra USA Board Chair Gururaj “Desh” Deshpande discussed Akshaya Patra’s global model of efficiency and ingenuity, “We all seek answers to pressing challenges and try to find ways to have a positive impact. Organizations that address vital issues and offer a real possibility of bringing about change attract individuals and activists and keep them engaged. Akshaya Patra is doing just that - effectively addressing the seemingly insurmountable problems of hunger, malnourishment, poverty and education by efficiently leveraging state of the art technology in a country

as enormous and as diverse as India.”

### **About Akshaya Patra**

Akshaya Patra, a public-private partnership, started modestly in 2000 by feeding 1,500 children and has grown exponentially in the last nine years to feed over one million children daily through 18 kitchens in seven states in India. Because of intensive use of technology, Akshaya Patra delivers school lunch at a fraction of the cost of similar programs in other parts of the world. It costs \$28 to feed a child daily for the entire school year. With an average government subsidy of 50 percent, \$28 feeds two children. An AC Nielsen Impact Study of the program showed improved school enrollment, retention rates and classroom performance. Akshaya Patra is a great example of what can be accomplished when the public sector, private sector and the civic society collaborate-- a cost effective, scalable solution with high quality service delivery.

Indigenously designed centralized kitchens optimize quality and minimize cost. The organization operates centralized kitchens in urban and suburban areas. The centralized model is technology-intensive. The automated kitchen facility is a classic example of how mechanization has improved efficiency and ensured quality. Appropriate technological considerations have governed all phases of the design and process. The facility consists of a series of mechanized steam-heated cauldrons, custom-built to cook nutrient-rich, native food most appreciated by children on a long-term basis. Mechanization has minimized human handling of food to ensure high standards of hygiene and cleanliness. Steam heating has accelerated the cooking process, enabling the Foundation to prepare meals in large scale in less than five hours. The centralized kitchens are located in Bangalore, Hubli-Dharwad, Mangalore, Mysore, Bellary, Jaipur, Nathdwara, Puri, Gandhinagar/Ahmedabad, Vrindavan, Hyderabad, Visakapatnam and Bhilai. Six of the Akshaya Patra kitchens have received FSMS ISO 22000:2005 certification— a first of its kind achievement for an NGO. Akshaya Patra’s next milestone is to serve 5 million children daily by 2020. For more information, visit [www.foodforeducation.org](http://www.foodforeducation.org).