

## **PRANAV SENTHILKUMAR**

### **Helping to adopt a school in Chennai**



While on my trip to India, while volunteering at an underprivileged school as a part of a TNF Initiative, I noticed that something fundamental had to be changed to allow these kids to learn.

They were extremely bright - able to grasp concepts immediately after an explanation. Yet most of these students, some of whom were in middle school, struggled to write their name or speak in English. I learned from many of them that they had to work a job to support their families, and they almost never had time to study. Furthermore, they were sitting on wooden crates, and had to erase and reuse notebooks every time they finished using one. The conditions were brutal - and I knew I had to do something to help these kids.

As I tried to understand why these students were able to pass through elementary and middle school without these fundamental skills, I stumbled upon the new policy of the Indian government. The government now requires students to

be passed until 8th grade, regardless of ability. Through this policy may seem as a boon at first, the grave reality is that most, if not all, of these kids are unable to pass the “10th standard exam” equivalent to passing the high school in USA.

I have been playing chess for nearly 10 years, and I have earned recognition at every level, including a title from the World Chess Federation. Seeing an opportunity to utilize my skills for a good cause, I decided that I would run chess tournaments in order to contribute towards the education of these students.

I created a nonprofit, GiftEducation Services, and I began to run chess tournaments and coach chess and geography to raise funds for my company.

Through these efforts, we were able to raise enough money to adopt one school for one year through the TNF ABC Initiative.

Together we have changed many lives, and my non-profit is still extremely active, and I would continue raising funds to help educate underprivileged kids. I am extremely grateful for TNF’s help, and support in achieving my dream.