



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

April 2014

## All 30 tailoring trainees net jobs

*ACL employs entire Sevalaya batch*



Balan HR Manager of Ambattur Clothing Limited (ACL) were the Chief Guests on the occasion and distributed the certificates.

Appreciating the services of Sevalaya, he assured that ACL will offer employment to all the women and youth who are



For 30 rural women ranging from teenagers to mothers the life has changed in the last six months. Without even 10th Std pass under their belt, they were unemployed and confined to their homes . Then came the opportunity to undergo tailoring course at Sevalaya's Ayalur Unit. No sooner have they completed the course, all 30 of them have landed jobs at Ambattur Clothing Limited. Regular monthly salaries, benefits of the organised sector, employee canteen, a

day care centre for the children and pick up from home and drop are all part of their new life.

### Certificates distributed

Certificates were issued to the 30 rural women and youth who have completed the free computer course run by Sevalaya at its Ayalur center, in a function at the Community Hall of Ayalur Panchayt on 12th Mar 2014. Selvanathan, General Manager, Valli, Senior HR Manager and

trained at Sevalaya. He also offered to arrange transport facilities for commuting to and from work place.

The valedictory function of the tailoring training at the Vadanallur centre of Sevalaya was held on 11th March 2014.

Fr. Joemike SJ, Superior and Correspondent of Loyola High School, Uthiramerur was the Chief Guest on the occasion and distributed the certificates.

Appreciating the services of Sevalaya, Fr. Joemike said that women empowerment is more important and that Sevalaya has chosen the right way of training the women. He also said that self development is more important for women which will not only help her but will also help in the development of her family.



# Joy of Giving: *the* Way of Life

Dear Friends,

Opinion about temples and priests are not so positive now-a-days. We have a feeling money works everywhere, if you need to jump queues in big temples, if you need to stand before the GOD for a longer period of time, if you need to book special prayers without notice – whatever you want except devotion can be purchased. When GOD himself wants to relinquish all material belongings and stand in front of you posing as “Palani Andi” (the beggar of Palani) – just with a piece of loin cloth – we go and offer golden loin cloth! Temples have become a place where people can show their money power. The temple priests attract lot of criticism like they give preference only to people who drop currency notes into their plate, people who are willing to offer money for every bit of their service etc.

Last week we had ear piercing function for ten underprivileged girls. To perform the rituals we had invited Arun Sastry, a priest from local temple. This local Shiva temple is a very small village temple, but with more than six hundred years of history. The temple does not attract a large crowd on normal days. Only on some festival days, there will be a noticeable attendance in the temple. Arun Sastry will keep the temple open from 5 AM to 12 noon and again from 4 PM to 9 PM, but hardly there



will be any visitor on a daily basis. Such priests in village temples will hardly get any income. They have to do the job just for the love of it. Only on festival days, there is a possibility of some income to the temple and the priest. The priest is also married and has a family to take care of! On many days he should be satisfied with a bunch of bananas and couple of coconuts which devotees would have offered to him. Most of the times, I have seen him sitting alone in the temple, but with a lot of enthusiasm, chanting Sanskrit and Tamil slokas. Crowd or no crowd made no difference to him.

Arun Sastry performed all rituals and conducted the ear piercing ceremony in a traditional way. He had to spend couple of hours at Sevalaya and when he was

packing up his things, it was time for us to give his “ Dhakshina” (the payment we make to the priest). I put some betel leaves and fruits and coconuts and a 500 rupee note on a plate and offered it to him. He just touched the plate and said “You are doing this function for the underprivileged girls. Let this money be my contribution. If you insist on giving me any Dhakshina, please give me just one rupee”. He was happy to receive one rupee for his two hours of service and walked away.

This “Priest social responsibility (PSR)” is not mandated by the Government.

Thanks & Regards

Murali

## Ear piercing performed on ten daughters



Ten daughters of Sevalaya had their ear piercing done on 16th March 2014. One of the Hindu sacraments performed on a child, the ear piercing ceremony

was made possible by ten kindhearted sponsors coming forward with financial support for the ceremony.



Out of ten girls in the age group of 5 to 10 years, the residents of Sevalaya’ Girls Home the parents details of seven girls are not known. Of the remaining three, two girls are under the care of their mother since their father deserted the family. One girl is under the care of her uncle, her parents having passed away.

Kind hearted donors who came forward to sponsor one child each were invited for the ceremony. They performed the role of parents, with the children sitting on their laps and Ganapathy Homam and ear piercing performed.



## Training trainers for skill upgradation



Pooja Makhija, Director of Fashion Futures, New Delhi, conducted a five day training for the trainers - a training camp for the teaching staff of Sevalaya's craft centre at Vadanalur, Ayalur and the garment section of the Community College at Kasuva. The objective was to give indepth training to properly use the power machine effectively, in pace with in today's rapidly developing garment industry. The staff had been given an earlier training for three days during the month of November 2013 by Pooja. The

follow up training covered the nuances involved in stitching various types of garments perfectly besides motivation, self confidence and leadership skills.

Pooja also supervised the classes conducted by the trainers for the garment section of the community college, to be sure that the lessons were well absorbed.

Says S. Kaveri, a trainer: " This was a new level of learning garment making. This training has given me confidence to become a good entrepreneur".

## Women in Focus at Celebrations



The varied roles women played in life were in focus at the Women's day celebration on 8th March 2014. Chief Guest of the function was Usha Srinivasan, HR Executive of BHEL. Speaking at the occasion she said, "Women play a powerful role in all aspects of life at home and in the world outside. She plays the role of a mother, wife and professional in her life today.

She has been endowed with the gifts of compassion, forgiveness, patience and love which stand by her in good stead helping her to play her multifaceted role with ease".

150 volunteers from SBI Global chose to celebrate their CSR day at Sevalaya, coinciding with women's day. They presented computers, stationery items and also made donation.

## A Dream come true



K. Laila is the tailoring trainee in the Sevalaya's newly opened community college. At the age of 40 she has got an opportunity to learn tailoring which is her long lasting dream. She says with full happiness " My dream has come true after joining the college. I never expected that I will sit in the tailoring machine and stitch clothes".

### Tough life

Laila shared her past years with us. She got married to K. Kothandam against her parents wish. She left her parents and started a new life with her husband but later she realized she had made a big blunder of marrying him. Her days passed with regular beatings and fight with her drunken husband and she left him one day when her daughter was very small. She came to her mother's house with her three children. For her livelihood she started to work as a helper in a garment manufacturer in Ambattur. She wished that she wanted to become a tailor and in the free time she used to sit in the machines and try the pedaling. She couldn't become a tailor because she didn't know it properly.

Days passed but her wish to become a tailor could not be fulfilled. So she decided to quit her job and joined Sevalaya's tailoring centre before 5 years. Her training could not be completed due to the financial need of her family. So she stopped the training in one month. She cannot even join in any part time courses due to the fee charged there and the qualification they require. After 5 years now she has got an opportunity to join the community college without fees and any qualification.

### Women at Sevalaya: some stats

- Ladies to Gents, staff ratio **2.1 : 1**
- School Toppers in last 14 years:  
**8 girls and 6 boys**

# Community College: vocational training for school dropouts



Community College is Sevalaya's latest initiative to inclusiveness through informal education. Functioning since February 2014, it is proving to be an unexpected ray of hope for rural youth who have had to forego formal school education, for whatever reasons. No doubt, the dropout rate in the Sevalaya school is remarkably low, but those who fail to finish school do not qualify for admission to ITIs that offer vocational courses. This realisation led to the setting up of the Community College which does not hold lack of formal education against a candidate.



The accent is on making the students competent. The training is practical in its orientation. Industry experts are being roped in to give practical tips through guest lectures. Partnership with industry is seen as integral to the unique value addition, be it through industry visits,

## How you can help

- Guest lecturers/trainers
- Offer internships/ employment (in construction, grooming, garment industries)
- Material support: Cloth for stitching practice, cosmetics for Beautician course, plywood for carpentry.
- Orders for furniture, garment stitching, installation of refrigerators and air-conditioners

## What is Unique

- Practical training by experts
- Practical training through internship in a corporate
- 6 months support as self employed
- Placement support

internship or placements. Importantly, Sevalaya's training will come with grooming, including etiquette, Functional English and communication skills as also customer servicing skills.

On your next visit to Sevalaya, you can now try facials and the furniture the trainees make under expert supervision.



Of the five trades, beautician course has 24 students, from teen aged girls to married women with no educational qualification. Garment cutting has 23 students, some of them attending classes with their little kids. Carpentry has 3 students while Electrician trade has 30 students, AC and refrigeration has 15 students.

## Light at the end of the tunnel



A. Ilangovan is a carpentry student at Sevalaya's Community College. He is 27 years old.

Ilangovan's father M. Angamuthu is a daily wage earner and mother goes for the 100 day wages work.

Physically challenged Ilangovan has been a burden to his parents. He did not go for any work and all the time he was at home. He had stopped studies after his 5th standard.

When he learnt about the carpentry course, he grabbed the unexpected opportunity to exit the deadend in his life.

He says " I also have a life now. After my course I will get a fairly good job. I can then take care of my family".



# Medical Centre brings emergency care closer to villagers

Kasuva village where Sevalaya set up its operations in 1988, is a remote village 42 kms west of Chennai city and 22 kms away from the head quarters of Tiruvallur district. The village never had even the basic medical facilities, forcing the people to go the district head quarters for medical treatment. The nearest Public Health Centre at Puliur is 3 kms away and functions only from 8 AM to 1 PM. To mitigate the situation, a small medical centre was started in 1994.

The centre started with Siddha medicines in the beginning when doctors from Arignar Anna Siddha Medical College used to visit monthly once and do the screening and the treatment for the villagers and the children. Gradually, the centre developed when doctors of various specialties such as Eye, Dental, ENT and General started visiting the Centre to do screening.

When old age home was started in 2002, the Centre proved very useful to the elder residents. They could be rushed to the centre in the night and treatment given to them.

As Nagarajan, the old age care taker recalls, "There were so many nights when we had taken the elders to the medical centre when their BP used to go high and for their asthmatic attacks. Medical centre was a boon to us during the nights and we used to do the first aid and then take them to the hospital in Tiruvallur".

The school teachers also shared the experience of taking Mohan, a Sevalaya pupil, who broke his hand and dislocated a bone. The boy was given first aid by



his seven month old infant developed breathing problem due to congestion in lungs. The family did not know what to do. Then they remembered the Medical Centre and came running with the child. The on-duty nurse Elavarasi assessed the situation and gave an injection which brought immediate relief to the child. The mother, who had been in tears, felt relieved when the child became normal.

keeping the bone in position using a scale and tying a bandage. The boy was then taken to the hospital for further treatment.

Nagarajan said that there were so many such experiences that had brought tears in his eyes and the role played by the staff in the medical centre was amazing.

A recent episode that emphasised the role of the Centre was that of D. Munirathnam who lives not far from Sevalaya. One day, late in the evening,



*Though a crucial outpost at Kasuva village in case of medical emergencies, this life-saving mission will be better served by an ambulance, since a hospital with minimum facilities is 22 kms away, at Thiruvallur.*



# Soon, Sevalaya too will have a basketball court

*Thanks to Round Table 95's generous sponsorship*

The members of the Round Table 95 who have been supporting Sevalaya for the past 2 years. They have made it a point to consider the immediate needs of Sevalaya and do their best.

The members were at Sevalaya on 20th March 2014, to donate 120 fans and 130 CFL lights.

While at the campus, they read the story of the two basketball players. The members were inspired by the two girls who played state level championship even without a basket ball court for

practice. Touched by the story, they immediately decided to support the construction of a Basketball court costing upward of an estimated Rs 7 lacs. Chairman of Round Table 95, Sachin announced this during the function, to thunderous applause. His colleagues Vimal and Sunil commended the team's passion. They offered their best wishes to the team and hoped they would play well and shine in state level tournaments.

On behalf of Sevalaya's children and on behalf of sports, shall we say, "Three cheers to the Round Table 95!"

## Motivating responses

*After reading about the basketball players, a lady wrote in, congratulating the girls and the P T master. Convinced of the need, she offered to escalate the matter to a government official with the powers to make the court a reality.*

*Meanwhile, the Round Table 95 offer of making the court at an estimated cost of over Rs 7 lacs came.*

*Sevalaya is grateful for every empathetic thought and deed.*

### Champion hoopsters without a hoop!



Sevalaya's girls' basketball team are champions at many tournaments. Team members K. R. Bhuvaneshwari and S. Chaitanya Lakshmi. Proudly dress in the State level competitions.

"What is so great?" you may wonder, watching your own playing days, the heart of practice, taking no shortcuts and the endless training practice sessions...

Believe it or not, Sevalaya does not have a basketball court, not even a half court, not even a board. But that did not deter the girls or PT master Sumanapandhi.

If only they had the basic infrastructure, these village girls can realize their dream and flourish in sportsmanship.

As a sports lover, if you would like to help them realize their dream, call Sevalaya, 044-24552374/9446222255.

**sevalaya**  
sevalaya.org

## Support to discover two more Abhiramis

Sevalaya's appeal for donor partners to help discover talents such as Abhirami elicited multiple responses.

Impressed with Abhirami's grit and success in her chosen field of fine arts, a gentleman wrote: "I would like to support two students like Abhirami, at Rs.12,000 per year each. Please get in touch with me."

Another encouraging response came from a Group company of Tata Consultancy Services, commissioning Abhirami to do a series of posters to display in their offices.

### Would you help us discover the next Abhirami?



Orphaned at five, and abandoned by relatives, Abhirami grew up in Sevalaya Home. She showed exceptional talent in art, which did not miss the expert eyes of Mr and Mrs Beach of Children's Art Village. Sponsored by them, Abhirami joined the Government Arts College, Chennai. Just months away from her graduation, she has a job offer from Dreamart magazine. Dreamart's pages will soon be the canvas for this budding artist.

Unborn talent has no demographic preferences. With timely identification and encouragement, such Godly gifts can blossom. In the last 25 years, we have seen many orphans becoming great professionals. We provide an enabling environment in our Boys and Girls Homes that together have 150 child residents. Would you help us to ensure that each of them realize their full potential? Would you help us to discover the next Abhirami?

With Mr. 12000 @ annum, it will span 24 months. Mail: www.sevalaya.org

## A large-hearted donor

"God is present in every Jiva; there is no other God besides that. He who serves Jiva serves God indeed"- Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda has inspired many people to work for the upliftment of the less fortunate. Sevalaya itself owes its birth to the inspiration that Swami Vivekananda provided to its founder early in life. Thankfully, many people in different walks of life practice the gospel of selfless service. By their very nature, they are empathetic to their fellow beings and do whatever they can for others.

One exemplary instance the world should know about is Anandapandi, who ekes out a living by collecting waste papers and materials and selling them. A native of Tirunelveli who is a IX Standard drop out, he runs a small waste paper mart near Jaya school at Thiruninravur and earns enough to support his family, consisting of his wife and two daughters.



He has to pay rent for his shop and lives in a rented house. But he is contented with his lot and feels happy that he can meet the needs of his small family.

"I celebrate the birth days of my daughters every year by donating a small part of my earning to feed hungry poor children of orphanages, instead of visiting temples

and doing pujas. From my friends and customers I came to know about the good services being rendered by Sevalaya to the destitute children, and I was eager to donate on the birth day of my second daughter" says Anandpandi. Recently when the 1st birthday of his younger child was celebrated, he had to give in to the desires of his family and have a small celebration at his hometown but he was keen on donating money to Sevalaya and immediately after returning he turned up at Sevalaya with a donation of Rs 1,000.

Today's materialistic world where there are many obsessed with the single point agenda of endless wealth accumulation as much wealth as possible, can do with more Anandpandis ready to share the little they have with those less fortunate than them. The wealth of such people may be limited but their hearts are large enough and ready to accommodate the wellbeing of others.



# A congregation of "Tiny scientists"



Students of Std I dressed as different scientists shared their experiences during the Science day function at Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School. The children made a presentation on the



preservation of environment. Another group presented a skit showing the important incidents in Dr.C. V.Raman's life. The science day was a culmination of a month long activities of science and different competitions like quiz, oratorical and drawing. Prizes were given to the winners of the different competitions.

The Chief Guest Dr. P. Meera, Manager Projects, Scope E Knowledge Center in her speech advised the children to understand science in the daily life and make use of it. She also said that learning science as a subject is not important, but understanding it and implimenting it in life will be more interesting.



V. Muralidharan giving away prizes to the children at the Annual Day at Hari Hara Vidhyalaya on 27th March 2014



Muralidharan distributing UKG graduation certificates at the 28th annual day function at Sri Ramakrishna Mutt Saradha Vidyalaya, T.Nagar.

# 180 villagers benefit from eye camp



Eye camp was conducted by the doctors of Udhi Eye Hospital on 2nd March 2014 at Sivanvoyal village . Out of the 180 villagers screened, 8 villagers who needed cataract surgery were immediately referred and surgery was done. 80 villagers were given glasses free of cost.



# Kottumurasu highlights hygiene message

The Kottumurasu was held on 9th March 2014 at Nallakavanoor village. The student team from Sevalaya enacted skits on personal hygiene and the villagers participated and understood the importance of hygiene.



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# Swamiji on the Joy of Giving

Ask nothing; want nothing in return. Give what you have to give; it will come back to you - but do not think of that now, it will come back multiplied a thousand fold - but the attention must be not on that. You have the power to give; give, and there ends it. Learn that nature will force you to give. So, give willingly. Sooner or later you will have to give up..... It is because we dare not give, because we are not resigned enough to accede to this grand demand of nature, that we

are miserable. The forest is gone, but we get heat in return. The sun is taking up water from the ocean, to return it in showers. You are a machine for taking and giving: you take, in order to give.

Ask, therefore, nothing in return; but the more you give, the more will come to you. The quicker you can empty the air out of this room, the quicker it will be filled up by the external air; and if you close the door and every aperture, that which is within will

remain, but that which is outside will never come in, and that which is within will stagnate, degenerate, and become poisoned. A river is continuously emptying itself into the ocean and continually filling up again. Bar not the exit into the ocean. The moment you do that, death seizes you.

*(Excerpts from Complete works of Swami Vivekananda- Chapter-2)*

***If only you could spare two pizzas,  
this child can live for a month.  
And dream of a life ahead,  
with another two.***



**Rs 500 a month can make a big difference!**

With Rs 500 a month, the living expenses of this orphaned child can be met. With another Rs 500, you can support his education, so he can dream of a life ahead.

Sevalaya is home to 150 orphaned boys and girls. In the last 25 years, we have seen orphans and first generation students born to landless labourers becoming proud professionals.

Today, Sevalaya offers quality education free to over 1,750 children of Kasuva and neighbouring villages outside Chennai.

Together we can make sure that each of them realise his/her full potential and becomes a productive and happy person.

***Come and partner us  
in transforming lives!***

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