



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Sevalaya's News Letter

DECEMBER - 2002

Dear Friends,

Mr. Bill Gates was in India this month and every day he was announcing donations for various causes including AIDS prevention and computer education. He also mentioned that he does not believe in leaving behind a huge property for his children. We have seen many such extra-ordinary philanthropy from the people in United States in the past. We have also seen such people in the TATA family. A notable person from Mylapore is Sir P.S. Sivasamy Iyer, who donated his own house to a school and spent his last days in a small rented house.

Coming back to Computer education in India, Bill Gate's donations will go a long way in spreading computer knowledge in all corners of the country. Sevalaya has a small computer lab and the school children get to use computers from 3rd standard. We got a Diwali gift from Tata Consultancy Services - 20 computers – for our computer lab. With this major donation, the total number of computers in Sevalaya has gone up to 29. The expansion work in the computer lab has been taken up now and very shortly, all 29 computers will be put to use.

Kasuva was a village without any facility a decade ago. There was no school, no medical facilities, no news papers, etc. Today, Sevalaya has made a difference in that area. No one would have even thought in their dreams that a school with all facilities, including a modern computer lab will come up in that part of the country! There is also a free medical center, a free library, all open to the near by villages. Many well-wishers like you have made this possible, through Sevalaya. The employees of Tata Consultancy Services and

the organization itself have contributed a lot this growth of Sevalaya. In fact the growth curve of Sevalaya, very closely follows the TCS's growth curve!

The land on which the school and hostel stands today was bought with the generous contribution from the Image project team in TCS, in 1990. After that many projects in TCS contributed to construction of hostel and classrooms. Many of the TCS clients also have visited the campus and have also contributed. Many continue to contribute for years together. TCS consultants Mr. Ron Radice, Mr. Jack Harding are some of our major donors.

Sevalaya is also working very closely on some of the TCS's community initiatives. The adult literacy program of TCS is co-ordinated by Sevalaya in two of the near-by villages. Couple of batches of adults has undergone this training already and many more enlisted themselves. Two of our volunteers will be traveling to TCS Pune, to understand the know-how of low cost 'Gandhian' water filter, developed by TCS Pune. Once they come back, Sevalaya will start manufacturing these low cost water filters, which will be poor man's aqua guard ! TCS Mumbai, TCS Hyderabad & TCS Thiruvananthapuram, played host to our children on their sight seeing visits this year. The children enjoyed the trip, many of them traveling in long distance trains, first time in their life! TCS Bangalore has invited the next set of children.

With such support from all of you, work at Sevalaya becomes really very easy!

Thanks & Regards
Murali

Exuberance over excellence

Yet another feather in our children's cap!

25 of our children participated in different competitions organised by Trinity Lab of Exuberance run by Vellaiyammal Educational Trust and were awarded Certificates of Merit. Sri. S. Amulraj of 9th Standard has been awarded a medal for standing First in the Tamil Poetry Writing Competition. Dr. Bharathi Natarajan, Managing Trustee of the Trust has congratulated all the children.

Now It's Tiruvananthapuram..

TCSers from different centres are vying with one another to provide hospitality to our children. Earlier it was Mumbai, Pune and Aurangabad, then it was Hyderabad, and now it is the turn of Tiruvananthapuram. 25 children with two staff members started for Tiruvananthapuram on 7th November. They were affectionately received and entertained by TCS Team led by Mr. Narayanan, Col.Nair, Mr. Kesavaswamy, Mr. Neethi and others.

In this Exposure Tour, they visited Sangumugam Beach, Kanyakumari, (where they were thrilled by the Vivekananda Rock Memorial and the 133 feet high statue of Tiruvalluvar) Kovalam Beach, Padmanabha Swami Temple and other places. They were accorded a warm send off by Col.Nair, Mr.Baby, Mr. Vimal and other friends.

"To sum up, we were enthralled by the 'God's Own Land' with its unpolluted greenery, loving, handsome, beautiful, unostentatious people, poetic language etc. it will be long before we get out of its spell" reports Mr. Saravanan who escorted the children along with Ms.Vijaya.

Ilakkiya Charal (Literary Showers)

Members of Ilakkiya Charal, a literary group of youngsters visited our campus and conducted

a literary event in which our children participated along with the group. The programme consisted of a debate, rendering of songs, a humour Talk show. There was a competition for our children on Swami Vivekananda and prizes were distributed. There were some nice gifts to our organisation like valuable books, stainless steel plates. Mr. Ilayavan, founder - President of the group appreciated the talents of our children.

Book-Review Meets.

Date : 9.11.2002
Speaker : Mr. Selvam
Book : Freedom from the known
Author : J.Krishnamurthy

Date : 16.11.2002
Speaker : Mr. G.Chittibabu
Book : 11 Mahavrathas
Author : Mahatma Gandhi

Date : 23.11.2002
Speaker : Mr. T.Easwaran
Book : Hypnotism
Author : Seshayya

Date : 30.11.2002
Speaker : Ms. Mohana Chandrasekaran
Book : Learn to live
Author : Swami Jagadatmananda

Training and Development.

Mathematics too is fun!

Our teachers Mr. A. Ganesh Kumar and Mr. Arockiaraj Kingston attended a workshop on "Mathematics is fun" (techniques for teachers from Standard I to V by Ms. Saroja Balasubramaniam and Ms. Geetha Kannan, organised by the Children Garden School Society at Chennai on 16th November 2002. The teachers report that the programme which included some mathematical Games was "very interesting and useful."

Our aim , mission and ambition –Quality

In our constant pursuit of quality, periodic inputs are given to our staff members. On 24th November, Mr. C.P. Chandrasekaran, Auditor for the International Standards Organisation, from Pune, talked to our staff members on Continuous Improvement. In a very brief session, he brought out the distinction between Continual Improvement and Continuous improvement; explained the concept of Dr. Deming Cycle and impressed upon the need for visualising the obstacles that one may face , even at the stage of planning. He added that this would come only out of experience. He has created an urge in the minds of the participant to qualify for ISO certification as a service Institution, sooner, rather than later. Mr. Borch, another Auditor of ISO from Germany also spoke to the participants.

Health Care

On 6.11.2002 and 8.11.2002, Ms. Malavika Vinodkumar, research student from Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Institute and our Nutrition Advisor, conducted blood tests for children.

Three inmates from our Old Age Home, had Catearact Operation performed–courtesy-Rotary Health Care Centre.

Deepavali Celebrations

Deepavali was celebrated with all mirth and merriment with the Managing Trustee and some of the other Trustees joining the children and senior citizens at the campus. All had new dresses and there were plenty of sweets and crackers to make the event colourful. In the evening, the inmates were taken to the nearby temple to worship the Day on which Good conquered the Evil.

Competitions galore!

A competition was conducted at our school among the students on the recitation of Pudhia Athichoodi by Bharatiyar. The following are the winners:

Juniors

K.Chitra	VI Standard	I Prize
B.Jeevanandam	VIII Standard	II Prize
B.Satish	VIII Standard	III Prize

Seniors

B.Rajalakshmi	IX Standard	I Prize
R.Shanmugavathi	IX Standard	II Prize
C.Rajendran	IX Standard	III Prize

In a Poetry contest for the 9th standard students, the prize winners were:

Rajeswari	I Prize
Meenakshi	II Prize
Banupriya	III Prize

Inter School Competition

Sevalaya conducted an Inter school competition on Bharatiyar for students of schools in Tiruvallur District. As many as 80 children participated in different competitions which included recitation, poetry writing, oratory and essay writing. As many as 35 prizes were awarded . Children from our school who bagged the prizes are: R.Yamuna Rani, B.Jeevanandam, G.Revathy, V.Kannan and U.Radha.

Kanda sashti Competition

In connection with Kandha Sashti, a religious event dedicated to Muruga, A competition on the Lord's Prayer Songs was organised by the local devotees. Our children romped home with 5 prizes. Winners: Dhanasekar, Yamuna Rani, Jeevitha, Ganapathi raman and Vaishali.

DID THEY MEET ?

Part II

In the November, 2002 issue of our *News Letter* we had seen how neither Mahatma Gandhi nor Mahakavi Bharathi ever got to meet Swami Vivekananda. As the famous biographer Goffrey Ashe had said, these meetings which were required to take place as per "historic logic" failed to take place.

The next question is "Did the Mahatma and the Mahakavi ever meet?" The answer here is "Yes, they did", but the meeting itself was too brief. It happened in March 1919. The ruling British Indian government had just then passed a cruel law denying basic legal rights and imposing cruel punishments on anyone taking part in freedom struggle. It was called the Rowlatt Act after the English judge who wrote it. Mahatma Gandhi had opposed the law from the very beginning, but all his efforts were in vain. His friends in Madras (now renamed Chennai) invited him to visit Madras to continue his campaign there, and he readily accepted.

Gandhiji arrived in Madras on 18th March 1919. He stayed as a guest of Rajaji, then a young lawyer. Rajaji's house was at 2, Cathedral Road, in Alwarpet, where the Chola-Sheraton Hotel stands now. Gandhiji addressed a number of meetings opposing the Rowlatt Act and also held discussions with lawyer friends like Rajaji, Sathyamurthy and Barrister Adhi Narayana Chettiar. He was not keeping well, and could hardly even sit in a chair; but anyhow he kept up a punishing schedule. One afternoon he was lying on a mattress in the verandah of Rajaji's house discussing with Rajaji and others. Chettiar was by his side, squeezing oranges and preparing juice for Gandhiji to drink. Gandhiji's secretary Mahadev Desai was there, and a few others. Rajaji had kept a young friend of his named V. Ramamurthy to be near the door and not let anyone in. (Ramamurthy later developed into a brilliant writer in Tamil, and wrote under the penname Va.Ra. He wrote a first hand account of the Gandhiji – Bharathi meeting on which this article is based).

Suddenly, as if out of nowhere, a man with extra-ordinarily bright shining eyes, and dressed in a black coat and white turban, walked in brushing past Va.Ra. 'Enna oay' (meaning "Hey there"), he called out, addressing no one in particular. That was characteristic of the man. Bharathiyar had arrived. And as was always the case, when Bharathi

arrived all eyes turned on him. Everyone else went silent. Va.Ra. meekly followed him inside. Bharathi went straight to Gandhiji, saluted him and sat by his side on the mattress. Conversation between the two followed.

Bharathi:- Mr.Gandhi! I am addressing a meeting at the Triplicane beach this evening at 5.30 P.M. Can you preside over the meeting?

Gandhiji:- (Turning to Mahadev Desai) Mahadev! What are our engagements for to-day evening?

Mahadev:- We have to be elsewhere at 5.30 this evening.

Gandhiji:- (To Bharathi) Then it will not be possible today. Can you postpone your meeting to tomorrow?

Bharathi:- That will not be possible... Then I will take your leave, Mr. Gandhi. My best wishes and blessings for the campaign you are about to launch.

With these words he left, as abruptly as he came in.

"Who is he?" asked Gandhiji after Bharathi left. Every one appeared surprised that Gandhiji did not know him "He is our great poet in Tamil", replied Rajaji. "He should be looked after with great care" Gandhiji said, "Isn't there anyone in Tamil Nadu who can do that?" No one replied.

What impression did Bharathi make on Gandhiji? We can only guess. Nobody introduced Bharathi to him, but Gandhiji himself had obviously realized that his sudden, unannounced visitor was no ordinary person. He did not mind that Bharathi came straight in and sat on his bed. Nor did he appear perturbed that he invited him to preside over a meeting at such short notice. He could see that Bharathi was a treasure, and that the treasure needed looking after! How true!

What impression did Gandhiji make on Bharathi? No need to guess here. Sang the Mahakavi:

Long may you live ,Gandhi Mahatma, you who have brought new life to Bharat,

Endless glory you have gained devising a simple plan whereby our people

Can shake off slavery, breathe free, grow rich, grow learned, grow wise

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