



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Sevalaya's News Letter

DECEMBER - 2004

Dear Friends,

With support from all of you, Diwali was a grand success at Sevalaya. There were visitors both from city and the villages nearby, everyone wanting to do something. Many brought crackers, sweets, fruits, rice, oil, dhal etc. Due to major support from many donors, this year for the first time, we were able to provide new dress for all five hundred children and forty-seven senior citizens.

Many find it difficult to make both ends meet, just with two kids in the house, during Diwali time. Any festival is a head-ache for lower middle class Indian family. When that is the case, we were going through the same motions, a month before Diwali, wondering how we are going to manage the expenses for a family of nearly six hundred people – but just a couple of days before the function the situation improved and we had enough funds to pull through, thanks to all of you.

The village parents were very happy when they received the new clothes for their children studying in our Mahakavi Bharatiar School, which no parent expects a school to do. But we did it, because we know, if we don't do it, these children have no way of getting it. Even sweets were distributed to the entire villagers.

Just a day after Diwali we were again in festive mood, as we celebrated Ramzan. This was an occasion for our children to know the importance of the function and to understand the basic ideas mentioned in Koran.

Two weeks later, we were again celebrating Guru Nanak Jayanthi. Children and the elders were listening to how Guru Granth Sahib was compiled – from the works of Brahmins, other upper caste Hindus, Lower caste Hindus, economically backward people like barbers, butchers, etc, Muslims and Sikhs.

Today we see many people understand only their religion or on many occasions misunderstand their own religion and have no understanding of other religions. If we tell the importance of all religions to our children, right from their school going age, may be there is a possibility that they will have a better understanding of humanity. This is what we are attempting in our school.

We had a small celebration of Karthigai also. The entire campus was glowing with the traditional 'agal' lamps for three days. We are all set to celebrate Christmas and New Year, next month. It gives lot of happiness when we see people from all paths of faith, come to our organization and take part in celebrations. Some people comment that it is even hard to believe that such organizations can survive in present day conditions. Well, you have to just come and visit us!

Speakers in every such function have said, "You are exactly following what is said in our religion". We are just doing one thing in our campus, serving the needy. This maps to the basic requirements of all religions.

Thanks & Regards
Murali



Study Circle Meetings

Date 06/11/2004
 Book We can live, if we think we can (Tamil)
 Author Mr.Rudran
 Speaker Ms. K.R.Vijaya
 Venue Sevalaya Service Centre

Date 13/11/2004
 Book Quick & Easy way to effective speaking
 Author Mr.Dale Carnegie
 Speaker Mr. Arockiaraj Kingston
 Venue Sevalaya Service Centre

Date 20/11/2004
 Book Duty Brings Glory (Tamil)
 Author Mr.Mervin
 Speaker Ms. M.Vatchala
 Venue Sevalaya Service Centre

Date 27/11/2004
 Book Madam Annie Besant
 Author Ms. Santhanalakshmi
 Speaker Mr. A.Sankarapandian
 Venue Sevalaya Service Centre

Students Study Circle

Date 07/11/2004
 Book Perarignar Kamarajar (Tamil)
 Author Dhanushkodi
 Speaker Selvan. K.Satish
 Venue Sevalaya Service Centre

Date 13/11/2004
 Book Annaiyar Iruvar (Tamil)
 Author Ambika Devi
 Speaker Selvi. Anjali
 Venue Sevalaya Service Centre



Date 20/11/2004
 Book Nine Freedom Fighters(Tamil)
 Author Govindaraj
 Speaker Selvan. S.Kumar
 Venue Sevalaya Service Centre

Date 27/11/2004
 Book O'Mind Relax Please (Tamil)
 Author Swami Sukhabhodananda
 Speaker Selvan. P.Ragul
 Venue Sevalaya Service Centre

EVENTS AT SERVICE CENTRE

DIWALI AT SEVALAYA

One of the main festivals of India is Diwali – the festival of lights. Children get excited about the new dresses and sweets, savouries and delicacies they get and above all the crackers and fireworks. Children at Sevalaya are no exception and thanks to the kindness of many philanthropic donors this year Diwali was an occasion to remember, a day to cherish for the children and senior citizens at Sevalaya. We thank all the donors who have contributed in cash and in kind in the forms of dresses to the children and senior citizens, sweets, etc. Diwali celebrations commenced on the evening of 10/11/2004. Mr. Thulasingham, President of the Tamilnadu Rice Manufacturers Association presided over. He inaugurated the celebrations by lighting a cracker. New dresses, sweets and crackers were then distributed to the children. The festivities then began and extended up to that weekend. He donated 10 bags of rice to Sevalaya for Diwali.

RAMZAN AT SEVALAYA

Dr. Aneez Ahmed, Professor of The New College, Chennai presided over the Ramzan celebration at





Sevalaya on 12/11/2004. He spoke to the children about the basic principles of Islam, the 5 duties every Muslim has to perform – two among them are fasting during the month of Ramzan and undertaking the Haj pilgrimage to the Holy Mecca. He added that above all this, the foremost duty of a man that is insisted upon by Islam is serving the poor and the needy.

Mambalam Srinivasan & Party presented a devotional music programme for the children and senior citizens on 15/11/2004.

GURU NANAK JAYANTHI

Guru Nanak Jayanthi was celebrated at Sevalaya on 27th November 2004, at a function organized on the occasion. **Mr. I.S.Sethi** (Secretary, Guru Nanak Satsangh Sabha) & Ms. Rimpi were the Chief guests on the occasion. **Ms.Rimpi** gave a brief, informative speech on the birth & life of Guru Nanak while Mr. Sethi spoke about Guru Nanak's teachings of Love, Brotherhood, Humanity and Secularity and narrated several interesting anecdotes from the sage's life.

In search of knowledge...

Staff of Sevalaya's craft centre and many women from the Village Self Help Groups in and around Kasuva were taken on trip to the Kuthambakkam Village on 13/11/2004.



The Panchayat leader of Kuthambakkam village, Mr. Elango, who has succeeded in creating employment opportunities in the village by developing many small scale village units producing oil and pulses, soap, tailoring unit, etc., spoke to the group about the feasibility of setting up such units in their respective villages which will provide employment and earnings for the individual and also strengthen the village economy. The group then visited the various units to see the functioning and returned as a motivated and inspired group.

Temple visits

The senior citizens were taken to the Sivan Temple at Pakkam for Sashti Festival on 13/11/2004.

The students were taken to the temple on 14/11/2004.

On 19/11/2004 the boys were taken on a visit to the Vinayaka Temple at Kasuva Village.

Participation in external events – sports, competitions...

Our school students participated in the Volleyball match held in the Angel Mat Hr Sec School on 06/11/04.

The girls' team of Sevalaya were the winners in the Kho Kho competition held in Grace Park School on 19/11/04.

Our students participated in the drawing competition conducted by Y's Men Club, Anna Nagar on 21/11/04.



Mens sana in corpore sano

Our Mission is integrated development of children. Integrated, or all round development includes the development of body, mind, intellect and the spirit . Taking proper care of the body is a sine qua non for the development of all the other faculties.

Mahatma Gandhi

Speaks of Mens sana in corpore sano (healthy mind in a healthy body) as the first law for humanity. There is an inevitable connection between mind and body. If we were in possession of healthy minds, we would shed all violence and, naturally obeying the laws of health, we would have healthy bodies without an effort.

Swami Vivekananda

Speaks of body as the chariot and the *buddhi* (intellect) as the charioteer. Buddhi, the charioteer, in turn serves as an effective instrument of self development by controlling the emotions and raising the higher self from the hold of the lower self.

Mahakavi Bharathiyar

Strengthen the Body " is one of his nuggets in Pudhiya Aththi Choodi. He speaks to himself in : "This ocean, the mind" (Siddha Kadal): Make up the mind that you have no disease. As the mind so the body. Son, conquer your body. At all times it should obey you, not you it. It is an animal. You are a Deva. It is a machine. You are its owner."

Prescribes certain simple rules of health and hygiene.

- Think the purest thoughts and banish all idle and impure thoughts.
- Breathe the freshest air day and night.
- Establish a balance between bodily and mental work.

- Stand erect, sit erect, and be neat and clean in every one of your acts, and let these be an expression of your inner condition.

- Eat to live for service of our fellow men.

- Your water, food and air must be clean.

Swami Vivekananda roars:

Be strong, my young friends; that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita.... You will understand the Gita better than with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and the strength of Krishna better with a little of strong blood in you. You will understand the upanishads better and the glory of the atman when your body stands firm from your feet, and you feel yourselves as men.

Mahakavi Bharathiyar prays to Kali:

Make my shoulders strong;

Cleanse this body of fatigue and dire disease;

A body that blades cannot cut;

A face that shines like flower

That greets the morning sun;

And a mind that conquers passions.

Grant me these, I pray.

(Translated by Mu.Srinivasan)

In Sevalaya, we have nutritionist- monitored balanced diet, good air, clean water, lush green environment, training in Yoga, physical exercises, sports and games in which our children enthusiastically participate.

For Free Circulation :

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