



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 1 **Sevalaya's News Letter-December 2006** Serve 9 Price-Re. 1

## **Dear Friends,**

When there is a struggle for every day existence, no one is going to aim for excellence. Basic need for food, clothing and shelter should be taken care before we can talk of anything at higher levels. Swami Vivekananda says that "God comes in the form of Roti – food, for the hungry man".

So when you have kids coming to school from broken families, some of them have no families – from the poorest of the poor conditions – what do you expect in their performance? Also an organization like Sevalaya will not be able to match the salaries given in Government schools. So we will not be able to attract staff at high quality levels. The mixture of such poor students and the poor quality staff can only result in bad performance, things becoming from bad to worse etc. At least that is what is commonly expected.

Well, Sevalaya has proved our common sense wrong. You may have students coming from lowest strata of society, they may be first generation school goers, they may not know their parentage, their fathers may be alcoholics and wife beaters, staff may have studied only in local language, they may not have very good exposure – but there is commitment to the cause taken up, if they are willing to put in extra effort, we can produce high quality results.

Sevalaya has been consistently getting 100% pass results, the only school to do so in the entire Thiruvallur district – out of nearly 250 schools. This we have written about before. Added to this, now we have won the Tata Consultancy Services-Education World Teachers Awards, for innovation in class rooms. Sevalaya

School has received the best primary school award for using innovative teaching methods in classes zero to five. There were 25000 schools from all over India participating in this award process.

To give mediocre education to first generation school goers, in itself is a Himalayan task. On top of it, to try innovative methods, and also to get a national award for it, is a real achievement by all our staff members. We had special training conducted by many people who are interested in education and also innovation and the staff took them very seriously and were ready to experiment.

Sevalaya's 'BGV' value based education has received a special mention as an innovative way of doing value based education. We are very happy about this. Sevalaya has designed a special curriculum, with help from experts in the field, to teach the life and message of Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda and Mahakavi Bharathi. We call the course BGV course.

For all the classes, there is a specific syllabus to be followed for this and one hour every week is allocated to this. As we have been doing it for many years now, Sevalaya children are fairly aware of the values these three great men of India stood for. For us, this is education. All glory to Sevalaya can come only because of Gandhi, Bharathi and Vivekananda. The TCS Education world award for innovation proves this point.

Thanks & Regards

**Murali**



Children's Day Celebration

**Awards**

Mr. G. Chittibabu of Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharatiyar Hr Sec School, Chennai was adjudged India's Best Primary Teacher in the Tata Consultancy Services-Education World Teachers Awards 2006. Mala Ramadorai, Educationist and Chief Mentor, Maitree, Associate Engagement Programme of TCS, presented the award to the teachers in a grand function at Chennai on 29/11/2006. According to Ramadorai, "The Teachers Award is TCS' way of recognising and promoting innovative teaching methods which in turn will nurture curiosity and creativity in young minds, preparing them for tomorrow's world".

**Events**

50 Members of Passam Train Friends group visited Sevalaya and spent a day with children on 12/11/2006. They conducted various competitions and sports events for the children. They also entertained the children



Pasam Train Friends

with the cultural programme. They sponsored the lunch for the residents of Sevalaya children home on that day.

Children's Day was celebrated at Sevalaya on 18/11/2006. Mr. S.Ahmed Abdul Kadhar, Inspector, Vengal police station was the Chief Guest for the occasion. Felicitating Sevalaya for the services rendered to the underprivileged children, he called upon the students to make the best use of the opportunities provided to them and insisted upon the importance to grow up with good values. He expressed his concern at the current trend of young software engineers with fat pay checks opting to spend their week end in partying and having fun. "It is unfortunate that "having fun" in present days means "drinking and dancing". Incidents of drunken driving and accidents (sometimes even fatal) are on the rise now – a-days". In these circumstances it is heartening to see a software engineer engaged in a constructive activity and spending his time usefully in the service of the needy, the poor and the destitute, he mentioned. He appealed to all



Students Cultural Programme



TCS Education World Award

software engineers to participate in such useful activity during the weekends and make their lives more meaningful. The children presented a cultural programme on the occasion.

The School Art Troupe "Kottu Murasu" went to Putloor. The team performed street plays highlighting the activities of Sevalaya.

### **NSS Camp**

The NSS students were engaged in cleaning the village roads on 08/11/2006 and cleaned the Puliur Temple on 30/11/2006.

### **Programmes where Sevalaya Participated...**

V.Muralidharan was the special invitee for the one –day workshop on "Corporate Social Responsibility" conducted by FICCI (Association of Indian Industries) on 15/11/2006 and he spoke about the activities of sevalaya and how TATA group has helped this organization to grow.

Our students participated in the following inter-school competitions held by Sornambal Educational Trust on 18/11/2006 and won prizes:

Essay Competition: K.Chitra-10<sup>th</sup> Standard - 1<sup>st</sup> Place

Poetry Competition: A.Sangeetha - 10<sup>th</sup> Standard -1<sup>st</sup> Place

Oratorical Competition: A.Sangeetha - 10<sup>th</sup> Standard -1<sup>st</sup> Place

Street Play: 2<sup>nd</sup> place-A.Silambarasan - 8<sup>th</sup> Std, Kanchana, Menaka, Baby, Ethiraj-7<sup>th</sup> Std.

A.Sangeetha, P.Abirami and K.Chithra participated in the Drawing Competition conducted by Bharath Vikas Parishad on 18/11/2006.

Mr.V.Muralidharan was one of the Chief Guests at the Thakkar Bapa Anniversary Day held on 29/11/2006.

G.Chittibabu & A.A.Kingston attended a workshop on Mind Mapping conducted by Mr. B.Shiva of TCS on 29/11/2006.

### **School Club Activities:**

Tamil club met on 23/11/06. To improve the students' vocabulary, interesting games like asking the students to find out as many one lettered words in Tamil were conducted. In the Maths club the teacher told the students about basic principles of Geometrical figures like Line, Triangle, Ellipse, Rectangle, Square, etc. on 24/11/2006. In the Science Club Meeting on 24/11/2006, G.Palanisamy spoke to the students on "Gravitational Force". The monthly meeting of the school recreation Club was held on 25/11/2006. Students of Class IV presented a skit on "Importance of Education". Social Science club met on 30/11/06.

### **Sports:**

The Kho-Kho Team participated in a competition held at Dr. NKBV Matriculation School, Korattur on 22/11/2006. P.Srinivasan came II in the Table Tennis tournament at Divisional Level held at Kancheepuram on 23/11/2006.

### **Study Circle:**

Mr. Shanmugam shared his thoughts on Swami Vivekananda's "Gnana Deepam - Part VI" on 04/11/2006. On 11/11/2006 Ms. Anasuya spoke on Mahatma Gandhiji's Autography "My Experiments with Truth". Swami Vivekananda's Gnana Deepam Part 16 was Ms. Valarmathi's choice for the study circle meeting on 18/11/2006. Mr. Manivannan spoke about Swami Vivekananda's "Rebuild India"

### **Students study circle:**

D.Selvi-spoke on the book Philosophy of Ravindranath Tagore-Authored by M.V.Venkatraman on 11/11/2006.

R.Devi-reviewed the book Valvangu Valvar (Tamil) Translation of a book authored by Shivakera on 25/11/2006.

## BARRISTER MOHANDAS

What is the role of an advocate? Should he go all out to defend the client even though he is guilty? Is nothing unfair in legal practice, as they say in love and war? *What would Gandhiji do?* Here is a case-study of what the Mahatma did as Barrister Mohandas at South Africa.

Gandhiji knew Parsi Rustomji ever since he landed in South Africa. He has been a source of support to Gandhiji in all his struggles against the rulers. Though Rustomji confided in Gandhiji in almost all of his personal affairs, he held back one thing. He was resorting to smuggling for a long time. Once he got caught and he ran to Gandhiji for help. His explanation for keeping Gandhiji in the dark was that he did not want to bother him with such tricks of the trade. He cried before Gandhiji pleading to save him.

Gandhiji's reply was: "To save or not to save is in His hands. As to me you know my way; I can but try to save you by means of confession". The Parsi was mortified and asked whether his confession before him was not enough. Gandhiji said: " You have wronged not me, but Government. How can a confession before me avail you?".

Inquiry revealed that the smuggling had been going on for a long time. The amount detected was a trifling. Gandhiji studied the whole case and explained the position to Rustomji. "It rests with the Customs Officer to prosecute you or let you go, and he will be guided by the Attorney

General. I propose to meet both. You should offer to pay the penalty they fix. If they are not agreeable, (to let you off with a penalty) you must be prepared to go to jail. I am of the opinion that the shame lies not so much in going to jail as in committing the offence. Imprisonment you should regard as a penance. The real penance lies in resolving never to smuggle again." Rustomji was shattered. His name and fame was at stake. Yet, he agreed to place himself entirely at the hands of Gandhiji.

Gandhiji met the Customs Officer and fearlessly apprised him of the whole affair. He promised to place all the books at his disposal and told him how penitent Rustomji was feeling. The Customs officer was appreciative. He directed Gandhiji to the Attorney General with whom Gandhiji entered into a correspondence. The Attorney General too appreciated Gandhiji's frankness and was convinced that nothing was held back.

The case against Rustomji was compromised. He had to pay the penalty equal to double the amount he had confessed to having smuggled. Rustomji reduced to writing the facts of the whole case, got the paper framed and hung it up in his office to serve as a perpetual reminder to his heirs and fellow merchants.

Difficult to believe. Isn't it? Yes. That is why Albert Einstein said that generations to come will not believe that such a man in flesh and blood walked on this earth.

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