



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 3 **Sevalaya's News Letter - December 2008** Serve 9 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

Couple of years ago, Mr. Malcolm Lane, one of our donors from UK, called me over phone and told me that he had just met his doctor and he has been identified with "Multiple Myeloma bone marrow cancer". He also said that he is communicating this news to me first as he wanted me to pray for him and he was not sure how long he is going to live. But as usual, he was all smiles and jokes on the phone. For a moment, I didn't know how to react and what to say. A distance of 8000 KMs is separating us both, and what can I do to comfort him, or comfort me, as he sounded perfectly normal. I told him that not just me, but the entire Sevalaya family will pray for his welfare. Then I communicated this news to the school headmaster the same day and he spoke to the children and the senior citizens during the assembly next day. From then on, every prayer in Sevalaya included the name of Malcom Lane. The children remember him very well as he had made a couple of trips to the school before.

When I went to UK after six months, on my official trip, I wanted to meet Malcolm. But I had been to some other part of UK, not London. I had sent e-mails to him before my trip and asked him if I can meet him on weekends and fixed up a date. Then I took a train and went to Malcolm's house. Mr. Kannan, one of our trustees, also came with me. As soon as we reached his house, Mrs. Malcolm told us that we should not make him talk for a long time. We understood her concern and wanted to spend minimum time with Mr. Malcolm. But he was the one who kept asking many questions about Sevalaya and its kids and wanted to chat with us for a long time!

A year later, I got an e-mail that Malcolm's health has gone from bad to worse and he is admitted in hospital and the family has requested for special prayers. Praying for him who is on a hospital bed in London from a small village near Chennai is alright, but how to send this message of prayer to him? We decided that Sevalaya children can

prepare a get well card and send it to him. The next morning the card was ready with nearly 700 signatures on it, all with sincere prayers that our friend in UK should get well soon. Malcolm calls his days in hospital as dark days, but according to him "One highlight during those dark days was to receive a handmade 'get well' card signed individually by 700 children from Sevalaya School near Chennai, India".

Power of prayer is too strong, that too prayer from innocent children! This prayer worked. Yes, Malcolm was out of hospital soon, back to work and back with all his jokes and enthusiasm for helping people in need!

He felt that he should come and meet all the children of Sevalaya and personally thank them, as they were a ray of light in the hour of darkness! But will his health permit him to travel 8000 KMs? Why not, the power of prayer can do wonders! Malcolm was in Sevalaya on 24th November and met all the children and spoke to them about his experience and thanked them personally. In addition he also made a contribution of Rs 4 lakhs, which will be used to construct the first class room in our second school.

Thanks & Regards
Murali

**Mr. Malcolm Lane from UK at Sevalaya
on 24th November 2008**





**Children's Day Celebrations
at Thiruvallur Govt. Hospital**

A Broader role...

Mr.V.Muralidharan, Founder & Managing Trustee, Sevalaya was unanimously elected vice-President (Development) of Tamilnadu Federation of Voluntary Agencies. TAFVA commands a membership of 1000 NGOs and 5 lakhs Self Help Groups, totally comprising over 1 Crore individuals.

Award

on 3/11/2008, "Tiruninravur Town News" a neighborhood journal, presented "Mudhalvan" Award to K.Chitra, our resident-student for standing first in the 10th standard Public examination in the entire Tiruninravur area in the year 2007.

Club activities

Our Maths. Club conducted Ramanujam Memorial Quiz contest for students, on 20/11/2008 and awarded prizes.

On 20/11/2008, Tamil Manram organized a speech by Mr. P.Soundarajan, on essay writing for students. As a follow up an essay competition was announced.

Science Club activity for the month was a two session series on bio fuel on 14/11/2008 and 20/11/2008. The topics covered were sources, availability, uses and production of Bio-fuel.

Events

On 01/11/2008, students of Bhaktavatsalam Vidyasram School, Korattur visited the campus and interacted with the residents of our Old age Home. They also exchanged notes on activities with the Interact Club members of our School and conducted games and cultural programmes for our children.

On the same day, Our Kottu Murasu Cultural Troupe conducted a programme of social awareness in Komakkambedu Village.

On 04/11/2008, members of the National Service Scheme of our school took up cleaning of the Amman Temple at Nallankavanur village.

The three-day children's day Programme at Sevalaya culminated with a function on 16/11/2008 in which Mr. Navaratanmull Chordia, Chairman, Khivraj Group of Companies, Chennai was the Chief-Guest. There were colorful events including cultural programme by our children. The Chief Guest appreciated the performance and applauded Sevalaya for their unparalleled service to the community.



**Children's Day Celebrations
at Sevalaya**

On the same day, Chennai District Rotaract Club members visited Sevalaya and conducted programmes with our children as a part of their Children's day activities.

On 24/11/2008, after a long and tedious journey of 8000 kilometers, Mr. Malcolm Lane made it a point to thank our children. There was overwhelming emotion on both sides. He handed over a contribution of Rs.4 lakhs for the construction of our proposed Elementary School building.

External Events

On 07/11/2008, 23 students of our school participated in Bhagavad-Gita recital at Chinmaya Mission, Thamaraiakkam and received certificates.

On 08/11/2008, 18 students from 9th and 11th standards who participated in the Quiz competition conducted by TCS AXA project group at Sonex Towers, Anna Nagar, Chennai qualified up to the final round.

Our 11th and 12th standard team got I prize for Bio-diesel model produced by them in the Zonal Level Science Exhibition conducted by Chief Educational Officer, Tiruvallur at Immaculate Hr. Sec. School, Avadi on 14/11/2008. Our 9th and 10th standard team got II Prize for their sustainability model. In 6th and 8th standard level our team got III prize for harnessing energy model.

In the district level Science exhibition, our team got I Prize for Bio-diesel Model and qualified to participate in the State Level science exhibition.

On 14/11/2008, Interact Club of Sevalaya celebrated Children's day in a novel and purposeful way. They were thoughtful about the hapless kids in the General Hospital Thiruvallur Pediatric Ward, who, due to illnesses could not join in the merriment of the day in the outside world. The club members joined by their teachers visited G.H. Thiruvallur and regaled the patients with stories, jokes, cultural events etc. They also distributed sweets and biscuits. The gesture of these children who are themselves victims of the society's ills, but now benefited by the bounty and kindness of well wishers was very much appreciated. Sure, they have learnt their lessons well on "sharing and caring".

5 students escorted by 2 staff members attended the NGO's Day function held at Microsoft Office in

Hyderabad, on 19 and 20/11/2008.

Ms. Bhuvaneshwari Muralidharan discussed the book "Tough times never last but Tough people do", by Robert H Schuller on 19/11/2008 at Gandhi Study centre, Chennai. Under the auspices of the same organization, on 26/11/2008, Mr. T.S.Venkata Ramani, Hon.Co-ordinator talked on the "Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda-by Eastern and Western admirers".

On 20/11/2008, students of VIII Standard 'B' section were taken on a field-trip to Poondi Water reservoir, Kakkalur Anjaneyar and Putlur Amman Temples.

From among 2000 Interact club students from 60 institutions, our student Abirami got the first Prize in drawing competition organized by Chennai District Rotaract club. She received the prize at the hands of Ms. Kirthi Chawla, Cine-actress in the presence of Rotaract Dt. Governor in a well attended function at Kamaraj Arangam, Chennai, on 22/11/2008.

Mr. V.Muralidharan was the distinguished Guest at the Anniversary function of Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya founded by Mahatma Gandhi, on 29/11/2008.

On 30/11/2008, Staff members were on an excursion to Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary.

Medical Camp

To commemorate the 83rd Birth day of Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, on 23/11/2008, Jaya Medical & Pharmaceuticals Private Ltd conducted a free Siddha Medical Camp at our campus. Nearly 300 persons from Kasuva and nearby villages were benefited by treatment and free medicines.

Sports

Sevalaya's super Senior Girls' Hand ball team was the winners in the District Level Competition held at Dr.Rajalakshmi Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Avadi. The event was held on 06/11/2008.

12/11/2008 saw another glory for us with T.Vivek of our school winning a second Prize in 100 Meter running at the District Level Athletic meet conducted by Chellammal Matriculation School, Manavala Nagar, Thiruvallur.

On 18/11/2008, in the monthly sports competition held by District Level Sports Authority at Velammal school, Panchetti, V. Banupriya did us proud by winning the second prize in 800 meters race, and S. Baby's feat won 3rd prize in 100 meter race.

Staff book review

On 01/11/2008, Mr.J.Lakshmanan discussed Bharathiyar's Essays. Bharathiyin Bharathiyam by Dr. N.Subbu Reddiar was the book reviewed by Ms. G.Jothi on 08/11/2008. "Bharathiyar's Bharathiya Jana Sangham- Congress Periyakkam" – by Mr. Nalli Kuppuswami Chettiar, Bharathiyar Stories, and "Mahakavi and Mahatma" by Mr. Mu.Srinivasan were the books reviewed on 15/11/2008, 22/11/2008 and 29/11/2008 respectively. The speakers were M/s. P.Damodaran, P.Soundararajan and S.Jayakumar.

Students Book review

Suguna spoke about "How to achieve?" (Tamil) by Ms. Manimekalai on 02/11/2008. In the subsequent weeks, Arunkumar took up for review the book "Thoughts and Activities" (Tamil) by Mr. V.M.Manthiram. Ammu spoke on "30 minutes every day - for progress" (Tamil), authored by Mr. P.S.Acharya. Last of the book reviews for the month was by Ranjith Kumar. The title of the book was "Sweeten the life" (Tamil). The author is Mr. B.Balakrishnan.

Temple Visits

Residents of our Swami Vivekananda Boys Home visited Ramanathapuram Vinayakar temple on 07 and 21/11/2008. Residents of our Mother Theresa girls' Home visit to Ramanathapuram temple was on 14/11/2008. Their visit to Roman Catholic Church was on 21/11/2008.

Training Programmes

Mr. R.Vijayaraghavan participated in the three day teachers' Career Guidance programme on 13, 14 and 15/11/2008 at Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Youth Development at Sriperumbudur.

On 15/11/2008, Ms. Kalpana Satish, Senior Manger, CRY conducted a Workshop on Child Rights for our staff members. In her view we need not totally ape the West in the Child right concepts, but the traditional values and social structure of the country should also be taken into account. She noted that the foundation of a classless healthy society is laid at the school and the combined efforts of parents, teachers and student-counsellors are required for the making of a prosperous nation.

On 22/11/2008, as a part of induction of our staff members to Gandhian thought, a talk (part of a 6 session Training) was given by Mr. G.Rammohan, retired railway Safety Commissioner and a Gandhian scholar.

On 22/11/2008, Ms. Anita and Mr. Karthik of Chennai Counseling Foundation conducted separate programmes for adolescent boys and Girls of our Homes.

Under the broad heading "Self-Governance", Mr. G.Chittibabu, Head Master conducted a training session on the topic "Involvement in Community Services" for the resident-students of our Homes, on 29/11/2008.

Sevalaya stall in NGO's Day function held at Microsoft Office in Hyderabad



Love India!

All of us know that Swami Vivekananda was a sannyasi with a difference. He crossed the ocean when it was taboo for saints, and carried the spiritual message of India far and wide. When it was considered that personal Mukthi was the goal of sannyasa, he created an order of Sannyasis dedicated to the service of the Poor. But, was he a patriot in the much understood sense of the term?

His intense feelings of love for the country and the heart's bleeding for its decrepit state have been expressed in private discussions with some of his admirers.

Mr. Nagendra Gupta recollects a conversation in 1897 and says, "What struck me most was the intensity of Vivekananda's feelings and his passionate devotion to the cause of the country". He quotes Swamiji: "The middle classes in India are a spent force. They have not got the stamina for a resolute and sustained endeavour. The future of India rests with the masses." "If it would help the country in any way I am quite prepared to go to prison..." Mr. Gupta admires Swamiji's unusually prophetic vision and writes, "No one had then heard of non co operation or Civil Disobedience, and yet, Vivekananda, who had nothing to do with politics, was standing in the shadow of events still in coming. His visit to Japan had filled him with enthusiastic admiration for the patriotism of the Japanese nation. "Their country is their religion", he would declare, his face aglow with enthusiasm, " the national cry is 'dei Nippon, bazai! Live long, great Japan!' The country before everything else. No sacrifice is too great for maintaining the honor and integrity of the country!"

To Mr. Haripada Mitra who said that Sannyasis should love the whole world and should be above any attachment for their own country, Swamiji gave a 'burning reply':-"How can a man who does not feed his own mother look after other people's mothers?"

On reading in the Newspaper that a man died of starvation in Calcutta, Swamiji poured forth

his agony thus:-"Now the country is about to go to rack and ruin!" "don't you see that in other countries hundreds of people die every year, in spite of their poor houses, work houses, Charity Funds etc.,? But in our country we never heard of death through starvation because of the system of alms-giving in vogue here! This is the first time I read in Newspapers that a man dies of starvation in Calcutta, even though there is no famine!"

The quintessence of Swamiji's spirit of Patriotism cannot be better expressed than in his own words as spoken to K.Sundara Rama Iyer of Trivandrum. "Practical patriotism means not a mere sentiment or emotion of love of the motherland, but a passion to serve our fellow countrymen. I have gone all over India on foot and have seen with my own eyes the ignorance, misery and squalor of our people. My whole soul is afire. I am burning with a fierce desire to end such evil conditions. Let no one talk of Karma. If it was their Karma to suffer, it is our Karma to relieve the suffering. To reach Narayana you must serve the Daridra Narayanas.-the starving millions of India."

Ms. Josephine Macleod of America was a dear disciple of Swamiji. Once she put this question to him: "Swamiji, How can I best help you?"

Swamiji's terse reply was, "**Love India**".



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