



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 2 **Sevalaya's News Letter - February 2008** Serve11 Price-Re. 1

Dear Friends,

How much of learning can happen only within a class room? If we depend totally upon education within the four walls, black board and books, we will end up only creating book worms. We need to take the children out to various places and give them an opportunity to see for themselves what is going on around them. But all this will cost money. Many rich schools can even take children abroad – I know of many schools in Chennai which arrange trips to Singapore and Malaysia etc., but the parents have to pay the bill.

What about children in places like Sevalaya? Even to spend money for books and note books, they will not be able to spare money, which is the reason why Sevalaya is giving everything free to 1000 students. When that is the reality, can these children also go out and see places as part of their education? Looks like a distant dream.

But when we have friends, supporters and well-wishers everything is possible. In this academic year alone Sevalaya children have gone to places like Thiruvananthapuram, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Pune. There were also one day trips like the one organized by the Rajasthan association, who took our children to Kishkintha, a fun park. In each city Sevalaya has a friends group and they took care of all expenses. Children were invited to their houses and very good lunch and dinner were provided. In every city, Tamil speaking volunteers

were selected as guides to the children and they were taken around all the important and historic places. The history behind each location was well explained and the class room history learning is no match to this.

Many children enjoyed the long train journey. Some of them have got onto a long distance train for the first time in their life! The children say that these days will be their unforgettable days, through out their life time. Along with learning they also had lot of fun, visiting fun parks, water amusement parks, hill stations, gardens and parks – entry fee to each would have been very high, and thanks to our friends in each city, this was made possible for our children.

We also take our children to near by post office, bank, hospital, some select government offices, with prior permission. In all such trips the staff of those establishments, were very happy to receive the children and explain what is going on in that place. Thus the children get a very good first hand understanding of how a bank functions, how a post office functions etc.

Yes, poor and destitute children also have a right to get around the world!

Thanks & Regards

Murali



Mumbai & Pune Tour



Mumbai & Pune Tour



Awareness among the students about Human Rights

Events

With a view to creating awareness among the students about Human Rights, a meeting was organised on 05/01/2008. Mr. P.Ezhilarasu, Tamilnadu State Patron, Human Rights Organisation and Mr. K.Murali Chief Organiser of the Human Rights Organisation were the Chief Guests and addressed the students.

Vivekananda Day was celebrated at Sevalaya on 12/01/2008. Ms. Grija Ragavan (Editor, Ladies Special, Chennai), Mr. S.Dhanasekar (Asst. Elementary Education Officer, Ikkadu) and Mr. E.Ganesh Babu (Additional Asst. Elementary Educational Officer, Ikkadu) were the Chief Guests. Prizes were distributed to the toppers in the State Level Open Book Examination on the life of Swami Vivekananda conducted by Sevalaya in which 650 students from 35 schools all over Tamilnadu participated.

Pongal, the harvest festival of Tamilnadu was celebrated for 3 days in the traditional way at Sevalaya. The first day of the celebrations Bogi, was on 14/01/2008. A mini marathon race stressing on "Smokeless Bogi" was organised. 200 Students from 13 schools participated. The Mini Marathon was flagged off by Mr. R.S.Rajarajan, Advocate & Councillor, Thiruvallur. Mrs. Dhatchayini



Mini marathon race stressing on "Smokeless Bogi"



Prize Distribution of State Level Vivekananda Examination

Duraikkannu, President of Puliur Panchayat, Mr. Ramadoss, Past President of Kasuva and Mr. Sambasivam, Proprietor of N R S Chambers, Kasuva participated in the celebrations.

On 15/01/2008, Pongal was celebrated. A brick oven was constructed in the open ground and Pongal, a sweet dish made of newly harvested rice, milk and Jaggery was cooked in new earthen pots and was offered to Sun God. Mr. Venkatesa Mudaliyar, landlord in Puliur was the special Guest and lighted the oven offering Prayers to Sun God.

The Third Day is celebrated as Mattu Pongal in Rural Tamilnadu. It is actually a Thanksgiving Day for the Friends of the Farmer-the cow and the ox. Traditionally, Jallikkattu – where a buffalo will be tamed by the youngsters – will be organised. But every year Sevalaya organises Volley Ball tournament for the village youth. This year 16 teams from 10 villages participated. Johnson Volley Ball team from Thiruninravur were the winners and Velliur team were the runners up. Mrs. Amsa Raja (Panchayat President, Pakkam) and Mr. G.Raveendran (Ex. Panchayat President, Palavedu) were the special guests.

The 59th Republic Day was celebrated on 26/01/2008. Mr. P.Ezhilarasu (Tamil Nadu state



Pongal Celebrations

Sevalaya Cement Road Inauguration



Patron, Human Right Organisation) hoisted the National Flag. Mr. S.Immanuel Carter of the District Medical division of the Human Rights Organisation organised a free Eye camp. 640 villagers were benefited. Free eye surgeries were performed and spectacles were distributed.

A concert on Key Board was presented by the students of Ms.Sathya Priya Krishnan on 26/01/2008. It was a new experience for the children who listened to keyboard for the first time. They enjoyed the programme.

Mr. J. Muralikrishnan, Advisor, Sevalaya and Mr. R.Shankar, Volunteer, interacted with the Higher Class students and discussed with them highlighting the need to give back to the Society.

External Events

On 19/01/2008, Sevalaya's Founder and Managing Trustee, Mr.V.Muralidharan, was invited to give a talk about service at IIT Chennai. Nearly 200 NSS students of IIT Chennai attended the program.

On 27/01/2008, Sevalaya students got an opportunity to present a cultural programme in the Family Day organised by Hands On Ventures, a BPO Company.

Sevalaya's cultural troupe , Kottu Murasu presented



a programme at Karalappakkam Village on 27/01/2008.

Sevalaya students participated in the Bhajan Programme near Gandhiji Statue at Marina Beach on 30/01/2008 on the Sarvodaya Day.

Tour

25 students and 2 staff members were on a 10 day educational tour to Mumbai & Pune organised and sponsored by Friends of Sevalaya at these cities.

NSS Camps

The NSS wing of The New College, Chennai, camped at Sevalaya for 10 days from 04/01/2008 to 13/01/2008. They planted 5000 tree saplings in the nearby villages, They took census in the Kasuva and Ramanathapuram village. A general medical camp was organised by them at Puliur village benefiting 350 villagers. They conducted sports competitions for the youth of Kasuva and Puliur village. They were also engaged in cleaning and white washing Sevalaya campus and also cleaning the Kasuva Village.

Club Activities

The Social Science Club met on 05/01/2008. Mr. J. Lakshmanan explained about the geographical conditions, temperature, natural resources, environment, and social conditions of the people, their life style and the political condition of the different countries of the world.

Study Circle

On 12/01/2008, P.Meenakshi spoke on the Bible - Thessalonians 1 & 2 and on 19/01/2008 Senthil Kumar spoke on Bible - Galatians.

Visit to places of worship

On 18/01/2008 the boys went to Vinayagar Temple at Ramanathapuram and on 25/01/2008 the girls went to that temple.

Always the right thing to do...

"Do not worry; Truth will ultimately triumph" a good hearted gentleman was reassuring a silent and steady Gandhian worker (This tribe is very rare nowadays) who was being subjected to the worst of calumnies. The spontaneous response of the Gandhian was not only astounding but it was profound. "Even if Truth fails, I will be by the side of the Truth." asserted he. Truth is a basic virtue, and even while facing insurmountable difficulties, Harischandra did not make any compromise, even though at that juncture he did not have any inkling that Truth was going to triumph.

Harischandra was Gandhiji's role model. Did Gandhiji face any situation when Truth apparently failed? How did he act then?

It was the passing of Black Act in South Africa, when Indians in Transvaal resolved under Gandhiji's leadership that they would not register, subjecting themselves to ignominious conditions. Barring a minority all Indians refused to register, and over hundreds were jailed. At this juncture, at the intervention of a journalist, General Smuts offered a compromise that if Indians would voluntarily register, the Black Act would be repealed. It was just to avoid illegal immigration, it was reasoned. After due consultations with the co-prisoners, Gandhiji agreed to this. There were meetings of Indian community and by and large the agreement was ratified. But a few Pathans led by Mir Alam accused that Gandhiji had sold out the community for a bribe of 18000 pounds. He vowed that he would kill Gandhiji if ever he dared to register himself. Gandhiji declared that he would be the first to register himself.

It was the fateful day. When Gandhiji was proceeding to the registrar's office, heavy blows from a cudgel descended on his head. He was

severely mauled. Blood was oozing out from his lips, and his cheeks were lacerated. Even in that condition what Gandhiji did was to request the registrar, who had arrived on the scene, to bring the papers so that he could register himself first as he had pledged. Even the registrar who was not so friendly to the Indian community suggested that all that could wait. Gandhiji insisted on him to bring the papers. The registrar complied, and while registering, there were tears in the registrar's eyes.

There is a post script to this story. General Smuts had in fact betrayed. The Black Act was not repealed. The Satyagraha was started again. The Indian community made a bonfire of all the registration certificates, and Gandhiji was the first to consign his. Here a very emotionally moving event occurred. Mir Alam embraced Gandhiji and said he was very sorry for having assaulted him. Gandhiji held his hand tightly and reassured him that he never bore any ill will towards him. It was a fitting finale for a 'case study' of truth alone triumphing.

True, truth always triumphs. But true adherents to truth stick to it not because truth triumphs, but because it is always the right thing to do.



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