



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 1 **Sevalaya's News Letter-January 2007** Serve 10 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

Wish you all a very Happy New Year. It is again time to take stock of the year that went by, and make fresh resolutions for 2007!

As usual, 2006 was a great year for Sevalaya. We are able to serve more needy children now. The school strength went up from 630 to 850 in this year. We are likely to cross 1000 during the course of 2007. Is it just the quantity – no, never at Sevalaya. The quality has also been steadily increasing. We got 100% pass results once again in the 10th standard board exams – 4th time in a row – a record in Thiruvallur district.

Added to this, this year the 12th standard also achieved 100% result, again only school to do so in the entire district. We have set our goals to continue achieving 100% results and also get district level and state level ranks in 2007. Added to this, we were selected as the best primary school for innovation in education, especially in value education – at national level, out of 25,000 competing schools. For a poor children's school, from a rural area, to achieve this feat, is no small accomplishment.

Are we teaching values only to our school children? Our values are based on Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda and Mahakavi Bharathi. To spread the message of these three great leaders, every year we conduct various competitions for schools in Thiruvallur and Chennai districts.

But in 2006, we expanded this activity, by sending invitations to all 8000 schools in Tamil Nadu. For Gandhi exam, nearly 60,000 children from 450 school participated; for Bharathi exam

40,000 children from 300 schools participated; for Vivekananda exam 20,000 children from 225 schools have participated. Added to this, this year we have introduced a Maths Talent Exam also, to commemorate the Birth Anniversary of mathematics genius Sri Srinivasa Ramanujam.

Are we doing only academics related and value related education? We have done equally well in sports as well. One of our children, Srinivasan, is a polio afflicted child, and he has become the district champion in table tennis! People wonder watching him playing table tennis, standing on one leg and the other leg, always hanging in the air! We won many other sports awards as well during the year.

There has been lot of coverage in both print media and television about Sevalaya's activities, during the year. Also there have been many visitors, both national and international. We also had volunteers staying in the campus for specific period of time to perform specific activities, from both national and international origin.

What is there in store for 2007? Will we move closer to our long term dream of creating a free university for the poor, destitute and the orphans? Will we get enough donations to buy the required land and building and equipments and employ more staff to run the university? We are fully geared up to proceed in this direction, with the hope that all of you are with Sevalaya.

Thanks & Regards
Murali

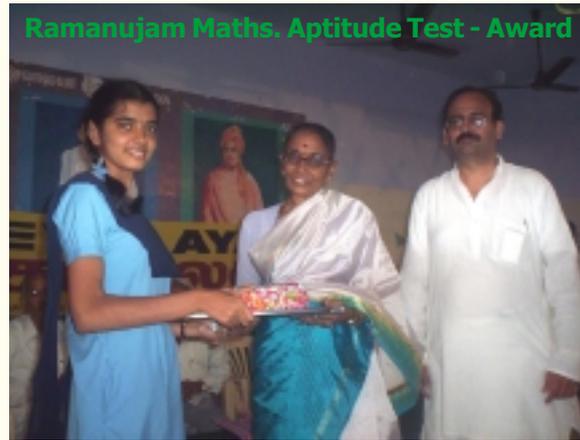


Events

As a step towards achieving one of the goals of Sevalaya – spreading the messages of Mahatma Gandhiji, Mahakavi Bharathiyar and Swami Vivekananda – a State level Examination was conducted for students of classes VI to XII on the life of Swami Vivekananda on 01/12/2006. 20000 students from 225 schools participated in the examination.

Bharathiyar Day, to commemorate the Birth Anniversary of Mahakavi Subramania Bharathiyar, one of the Trinities of Sevalaya was celebrated at Sevalaya on 02/12/2006. Mr. Heinz Hopp, Consul General, Consulate of Federal Republic of Germany was the Honourable Chief Guest for the occasion. Prizes were distributed to the Toppers in the State Level Bharathiyar Examination conducted by Sevalaya.

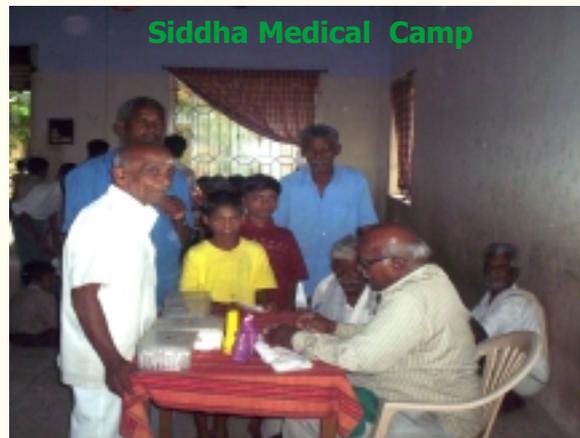
To commemorate the Birth Anniversary of Mathematics Genius of India, Sri Srinivasa Ramanujam a Maths Talent Exam for students of Class X & XII for the schools in Chennai & Thiruvallur District was conducted



on 05/12/2006. 139 students from 27 schools participated in the examination. Prizes were distributed to the top rankers in a function organised on 23/12/2006. Ms. R.Vijayalakshmi, Executive committee member, Association of Mathematics Teachers of India, Chennai, was our chief guest and distributed the prizes. The Maths Club of Sevalaya presented a skit on the occasion on the topic "No Maths; No Life".

Mrs Rama Raghavan from Bangalore conducted a workshop on Mind Mapping and Personality Development for the students and communication skills and teaching techniques for the staff on 08/12/2006.

Christmas was celebrated with joy at Sevalaya campus on 22/12/2006. A beautifully decorated manger adorned the stage. Ms. Ruth Vennila, District Social Welfare Officer, Thiruvallur was our Chief Guest for the function. Rev. Fr.Arul, Parish Priest of Thiruninravur, Rev. Fr.Doss, Correspondent, St. Claret Matriculation School, Thiruninravur and Mr. D'Souza, President, Anglo Indian Society graced the occasion by their presence. The chief Guest spoke about the values Christmas





symbolises namely, simplicity, purity and spirit of sharing. The Children's joy knew no bounds when Santa Claus visited them accompanied by the jingle bells and distributed sweets.

Medical Camps

A free Siddha Medical Camp was conducted on 24/12/2006 by the doctors of Arignar Anna Siddha Hospital. The camp was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, Kilpauk. 350 People were benefited by the camp. Free medicines were distributed.

Agarwal Eye Hospital conducted a free Eye Camp on 27/12/2006. 100 People were benefited by the camp. 5 were referred for free cataract surgery.

NSS Camps

8 volunteers from NSS unit of Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai camped at Sevalaya for 4 days from 02/12/2006 to 05/12/2006. They conducted computer classes for the students, conducted career guidance programme and helped in organising the Library.

Programmes where Sevalaya Participated...

53 students of X Std and 49 Students of XII Std attended a Programme "Let Us Succeed" organised by Dinamalar, a popular Tamil Daily at NDP Thirumana Mandapam, Manavala Nagar, Thiruvallur on 03/12/2006.

The programme was conducted by teachers of Hindu Higher Secondary School, Triplicane. They spoke to the students about how to prepare for the Board exams, time management, drawing up a daily schedule and



adhering to it and various tips for facing the Board Examination.

20 staff members of Sevalaya attended the Art of Living Health and Happiness Programme conducted by Sri.Sri. Ravishankar from 05/12/2006 to 08/12/2006 at Anna University Grounds, Chennai. Free passes for the programme were provided by CIOSA.

Sports

Our school team participated in District Level Sports competition conducted by District sports Officer at Thiruvallur on 01/12/2006. Azhagiri secured III place in the District Level Discus throw competition.

The Divisional Level Sports competition at Kancheepuram was conducted on 05/12/2006 in which Azhagiri one of our students participated.

Study Circle

Mr. V.Vasu — spoke about Gnana Deepam Volume II of Swami Vivekananda on 02/12/2006. A book by Mahatma Gandhiji on Khadi and Village Handicrafts was discussed by Mr. S.Senthilkumar at the meeting on 09/12/2006. A book on Gandhiji's thoughts on Economics was Mr. K.Baskar's choice for the study circle meet on 16/12/2006. Mr.S.Jayakumar shared his thoughts on Gnana Deepam-Volume III by Swami Vivekananda.

Temple Visit

Hostel boys were taken to Vinayagar Temple at Ramanatahapuram on 01/12/2006 and 15/12/2006.

Hostel girls were taken to the same temple on 08/12/2006 and 22/12/2006.

I Want Peace

"I want Peace" cries the tormented man. The aviation says, "You are the Peace you are pining for. Realize this." Such a state of anubuthi is far to seek for all of us. Sages tell us, ".Remove the 'I' and 'Want'. What remains is 'Peace'.

Let us turn to Swami Vivekananda, who is our friend, philosopher and guide. He will surely tell us, lesser mortals, something that we can apply in practice.

Once a young man came to Swamiji and said, "Swamiji, I frequent various sects but cannot decide what is Truth." Swamiji replied in the most affectionate way, "My boy, you need have no fear; I was also once in the same state. Tell me what instructions the people of different faiths have given you and how you have followed the instructions." The youth replied that a learned preacher had clearly convinced him of the truth and utility of image worship, and that he had accordingly done Puja and Japa for a long time with great devotion; but that that he had not been able to find peace.

Then someone had advised him to try to make the mind void at the time of meditation. He had struggled hard to do so, but still the mind had not become calm and controlled. "Sir," said the young man, "still I sit in meditation, shutting the door of my room, and closing my eyes as long

as I can; but I cannot find peace of mind. Can you show me the way?"

"My boy," said Swamiji in a voice full of sympathy, "if you take my word, you will first of all have to open the door of your room and look around instead of closing your eyes.

There are hundreds of poor and helpless people in the neighborhood of your house; them you have to serve to the best of your ability. He who is ill and has no one to look after him; he who has nothing to eat, you will have to feed him; he who is ignorant, you will have to teach him, well-educated as you are. My advice to you is that, if you want peace of mind, you have to serve others in this way as well as you can."

Swamiji's advice is obviously good and practicable. But, it seems that the young man was not serious in his quest for Peace. He argued, "But suppose, sir, that in going to nurse a patient I myself fall ill through loss of sleep and irregular meals, as well as through other irregularities..." Swamiji replied rather sharply, "Why, boy, from your words and manner it is evident to everyone present here, that people like you, who are so mindful of their own bodily comfort, will never go out of their way or risk their health to nurse the sick."

Do we really seek Peace of mind? Are we really serious? Let us then follow Swamiji's advice. The right time is NOW.

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