



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

January 2014

"I bow my head to the great service of Sevalaya"- Dr. Hande



Rajaji's 135th Birth Anniversary was celebrated at Sevalaya campus on 10th December 2013. Dr. H. V. Hande, a medical practitioner and senior politician, who had served in MGR's cabinet as Health Minister and as member in the Tamil nadu assembly for four terms, was the Chief Guest. A freedom fighter, Dr. Hande had the unique opportunity to work with Rajaji.

Dr. Hande recalled the genius of Rajaji and his sagacious wisdom in tackling even complex problems. He cited Rajaji's role, when he was the Governor General of India, in integrating Hyderabad with the Indian union. He cautioned and counseled the then Home Minister Sardar Patel and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to strategically name the action taken to integrate Hyderabad as Police action. The nation witnessed a remarkable success in amicably solving the complex issue.

"I bow my head..."

Dr. Hande paid rich tributes to Sevalaya for its excellent services to the poor, by educating them, besides serving senior citizens in the campus. "As we see, it

is very difficult even to run commercial establishments, but Sevalaya has been consistently providing all facilities, totally free of cost to the beneficiaries for the past 25 years," he noted.

"For this yeoman service, I very much bow my head," Dr. Hande said.

"Prize very special"

Dr. Hande also distributed prizes to the students who participated in the Tamilnadu State-wide Open exam on Rajaji. 11 students from the schools of Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Krishnagiri, Thiruvallur districts won prizes.

K. Santhosh Kumar of Jaya Matriculation Higher Secondary School was elated: "I felt very happy in getting the prize from Dr. Hande. I didn't expect that I will get the prize from such a famous person. I used to participate in all the competitions conducted in the school, but this prize is very special for me".

Admirers of Rajaji attended the function and spoke about the leader, wishing all the children the best in the lives by following the principles of the great leader that Rajaji was.

Above: Dr. Hande speaking at Rajaji's Birth Anniversary Celebrations.

Below: Garlanding Rajaji's Picture. V. Muralidharan and Rajaji admirers also seen in the picture.



*Best wishes for a
Happy
New year*

Joy of Giving: *the* Way of Life

Dear Friends,

In this issue, I have quoted in entirety from the website 'www.marksdailyapple.com', because what I wanted to say has been stated so well!

Quote

By giving, let me say, I don't necessarily mean money. Money by itself can help make a lot of useful and beneficial things happen – for an individual or for an organization that helps individuals in some essential way. What I'm talking about here is service – the time, energy and effort we give to help other people and causes. Of course, we become a positive force in the universe when we do so. We help out a neighbor, spare another forest acre, enhance a community's hope and opportunity. We make a friend's day. The evolutionary undercurrent here is mutual benefit. Sure, we're helping others, but we're also benefiting ourselves in ways we might not expect.

Sure, we get that gratifying "helper's high," the blast of feel good hormones such as oxytocin. That's just the tip of the iceberg, however. In an employee study (PDF) conducted by United Health Group, those who volunteered scored better on nine measures of emotional wellness that included "personal independence, capacity for rich interpersonal relationships and overall satisfaction with life." Of

those who volunteered, the majority said they felt less stress and nearly all reported that their service enhanced their "sense of purpose in life."

Research has found significant benefits for older adults in particular. In a randomized clinical trial involving Baltimore's Experience Corps, Johns Hopkins researchers observed physical and cognitive benefits in older adult volunteers who tutored in urban schools. Participants reported significant gains in perception of social support and connectedness as well as physical strength and mobility. Another Carnegie Mellon University study found volunteering was associated with a 40% lower risk of high blood pressure in older adults. It's possible the kind of volunteering can influence gains as well. Larger scale research out of Cornell University showed older adults who volunteered with an environmental stewardship program were



less likely to experience depression in later years. The lower risk was 50% for environmental volunteers and 10% for non-environmental causes/services. Finally, research shows volunteerism significantly lowers mortality risk in one study by over 60%.

For all the focus on older adults, however, people in any age group experience advantages. Adolescent in a University of British Columbia study showed lower BMI, inflammation and cholesterol readings following a ten week volunteer period. Emotional and physical changes appeared to go hand in hand. As the director of the study noted, "[Those] who reported the greatest increases in empathy, altruistic behavior and mental health were the ones who also saw the greatest improvements in their cardiovascular health."

The number of hours devoted to volunteering each week doesn't appear to influence most benefits, but the length of years does matter. As you can imagine, the longer you do it, the greater the benefit. Likewise, those who volunteer for self-focused reasons didn't benefit compared to non-volunteers. Apparently, we can intellectually know we'll benefit, but the advantages come when we let go of that intention.

Unquote.

Thanks and regards,
Murali

300 strong Sevalaya team joins rally

300 children from Std VIII to XI participated in the rally along with the Ratham of Swami Vivekananda, to mark his 150th birth anniversary held in Thriuvallur on 21st December 2013. The rally started from Municipal office and ended in Venkateshwara school. Totally 15 schools participated in the rally.

Our child Ashok of Std VIII who dressed up as Swami Vivekananda garlanded one of the dignitaries on the dias.

Among all the participants, Sevalaya children showed great enthusiasm in reciting the sayings of Swamiji with full energy which won the appreciation of the organisers.



Children design houses



A variety of mini house models, created by children of Standard V was on view at an exhibition on 13th and 14th December 2013. The house ranges from the ancient house models to modern apartments.

Medical Centre opened

Mahatma Gandhi Medical Centre was inaugurated at Sevalaya campus on 20th December 2013 by N. Subramanian, a long standing donor who has benevolently funded the construction and the operational expenses of the Centre. The 12-bedded Medical Centre will provide medical facilities to the villages in the vicinity.

This comes as a great relief to the villagers, who now have to go to either Thiruvallur GH or Puliur Health Centre for any medical issues. A tough task, because there are no proper transport facilities from their village to these medical centres.

But now, they have the Medical Centre where a doctor is available from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM, with a team of 3 nurses and one nurse is available round the clock. Both Siddha and Allopathy treatments are offered. The Medical Centre has separate 6-bedded wards for men and women and a pharmacy attached. Free medicines are provided to the patients.



The Chief Guest expressed his appreciation of the health and educational services extended to the villagers. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. B. Rajan, entrepreneur from Singapore said he felt very happy visiting

Sevalaya and the services offered were really appreciable.

Dr. Sai Lakshmi, Founder of Ekam Foundation also attended the inauguration.

Mobile Library



Mobile Library was held in Pagalmedu village on 8th December 2013. Around 20 children of the village visited the library and spent time reading books

Training in organic farming

A training programme on organic farming was held on 12th December 2013, at Thamarapakkam village. 13 villagers, including five ladies, attended the programme and are determined to apply the new techniques in their fields.



Shell volunteers conduct games

11 volunteers from Shell visited Sevalaya on 21st December 2013. They spent time with children by encouraging the children to play games. The children enjoyed the day by playing games like throw ball, volley ball, chess and carom. They also conducted competitions among the children and distributed prizes to them.



Sevalaya leads knowledge sharing session

Ennangalin Sangamam, a network of NGOs celebrated its 9th Anniversary and 150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda on 15th December 2013 at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore. Swami Gautamanandaji Maharaj, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math and Swami Vimurthanandaji Maharaj, Editor, Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam were the Chief

Guests. 800 NGOs participated in the event. The NGOs were classified in to groups like education, Homes, etc., facilitating exchanging of notes and knowledge sharing. Sevalaya led the group of NGOs on Homes and made a presentation on the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act.

Happy family around him



C. Micheal Raj shared his experiences about his stay in Sevalaya. He was born in 1959 in Nanguneri Village of Tirunelveli District. His father was a farmer and also had a hotel. Born in a middle class family he could not continue his studies and was working in a press for some years. He got married in 1992 and he says his married life is not a successful one. His wife left him, taking away their two children with her, 6 years back and he has no contact with his family now. Only his brother is in contact with him.

He felt very lonely after his wife and family deserted him. He was working in a lodge for two years and saw the advertisement of Sevalaya in a daily

paper and felt that he can also go there and stay.

He is in Sevalaya for the past one year. In his free time he helps in the kitchen. He relieves the watchman at the gate during the breakfast, lunch and dinner time. He says, the surrounding is very natural. The word partiality does not exist here. The services are provided to the fullest extent. The beneficiaries are poor and the needy and whatever is done is very transparent. Hardwork is the root cause for all the good things that is happening in Sevalaya. He feels very proud and happy to be associated with Sevalaya. Even though he is not staying with his family, he feels he has got a family here.



Sevalaya has changed her life

“My life would have been very different hadn’t I joined in Sevalaya says G.Jothi, Day Care Centre staff of Sevalaya.

Jothi studied in Sevalaya from her Kinder Garden. Her mother Rani has a shop nearby the school and her father Ganesan is a Railway employee. When she joined Sevalaya her father was a agriculture labor and their family was in a very bad state. She and her three brothers also studied here.

She says “If Sevalaya was not in this place, my parents would have definitely got me married at a younger age itself. There were no schools in the vicinity

and Sevalaya was the only school in this village”.

Jothi finished her schooling and with the guidance of her teachers she completed her B.A. English from Hindu College. She joined Sevalaya as a Day Care Teacher and then finished her B.Ed and is now doing her M.A. She also got trained in Montessori Methodology and now she is the teacher in Montessori section.

She says Sevalaya has transformed her life totally. Meanwhile, she believes that the School has also changed: the teaching standard and methodologies have vastly improved, and so has discipline.



Delightful moments away from home

Amelia Rayanne Lamar is a volunteer from California, United States of America who is staying in Sevalaya from September 2013. She is by profession an artist and art coordinator for music festivals. She loves teaching art to the children and hence she found in internet about Sevalaya has come here.

She says her mother is the person who brought her and her sister and her father did not play any role in their life. Hence her mother is so special to her. When she saw these children she felt very happy since with such a background these children are looking cheerful, intense and beautiful. She says that her life achievement was when she performed Live Painting with musicians in front of 10000 people.

Her stay in Sevalaya is a more interesting experience for her. She says the most memorable moment was the night of Deepavali. “We in our country are scared for everything. We burst crackers but not like the one that you are doing. The children are enjoying the crackers and the huge rockets that they burnt were very interesting to watch. The day was full of smoke and noises everywhere. I



have not seen such a day in my place. In the beginning I was scared to see this but when I started to enjoy the whole scene it was mind blowing. You people are enjoying your life here. Western culture is full of rules but you are very close to life here”.

Amelia wanted to spend time in the fields. She wanted to learn more about organic farming and the methods of it.

She says that every day is becoming an experience for her. “Life is beautiful here”, says Amelia.

Gold, bronze, for Vijayakumar in Inter district athletics

M. Vijayakumar of Std XII won the 1st price in Shot put and the 3rd Prize in Discus throw in the Senior category, at the inter district Athletic tournament held on 1st December 2013.

R. Arun Kumar of Std XII won the 3rd Prize in Javelin Throw.

The Sevalaya contingent had 10 boys, trained by A. Sankara Pandiyan, PT



M. Vijayakumar



R. Arun Kumar

instructor. Around 2,000 students from 150 schools from Kancheepuram,

Chennai and Thiruvallur districts participated in the meet held at Nehru Stadium, Chennai.

Arun and Vijay were spotted as potential athletes by their coach Sanakara Pandian when they were in Std VII. Both have been winners in athletics at the Zonal level for the past 3 years. They are also district level Hand ball players and part of the winning team in the past 4 years.

Fun games keep them entertained

On 8th December 2013, 12 volunteers from Pasam Train Friends Association visited Sevalaya and spent time with the hostel children of Kinder garden to IX standard. The children had a whale of a time, as the enterprising visitors conducted Frog race, lemon and spoon race, Balloon hitting race for the little ones and Volley ball, Throw ball match for the senior boys and girls. They also distributed prizes like sketch pens, pencils and note books for the winners.



Inspiring nature film from Scotland

Nichol Irene of Scotland, who has come as volunteer to Sevalaya showed a one and half hour film on Nature, wild life and the islands in and around Scotland, for the children from Std I to V in batches.

Lohitha, of Std IV says, "I felt very happy to see the film which showed the various kinds of animals in Scotland. This film was very different to me and I liked it very much".



Special Disha camp shows the way

30 hostel children of Sevalaya were among the 90 children who participated in a special Disha Camp conducted in Sevalaya.

Held from 26th to 30th December 2013, it was tailor made and conducted by Mafoi Foundation for the children from North Chennai schools who have learning difficulties.



Messaging through Kottu Murasu

Kottu Murasu was played in the village Nallankavanaur. The children of the village staged a play on personal hygiene, Witnessed by more than 50 villagers.



As part of the improvement training, the children were motivated through yoga, meditation, exercises and guest lectures.

15 volunteers who had already got training monitored the whole camp.

Celebrating the birthday of mathematics genius



Srinivasa Ramanujan made India proud through his extra ordinary contributions to mathematical analysis, number theory, infinite series, and continued fractions.

Born at Erode in 1887, Ramanujan developed an interest in Mathematics at the age of 10. Ramanujan had conducted his own mathematical research on Bernoulli numbers and the Euler–Mascheroni constant. Ramanujan studied at Government College in Kumbakonam, and

recognizing the brilliance of his work, he was invited to Cambridge to visit and work there. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

In December 2011, in recognition of his contribution to mathematics, the Government of India declared that Ramanujan's birthday (22 December) should be celebrated every year as National Mathematics Day, and declared 2012 the National Mathematics Year.

To make the children aware of the great genius , every year Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiar School celebrates Ramanujan Day. During the month of November, schools from Thiruvallur and Chennai were invited to an examination on Maths for the children of Std VI to XII. 115 children from 14 schools participated in this competition and 11 children won prizes.

The prizes were distributed to the children on Ramanujan Day which was celebrated in Sevalaya on 24th December 2013.

Chief Guest, S. Nagarajan, Senior Manager, Administration and Facilities of TI Metal Forming, noted: " Swami Vivekananda said, "Give me 100 youth, I will transform the Nation", and here is Sevalaya producing 1,700 youth, who have the ability to transform the world in the future."

He encouraged all the children to prove their abilities and noted that they had got a wonderful opportunity to know in detail about inspiring leaders and achievers in various fields.



Jingle bells at Sevalaya

Christmas was celebrated with gaiety and joy at Sevalaya campus on 14th December 2013. 50 volunteers from Lionbridge Technologies contributed their time to make the function memorable for the children of Sevalaya. Christmas Carols by the primary school children and the volunteers were interspersed by skits on Christmas. The high point was the much anticipated entry of Santa who cut the cake and soon everybody was tucking in.

The volunteers shared with the children the message on giving.

Games and Icebreakers added to the joy.

Loyola visit

15 elders and 25 children of the hostel went to Loyola College on 14th December 2013 to attend the Christmas celebration. The function was organized by Rev. Fr. Dr. S. Peter, Director of LIBA (Loyola Institute of Business Administration).



“Children’s faces show their happiness in Sevalaya”

Bharathi’s 132nd Birth Anniversary was celebrated at Sevalaya campus on 11th December 2013 at 11 a.m. K. Chandrasekar, Chief Educational Officer, Thiruvallur District, participated as the Chief Guest.

The function started with a cultural programme by the children, portraying the life history of Bharathiyar. Later V. Muralidharan, Founder and Managing Trustee of Sevalaya spoke about the open book exams conducted every year in Sevalaya throughout Tamilnadu on the great leaders Bharathi, Gandhi, Vivekanada and Rajaji.

In his speech Chandrasekar praised Sevalaya for the excellent services to serve the poor by educating them. He said, “The children’s happiness with the schools in the school is seen on the faces of 1,700 children studying in Sevalaya. Chandrasekar also distributed prizes -



books and certificates - to the students who participated in the Tamilnadu State wide Open exam conducted on Bharathi. 9 students from the schools of Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Kanchipuram, Theni, Sivagangai, Chennai and Thiruvallur districts won prizes and 8 students attended the function to get the prizes.

Janani, of Govt. Girls Hr.Sec.School, Manamadurai, felt that this opportunity was a great experience for her. The school is totally disciplined and remembering Bharathiyar by conducting open exams on him is a different idea. She said “I argued with my parents to attend the function since I want to see how Sevalaya is. If I get absent in my half yearly exam I am not worried, I have seen a wonderful place today”

She felt that hereafter she will attend all the exams that is conducted in Sevalaya and will come and collect the prizes.



December Gopooja

Gopooja was performed on all Fridays in the month. The Pooja was sponsored by many donors each week. The children and the elders participated in the pooja and prasathams distributed to all.



In Brief

A. A. Kingston and K.K.Shiva Sailam attended a Leadership training programme on “Get more productivity with time management”, organized by Light House Talent Management Company Ltd.

On 17th and 18th December 2013, 25 elders visited Shivan temple in Pakkam to view the Arudhra Darsan of Lord Shiva.

On 20th December 2013, V.Muralidharan and A.A.Kingston attended a meeting conducted by Department of Social Defense in the Thiruvallur Collectorate on “Handling dropout in the homes”.

120 children attended the Iyappa Bhajan conducted by Pattabiram Iyappa Seva Samajam on 24th December 2013.

65 children and 25 elders attended the Vishnu Sahasranamam Recitation Programme organized by A. C.S Ravi of Thiruninravur on 25th December 2013.

20 children went to Thamarapakkam Shivan Temple to do service by helping the people visiting the temple, on 31st December 2013.

28 elders went to Kamarajar Arangam on 19th December, 2013 to view the inauguration day of ‘Chennai Thiruvaiaru’, a musical programme held during the month of Markazhi every year

An awareness camp was held in Ayalur village on 14th December 2013, to spread information about Sevalaya’s Community College that will be operational in a few months. Shanmuganandam of Sevalaya’s Community College spoke to the villagers about the job opportunities it can offer. There was a good response from the villagers, with 15 prospective students from the village attending the session.

Medical camp was held in Velliyur Panchayat. The Panchayat leader Usha Murugan inaugurated the camp and Dr.Sharada Banu and team conducted the General and Pediatric check up for the 143 villagers who came from 5 villages in the vicinity.

Swami Vivekananda's Karma Yoga

You should work like a master and not as a slave; work incessantly, but do not do slave's work. Do you not see how everybody works? Nobody can be altogether at rest; ninety nine per cent of mankind work like slaves and the result is misery; it is all selfish work. Work through freedom! Work through love! The word "love" is difficult to understand; love never comes until there is freedom. There is no true love possible in the slave. If you buy a slave and tie him down in chains and make him work for you, he will work like a drudge, but there will be no love in him. So when we ourselves work for the things of the world like slaves, there can be no love in us and our work is not true work. This is true of work done for

relatives and friends, and is true of work done for our own selves. Selfish work is slave's work; and here is a test. Every act of love brings happiness; there is no act of love which does not bring peace and blessedness as its reaction... True love can never react as to cause pain either to the lover or to the beloved. Suppose a man loves a woman, he wishes to have her all to himself and feels extremely jealous about her every movement; he wants her to sit near him, to stand near him, and to eat and move at his bidding. He is a slave to her and wishes to have her as his slave. That is not love; it is a kind of morbid affection of the slave, insinuating itself as love. It cannot be love; because it is painful; if she does not do what he

wants, it brings him pain. With love, there is no painful reaction; love only brings a reaction of bliss; if it does not, it is not love; it is mistaking something else for love. When you have succeeded in loving your husband, your wife, your children, the whole world, the universe, in such a manner that there is no reaction of pain or jealousy, no selfish feeling, then you are in a fit state to be unattached.

Attachment comes only when we expect a return. If working like a slave results in selfishness and attachment, working as a master of our own mind gives rise to the bliss of non attachment.

(Extracts from The Complete works of Swami Vivekananda-Vol..I-Page 57 to 59)

Published by: Bhuvaneswari Muralidharan and owned by / on behalf of Sevalaya and published from

F2, Jains Eden Park, 4 - Judge Jambulingam Road, Mylapore, Chennai – 600 004.

Printed by: S.Kannappan @ Gem Offsets, No. - 24(Old no.20), Swami Achari St., Royapettah, Chennai -600 014.

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Design

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How many future doctors do you see here?



Tough to predict.

But we are more than just optimistic. In the last 25 years, we have seen orphans and first generation students born to landless labourers becoming Doctors, Engineers, IT professionals and Police officials.

Today, Sevalaya offers quality education free to over 1,750 children of Kasava and neighbouring villages outside Chennai. On an average, it costs Rs 6,000 every year to educate one child.

Together we can make sure that each of them realises his/her full potential and grows into a productive and happy person.

Partner us in transforming lives!
Donate now. Visit www.sevalaya.org/support/

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