



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Love 3 **Sevalaya's News Letter - July 2008** Serve 4 Price-Re.1

Dear Friends,

Nearly 12 years ago myself and other trustees of Sevalaya, contacted a building contractor and explained to him our dream school building and asked him to draw a blue print. The contractor looked at me and thought that I must be joking. He said in an unfriendly voice "You are asking for 32 class rooms, 4 labs, one library and an auditorium – do you have any idea how much it will cost? Close to one crore rupees(250,000 USD). So don't waste my time". Then I asked him "How much will it cost to draw the blue print?". The contractor said it will be around Rs 1000 (25 USD). Then I said "Oh! We have that much now, so please give us the plan".

After we got the plan, we relentlessly worked towards making our dream a reality. We constantly spoke to our families, friends, colleagues, contacts about our grand plans. The way the children's Home we started was functioning, inspired confidence and our tireless campaigning started yielding results. The support base was building up.

Seven years later, the school building was fully constructed, at the estimated cost, and now 1000 children get free education in this building. We were happy that we are able to realize our dream and we could somehow muster the one crore rupees required and complete the building.

But in the last two years, we are pushed into a situation that we are not able to admit more children into the school, even though we get many deserving kids seeking admission. This is because the school is full to its capacity and we can't take any more kids. Then the phase II of the dream started – why don't we go beyond the 1000 mark? This will need another school building. But this time the challenge is the availability of land. The entire 7 areas of land are fully utilized now and we need to buy extra land to go for the second school building.

This entire week (June last week), we have been negotiating the purchase of some more land, and by the time this newsletter reaches you, we would have completed the transaction. The blue print for the first stage of the second school building is ready now. The cost is going to be Rs 56,00,000 (140,000 USD). This means each class room will be costing Rs 4 lakhs (10,000 USD) to construct. I am sure we need not wait for seven years to complete this building, as we did in the case of the first building – we are hoping to complete it within one year, so that when the next school year starts in June 2009, we will be ready to welcome 500 more children into the education system.

As we are sure about support from all of you, as soon as we take over the land, we plan to lay the foundation and start the construction work. We will report about this in our next month's news letter. Any contribution, big or small, one class room or a block of class rooms, one fan, one light, one door, one window, or one brick will all count. We can all pool in our resources and make a difference to 500 more kids' lives, on an ongoing basis.

Thanks & Regards
Murali



Free Books, Note books, Bags & other Educational aids for 1000 Children



Events

On 07/06/2008, in a function organized for the commencement of academic year 2008-2009, 2 sets of uniforms each, notebooks and school bags were distributed to the 1000 rural poor students of Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School. 2 Trained Graduate Teachers in English, Mr. Mohammed Shafi and Mr. Chelladurai, who are visually challenged, were also inducted into the school. The uniforms and other educational aids were distributed by the Chief Guest Mr. Rajasekaran, Deputy Tasildar of Thiruvallur District. Mr. B.Vijayakumar, Advocate of Madras High Court was the special guest.

The Thiruvallur unit of the DMK Party celebrated the Tamilnadu Chief Minister Dr. M.Karunanidhi's 85th birthday at Sevalaya on 08/06/2008 by providing special meals to the residents of Sevalaya. Thiruvallur Chairperson Mr. V.S.Shanmugam, the district councilor Mr. R.S.Rajarajan, Jaya Pughazhendi and panchayat presidents and councilors from 15 villages around Sevalaya participated in the function.

25 Chinese from the Rotract club of Hong Kong landed in Sevalaya on the morning of 08/06/2008, to conduct a mini Olympics for the children and senior citizens of Sevalaya. Various events were



Prizes to the toppers in the public exams. by J.C.D. Prabhakaran, Ex. M.L.A. and Askaraj Jain, Ambattur

Felicitation for receiving the Swami Gnanananda National Awards 2008



organized and the Chinese volunteers were very busy, out in the hot sun, running along with the children and cheering them up. The grandpas and grandmas were also early participating in the walking race and the musical chair and many other competitions.

The visiting Rotractors spoke to the children about Hongkong, the city's history, about China's National Flag, the National Flower and about the Chinese Calendar. They also spoke to them about the Chinese languages Mandarin and Cantonese, explained how each sign represented a word, how those symbols evolved etc., distributed many colourful prizes the winners of the events. They also screened a movie on the culture and history of Hongkong.

Senior officials and staff of State Bank of Mysore, Chennai Main Branch visited Sevalaya on 26/06/2008. They interacted with the residents of Sevalaya and distributed Notebooks to them.

Nearly 20 Volunteers from Rotract club of Aakash spent two days at Sevalaya i.e 28/06/2008 & 29/06/2008. They conducted sports events for the children, presented cultural programme. They also planted tree saplings in the campus and in the village during their stay.



Volunteers from Rotract club of Aakash



External Events

Mr. V.Muralidharan, Founder & Managing Trustee and Mrs. Bhuvanewari Muralidharan, Hony. Correspondent of Sevalaya were felicitated at a function organized by an NGO "Udhavum Nanbargal" at Alathur Village on 15/06/2008 for receiving the Swami Gnanananda National Awards 2008 in the category of Families in Social Service. Mr. A.K.Venkatasubramaniam, Catalyst Trust presided over the function.

Mr. V.Muralidharan gave a Power Point Presentation on Sevalaya's activities at the Kilpak Residents Association Meeting on 14/06/2008.

Mrs. Bhuvanewari Muralidharan participated in the one-day seminar on "Social Entrepreneurship" organised by Centre for Social Initiatives Management and US Consulate on 17/06/2008.

Staff Book Review

On 14/06/2008 Mr. G.Chittibabu reviewed the book on Bharathiyar's Life History written by Va. Ra. Ms. Annapurna took up the book Bharathi-The path finder authored by Mr. M.Srinivasan for review on 21/06/2008. Elanthai Su.Ramasamy's 'Science in the works of Bharathi' (Tamil) was reviewed at the meeting on 28/06/2008 by Ms. R.Vijaya.

Students Book Review

On 14/06/2008, P.Amul shared about what she read in the book '30 minutes for Improvement' written by Mr. P.S.Achariyar. K.Chitra spoke on the book 'Values of Life for the Youth' (Tamil) authored by Mr. Chendurai Muthu on 21/06/2008. On 28/06/2008, relates reviewed the book 'Select your Goals' written by Mr.Gopi Sarapoji.

Club Activities

Tamil Club gave training to improve students' hand writing at its meeting on 17/06/2008. The English club activities for the academic year 2008 -2009 started on 11/06/2008. The students were divided in to 3 groups and group leaders were elected. It was decide to improve the reading skills of the club members. The club members met on 11, 17, 24 &

25/06/2008. They went through the book "Phonetics for beginners" assisted by the teachers Mr. C.Adimuthu, Mr. M.Chelladurai and Mr. S.Mohamad Shaffi. The Maths. club activities for the academic year 2008 -2009 started on 12/06/2008. Aim of this year is 'to prepare for competitive exams'. At the club meeting on 19/06/2008, the topic 'Simplification of numbers' was discussed. The inaugural meeting of the Science Club was held on 11/06/2008. Members were divided in to 4 groups and they discussed about 4 scientists - Edison, Einstein, Darwin & Michel Faraday. On 20/06/2008 a movie about wild animals was screened for the members. The Social Science Club met on 12/06/2008. Students were encouraged to read books on general Knowledge. A Quiz was conducted at the meeting on 19/06/2008.

NSS Activities

On 12/06/2008, the NSS students cleaned the school campus. They also cleaned Goshala and its surroundings on 19/06/2008.

'Kottu Murasu' Programme

The Kottu Murasu Cultural troupe of Sevalaya presented a programme on 18/06/2008 at Melakondaiyur Village on awareness about literacy and welfare of society through plays, songs, dance etc.

Temple Visits

On 06/05/2008 and 20/06/2008 the Hostel Boys went to Ramanathapuram Vinayagar Temple. On 13/06/2008 the Hostel Girls went to Ramanathapuram Vinayagar Temple. On 27/06/2008 the Hostel Girls went to R.C. Church, Thiruninravur. The senior citizens at the Old Age Home were taken to Periyapalayam Mariyamman Temple on 30/06/2008.

Other Activities

Sanskrit classes are organized for the hostel students. The classes commenced on 22/06/2008. Mr. Dhayalan from Mittanamallee teaches Sanskrit to the students. Mr. M.Chelladurai is conducting Music classes for the hostel students.

Every Saturday, there is a open House Programme Nila Mutram where the staff and hostel children spend the evening at the open grounds. Children sing and dance and enact skits. On 07/06/2008, Mr. V.Murallidharan shared interesting anecdotes from Gandhiji's life. Mr. G.Chittibabu spoke to the children about Bharathiar on 14/06/2008. Mr. G.Pazhanisamy and Mr. P.Narayanamoorthy has spoke about Swami Vivekananda in Nila Mutram programme on 21/06/2008 and 28/06/2008.

On 30/06/2008, Mr. P.Selvam spoke to the children on 'Time Consciousness', to create an awareness about time management.

Haiku, Bharathi and economy of words.

Mahakavi Subramania Bharathiyar lived in age when communication systems and news channels were not as developed as they are now. Yet, surprisingly he displayed an intimate knowledge of world events and trends in his essays, poems, editorials cartoons and other writings. His writings included a wide gamut of events and trends. To cite a few: Mazzini's orations, greetings to Belgium, the plight of Indian women laborers in the sugarcane plantations in Fiji Island, Floods in Paris, war between Morocco and Spain, Russian Revolution, China's intrusion in to Tibet, other events in Persia, Turkey etc. He kept himself abreast of and wrote about literary trends elsewhere in the world.

Haiku is a Japanese poetry form. It is known for its brevity. This type of poems was first introduced to Tamil by writer Sujatha in 1966 when he translated a few haikus in to Tamil and published them in the literary journal Kanaiyazhi. Now this Haiku form is very popular in Tamil literature. It is amazing that Bharathiyar wrote about the short form of Japanese poetry in Swadesamitran under the heading "Japanese poetry" on 16/10/1916. That is half a century before this form found its entry in to Tamil world. In his article, Bharathiyar refers to an article by a Japanese poet in Modern review where he wrote about how short Japanese poems were. One poem quoted by him, freely runs like this:

Ravaged in flames!
How tranquil like a
Falling flower!

This poem purports the state of mind of a Gnani (a man of wisdom) who is as tranquil as a flower even in the midst of gravest of calamities. Incidentally Indian literature speaks of king-sage Janaka possessing such a state of mind.

Sujatha tersely defines Haiku as " Three lines; two frames: and a wonder!" Bharathiyar admires the Japanese literature for its economy of words. He refers to Tirukkural in Tamil but regrets that in recent times our literature has become mere verbose.

Bharathiyar might not have written Haikus. But a few pieces of his, we find have the characteristics of haiku.

Look at these three consecutive axioms in Puthiya Athi chudi.:

Think good.
Toil through the day.
Desired shall come to pass.

Another much more appropriate example will be the "Fire-chick" (agginik kunjju)

Found a fire-chick;
Placed in a hole in the forest;
Forest smouldered cleanaway! (Translation:TNR)

Thaththarikida Thatharikida Thiththom! adds to the wondrous effect. Of course we have to leave the line conveying the bard's comment that in fiery valour is there a thing like fledgling or age-worn?

We come to the central theme of Bharathiyar's article. It commends on the economy of words. While on the subject of economy of words, we cannot but quote Gandhiji:

"My hesitancy of speech which was once an annoyance is now a pleasure. Its greatest benefit has been that it has taught me the economy of words. I can now give myself the certificate that a thoughtless word hardly ever escapes my tongue or pen. I do not recollect ever having had to regret anything in my speech or writing I have thus been spared of many a mishap and waste of time."



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