



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Sevalaya's News Letter

JUNE - 2004

Dear Friends,

If something happens only once, people may say that it was just luck. When the event happens for the second time, we sit up and start observing a pattern. If it happens again and again, it becomes a habit.

Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher secondary school has done it again. We have achieved 100% result once again in the school final (10th standard) examination. This is the only school in Thiruvallur district, which has achieved this, on two consecutive years.

Children of Sevalaya come from very poor families. Many of them are orphans and destitute children. Many come from families where generations together their forefathers have not gone to school. We were told initially that it is very difficult to educate such children. People talked about the 'education gene'. We were even advised not to expect high scorers from such group of children. I was personally advised by many not to 'dream' too much, for I may end up as a lunatic! But our teachers and children have proved all these theories wrong!

We also had many who encouraged us. There was a strong belief in many that if proper atmosphere is provided, any child will come up with flying colors. The Kasuva village never had a school. Sevalaya took upon itself to implement one of Mahakavi Bharathiyar's poems, which talks about establishing and running schools for poor in places where there are no schools as the right form of saraswathi

pooja (offering to the Goddess of knowledge), built this school in Kasuva village in 1991, as a memorial to the great poet. After 13 years, we have seen nearly 500 poor children getting free education, and to crown it all, last two years, we have achieved 100% results. Looking back, we are very happy about the transformation what Sevalaya has brought about in this part of Thiruvallur district. From no education in the village, to the level of educating 500 children; that too, giving them quality education.

We have to congratulate all our teachers for putting in all the extra effort required. Many of them have to take up dual role, both as parents and teachers, as many children lack support from parents or relatives. Credit goes to all other staff also, as they played the crucial supporting role.

We have to thank all of you for your support, in terms of volunteering to take special classes on weekends, contributing for the school building construction, contributing for the purchase of note books, books etc., and also giving us the much needed encouragement. But for the support from one and all, Sevalaya would not have achieved this wonderful success.

The academic year is starting this month. This year we will be sending our first set of students to +2 examination. We hope we will get same results there also.

Thanks & Regards

Murali

Study Circle

On 08/05/2004 Ms. Easwari shared her thoughts about the book "Perunthalaivar Kamarajar" by S.R.Govindaraj at Sevalaya Campus.

On 15/05/2004 Ms. R. Latha spoke on the Book " How to Plan for your Development" by Lena. Tamilvanan at Sevalaya Campus.

On 22/05/2004 Mr. A.Sankarapandian spoke on the book "Poverty is not a Hinderance" by Prof. K.Ramachandran at Sevalaya Campus.

Training & Development

Mr. A.Sankarapandian, our Physical Education Master attended a Training Programme at MVAS Shri K G Nadgir College of Physical Education at Dharwad from 02/05/2004 to 13/05/2004. He has come back equipped with techniques of training the children in gymnastics, various field games and conducting tournaments. The training also comprised of testing and evaluation methods and sports first aid.

Free Summer Camp in Computer Education

The free 1 month Computer training camp for rural youth organised by Sevalaya which commenced on 17 / 04/ 2004, concluded on May 22/05/2004.

A Visually Challenged Artiste lights up the lives of our children...

Vidwan K. Gururaj of Bangalore is a visually challenged musician. He is an accredited artiste of the All India Radio, Bangalore. A staunch devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, he generously offered to perform a music programme to raise funds for the welfare activities of Sevalaya.



He presented a 2 ½ hour carnatic Music programme at Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan Auditorium on 29/05/2004 at 6:30 PM. The music was divine and elevating. He was accompanied by, Mr. Suresh on the violin and Mr. Balaji on the mridangam. Swami Kamalanandaji Maharaj, Secretary of Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, T. Nagar and Swami Padmasthanandaji Maharaj, Assistant Secretary of Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, T. Nagar were the chief guests and graced the occasion.

The funds raised were utilised to provide notebooks to the children of the Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School.

Stepping out in to the world...

Ms. S.Usha, the first girl to join Sevalaya 12 years ago, has now successfully completed XII Std. Usha, a child about to be sold off by her parents in Mumbai Railway Station, 12 years ago, gave them the slip, boarded a Chennai bound train, travelled without ticket and landed up in Chennai Central. The trauma of being deserted by parents, going without food, and travelling ticket less had all left the child in a pathetic state. Fortunately for her, she was spotted by some well wishers and was brought to Sevalaya. From then on, there was no looking back for her. The traumatic days were over and happy days were here again. She grew up under the loving care and shelter provided by Sevalaya and now she is ready to face the world. Now that she has completed her XII Std, she will be a pre trainee in the Kasthurba Hospital run by the Gandhigram Trust for a year after which she will join the Arogya Sevika course. (Nursing Course). On completion of the course her prospects of getting employment in private nursing homes are bright.



The success story continues...

Sevalaya has done it again! For a second successive year all the 20 students of the Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School, who appeared for the X Std Public Examinations conducted by the Board of

Secondary Education, Tamil Nadu, have come out successfully. The school topper is B.Rajeswari who scored 85.2% (426/500).

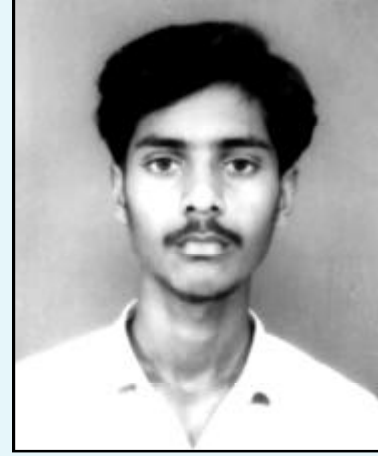
The table below gives the marks secured by our students in various subjects (out of 100) and an analysis of their performance.



B.Rajeswari
I Place



A.Meenakshi
II Place



P.Giridharan
III Place

Name	Tamil	English	Maths	Science	Social Studies	Total	% of marks
B.Rajeswari	80	73	82	96	95	426	85.2
A.Meenakshi	84	75	97	90	76	422	84.4
P.Giridharan	68	57	92	90	89	396	79.2
D.Manikandan	75	62	84	93	80	394	78.8
L.Asha	70	61	95	84	77	387	77.4
R.Shanmugavathi	76	65	88	84	72	385	77
S.Sivakumar	66	77	93	79	62	377	75.4
K.Banupriya	68	61	77	73	81	360	72
B.Rajalakshmi	63	62	67	87	77	356	71.2
G.Asha	66	60	68	89	72	355	71
E.Geetha	65	64	55	83	76	343	68.6
D.Alamelu	58	55	63	83	68	327	65.4
Jeyapal	59	60	69	68	60	316	63.2
R.Rajkumar	55	59	77	73	48	312	62.4
C.Rajendran	55	45	67	76	68	311	62.2
K.Poornimadevi	50	48	59	85	74	307	61.4
V.Baskaran	47	59	60	81	58	305	61
V.Muniammal	52	57	62	71	60	302	60.4
K.Thiagaraj	56	49	60	68	57	290	58
M.Kanimozhi	40	41	39	53	46	219	43.8

GREAT ORATORS ALL

At the Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School in our Sevalaya campus we hold a number of inter-school competitions every year in fields such as oratory, essay writing and poetry writing. The competitions are open to students from all the nearby schools, and students from over a dozen high schools participate. The high level of talent displayed by the participants would surprise any first time visitor. The oratorical contest in particular is a delight to watch. For the few minutes each participant is on the stage he or she is a totally transformed individual. They burst out of their shells of shyness, and go ahead with voices raised and arms flaying, articulating their ideas on the topic under discussion with great verve and energy. That is a talent we like to encourage. Our three guiding lights of Sevalaya – Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Mahakavi Subramania Bharati – were all such brilliant orators that with the power of their oratory they changed the course of history in their time. We like to kindle and to encourage the development of that power in the children under our care.

Swami Vivekananda opened a new chapter in the world's history of religions with one single piece of brilliant oratory. It was, of course, his famous speech at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. The Parliament had been organised by some high-minded persons in U.S.A. to discuss the various forms of religious beliefs prevalent in this world and to discover the unity underlying the diversity. Swamiji faced great difficulty in undertaking the journey to U.S.A. to attend the Parliament, and in getting himself nominated as a delegate to represent Hinduism. When at last the day came when Swamiji was seated on the stage as one of the speakers at the inaugural session, there was an assemblage of over 6000 at the hall, including some of the most distinguished of the world's philosophers and theologians. The delegates were called to speak in an alphabetical order, and 'Vivekananda' was near the end at number thirty-one. All except Swamiji had come with prepared speeches, and many spoke at length in high-flown language. Swamiji spoke

extempore. He began, addressing the audience as "Sisters and Brothers of America". The effect was electrifying. The whole audience stood up and burst into applause. It took many minutes to subside. To a hushed audience he spoke of Hinduism's spirit of tolerance and universal acceptance, and pleaded for an end to all sectarianism and fanaticism. It was a short speech; but it opened the eyes of the Western world to the ancient wisdom of India.

Mahatma Gandhi was terribly shy as a youngster, and it took him many years to muster courage to speak from a public platform. But once he got involved as the pleader for just causes, be it for the rights of Indians in South Africa or for freedom for the Indian nation from colonial rule, he had to of necessity stand up and speak. And when he did that, history was made. It is said that among all the world's leaders Gandhiji had made the largest number of speeches, to the biggest crowds ever assembled, and on the widest variety of themes.

In his speeches Gandhiji always stated the plainest truth in the simplest language. Among the great speeches he had made can be counted the sensational speech he gave at the Banaras Hindu University in 1916, his speech on *Swadeshi* in 1916 in Madras, his plea at the 'great trial' in 1922 and his sermon on voluntary poverty at a London church in 1931. These and other speeches are to be read for their content and for the beauty of the language.

It is a little known fact that the poet Subramania Bharati was also a brilliant orator in Tamil and English. Young Bharati used to address meetings in Madras on nationalist themes during 1907 and 1908 as he got drawn into the freedom movement. During his later years he was an orator in great demand to speak on a variety of topics, ranging from religion to social reform. In his prayer to Goddess Sakthi he sings:

Goddess of clear Tamil!

Descend in floods upon my tongue!

For Free Circulation :

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