



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

## Sevalaya's News Letter

MARCH - 2006

### Dear Friends,

One of the very interesting books I have read is 'The Alchemist'. It talks about dreaming and constantly pursuing one's dreams. The book says "If you steadfastly follow-up on your dream 'the whole world will conspire with you' so that you achieve the desired results".

One such dream is building a free university at Sevalaya, catering to the needs of bright and deserving but orphan, poor and destitute children. Even to run a free school, we have to struggle a lot to make both the ends meet, month after month. But dreams have to be crazy, they have to be out of the ordinary, they have to be way above the present day reality, otherwise it is not worth calling it a dream!

When the dreaming started we had no idea of what is required to build a university. What courses we can offer to give it a rural bias? If we do that, how to make the students employable? How will the buildings look like? How much land is required? How much money is required, both initially and for running expenses? The only answer we had was that when we wanted to build the four storeyed school building at a cost of one crore Indian Rupees (US Dollar 200, 000) , we had a bank balance of Rs 1000 (US dollar 20), but finally we made it, in seven years! So let the current situation not restrict our plans or dreams for the future.

First of all we needed a civil design, so that we get an approximate idea as to how much money is required to build the initial infra-

structure. Where to get this done? We had great ideas about making the whole campus green and eco friendly.

In the meanwhile, Tata consultancy services, IIT Madras and Stanford university organized a three day program for students at IIT Madras, on tsunami relief. I was invited on the first day to talk to the students on 'How to start a social venture' and also on the final day as one of the judges to select the prize winning business plan for tsunami relief.

There I met a couple of friends from Stanford and told them about Sevalaya's university plan. They immediately agreed to take this up as a regular project work for their students and come up with a detailed plan for the university.

It was run as a three months project and twelve students worked on it. A nice campus on 20 acres of land is on paper now. The plan is ready and Stanford University has delivered the nearly hundred page document. It includes how we will re-cycle all waste in the campus, how we will make the campus solar powered, etc. The estimated cost is around 5.63 crores.

How to get this money? How to buy 20 acres of land? How long will this take? How much money is required for running expenses? How will we collect it? From where? We have no concrete answers for all these questions. But we are sure about one thing. You are there to 'conspire' with us, to make this dream full filled.

Thanks & Regards  
**Murali**

### Sri Ram Engg. College Students Visit



### Administrative Office Moves to Campus...

The administrative office at Adyar will move to Sevalaya Service centre at Kasuva with effect from 01/03/2006. The contact address and phone nos henceforth will be:

**Sevalaya, Kasuva Village, Pakkam Post near Thiruniravur 602024.**

#### Phone Nos:

Sevalaya	(044) 26344243
Old Age Home	(044) 26346162
Ramani	9444346699
Bhuvana	9444620286
Ravi	9444620289

### Events at the Campus

An intra school Kho-Kho competition for the students was held on 02/02/2006. Vivekanandar Group won in the boys and Bharathiyar Group won in the Girls category.

30 students from Anna University and 30 staff members from Isoft company visited the campus and spent a day with the children and senior citizens on 25/02/2006.

### Foreign Volunteers

Volunteers from John Hopkins University

### Science Club



USA are planning for a visit to Sevalaya in Summer 2006. They are interested in enrolling more volunteers in their group for this project and have created a link in their website.

Any volunteers from Overseas interested in joining this group can check out their website: [http://home.pacific.net.hk/~ep2/ep/join\\_india.html](http://home.pacific.net.hk/~ep2/ep/join_india.html) for application and other details (subject to changes) of EP's 2006 India Summer Camp.

### In the AIR.....

An interview with Sevalaya Trustee Mr. Narayanan, Old Age Home in – charge Mr. Selvam and some of the senior citizens was broadcast by All India Radio on 18/02/2006.

An interview with Hony. Coordinator Mr. T.S.Venkataramani and Hony. Correspondent Ms. Bhuvanewari Muralidharan was broadcast on the FM Radio of M O P Vaishnav College for Women on 18/02/2006.

### And on TV...

An interview with Managing Trustee Mr. V. Muralidharan on Gandhiji's Leadership Qualities as established in Salt Satyagraha Movement was telecast in Chennai Doordharshan on 23/01/2006.

## Science Club Activities

Mr. K.Mohan, Trustee of Sevalaya spoke to the student members of the Science Club about "Cloning" on 25/02/2006.

## Sports Events

Tamil Nadu Govt. conducted Rural level Sports Meet for the Thiruvallur Union on 26/02/2006 & 27/02/2006. Our school students participated in the meet and won various prizes in different categories. Following is the list of prizes secured by our students.

### GIRLS:

#### Under 12

##### 100m Race:

V.Banupriya - II Place  
R.Kavitha - III Place

##### Shot put:

A.Tamilselvi - I Place

#### Under 16

##### 100 m Race:

R.Selvi - I Place  
R.Saranya - III Place

##### Shot-put:

R.Selvi - III Place

##### Long Jump:

R.Selvi - I Place

#### Above 16

##### 100m Race:

S.Baby - I Place

##### Long Jump:

R.Janani - II Place  
R.Saranya - III Place

### BOYS:

#### Under 10

##### Frog Race:

N.Anbarasan - III Place

##### Sack Race:

M.Arulprakash - II Place

## Under 12

### Shot put:

M.Arun kumar - I Place

### Parents Event: (Lucky Corner)

K.Nirmala(Lady Warden) - I Place

### Senior Citizen Event: (100 m Walk)

R.Rajagopal(OAH) - I Place

### Games:

Volley Ball(Under 12) - Runners

## Students Study Circle

In the Students Study Circle meeting, M.Kalpana spoke about the book "Achiivers who conquered their physical disability(Tamil)", written by Mr.S.Shanmugam, on 04/02/2006. K.Varalakshmi reviewed the book "How to lead an active life?(Tamil)" by Mr.Lena Tamilvanan on 11.02.2006. S.Radhika reviewed the book Spark of Freedom (Tamil) by Rukmani Seshayee on 25.02.2006.

## Study Circle

Ms. Kamala Kandaswamy's book "The Art of Successful Speaking"(Tamil) was reviewed by Ms.Eswari on 04/02/ 2006. Ms.Jayalakshmi reviewed the book "The story of Indira" by Ms. Sivasankari on 11/02/2006. Mr. A.Annamalai reviewed the Book "The Secret of Childhood by Maria Montessori on 18/02/2006. S.Velayudham spoke about the book "Useful Ways of Living" by Dr. M.Krishnasami on 25/02/2006.

## Temple Visits

Boys of Sevalaya hostel went to the Vinayaka Temple at Ramanathapuram Village on 10/02/2006 & 17/02/2006. Girls of Sevalaya hostel went to the Vinayaka Temple at Ramanathapuram Village on 24/02/2006.

## Swami, our Guiding Star

This question was put to Swami Vivekananda by one of the disciples: "Swamiji, you teach us about truthfulness, honesty, courage, purity, selfless work and so on; but it is not possible for one who is in service to follow these teachings strictly. Since we are working in order to earn money, how can we call it selfless service? Service is after all a sort of slavery. Moreover, business life, these days is such that truth and simplicity are almost impossible for a businessman. Swamiji, it is not possible to keep the moral side sound, if we have to work in this world."

Swamiji, like Mahatma Gandhi and Mahakavi Bharathiyar, was not in agreement with this view. He replied, "I too have thought about this matter a lot, and have come to the conclusion that no one really wants to earn money by keeping his character intact. No one even cares to think about the matter or feels it to be a problem, as you do. It is the fault of the present system of education."

Then he proceeds to dwell on what he considers essential for the country. "The education of the masses, the teaching of higher truths to people of the lower castes, mutual sympathy and love- and particularly a sort of brotherly feeling developing between the higher and the lower castes."

How can this be achieved?

"if educated men like you go to the villages, take up agriculture, mix up with the village folk and treat them as your own, without hostility, then, you will see, they will be so overwhelmed that they will sacrifice even their life for you... and what is essential will be achieved."

How will this happen?

The villages are eager for the company of the educated. They have thirst for knowledge. When they have the company of an educated man, they sit round him and listen with rapt attention to whatever he says. The educated people have to take advantage of this tendency,

invite a group of villagers to their homes each evening, and teach them with the help of stories and parables. By means of such a national movement, we shall be able to achieve a hundred times more in ten years than we could otherwise achieve in thousand years.

The educated man remonstrates, if he is asked to take up agriculture. Is it for this I have gone for so much of education? Swamiji cites the example of sage Janaka who held the plough in one hand and studied the Vedas using the other. We have to learn the science of agriculture and apply the knowledge to its development. We have to work like intelligent people after acquiring the necessary knowledge...these days, no sooner the village boys read a book of English or two, than they run to the cities. That is why we have not progressed. If educated men go to live in the villages, even small villages will become developed; and if agriculture is carried on scientifically, then the yield will be more. In that way, the farmers will be awakened to their duty. Their intellectual faculties will develop; they will be able to learn more and better things.

Swami wanted young men to study Sanskrit, as also western science. "Learn accuracy, my boys, study and labour, so that the time will come when you can put our history on a scientific basis... The history of our country written by English writers cannot but be weakening to our minds, for they tell us only of our downfall. It is for Indians to write Indian History. Therefore set yourselves to the task of rescuing our lost and hidden treasures from oblivion. That will be true national education, and with its advancement a true national spirit will be awakened."

In Sevalaya, we teach the children that right means are as essential as right ends. We teach them the values of truth, honesty, courage and selfless work. With us there is no distinction of caste. Scientific agriculture is a part of our curriculum. The glory of the country's past and our duty for its future are what we aim at imparting to our children. We feel reassured that we are proceeding on the right lines while claiming to be inspired by Swami Vivekananda.

Send your comments to: Sevalaya, Kasuva, Pakkam (P.O.), Near Thiruninravur - 602 024, Tamil Nadu, India.

Phone Nos. : 9444346699 (Ramani), 9444620286 (Bhuvana), 9444620289 (Ravi),

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