



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

March 2014

## Sevalaya's Community College inaugurated

*Offers carpentry, refrigeration mechanic, beautician courses*

Sevalaya achieved yet another milestone close on the heels of opening the Medical Centre at its Kasuva village campus: the inauguration of its Community College, supported by SCOPE International Pvt.Ltd.

On 17th February, 2014, Sevalaya's Community College was inaugurated by Edwin Newis, CEO of SCOPE International Pvt. Ltd. The Community College is their second project in support of education and fully funded from contributions from their employees. The Chief Guest said that the college was fully equipped in helping the students in life skill courses. He wished all the students the best in using this opportunity and doing well in their life.

### SCOPE partnership

Also present in the inauguration were J. Chandramouli, Group Head, Human Resource Shared Service Centre, who recalled SCOPE's long running relationship with Sevalaya. SCOPE volunteers had given the children memorable time by taking them to Birla Planetarium and at the village sports.

The function was attended by Syed Rawoof, Probationary officer from Department of Social Defense and Vijay



Kishore, Principal of AMK Polytechnic College. Also at the inauguration were the first batch of around 70 students who have already been admitted in various trades. Thanks to Sevalaya's awareness campaign in the past few months, the village population realizes the importance of the trades offered, with more aspirants awaiting admission.

The community college is a natural progression in Sevalaya's educational offering. Already the Sevalaya School, where 1700 children receive good quality

and free education, has classes upto 12th Std. The community college offers vocational courses for students who have dropped out from school and for those who have never had any formal education at all. The college has 5 rooms for various trades, with 4 labs. Courses offered are in carpentry, refrigeration mechanic, garment making, beautician and electrician - vocations that are in good demand in urban and rural areas.

The inauguration event was followed by an eye camp conducted by Sankara Nethralaya supported by SCOPE in which Sevalaya's resident children and elders as also the staff were covered.

The volunteers from SCOPE painted the black board in the classrooms of the school and also planted tree saplings in the community college campus.



# Joy of Giving: *the* Way of Life

Dear Friends,

It was a dark day which the three small kids will never forget in their life. Their mother was cooking food in their little house and the kids were playing nearby. Suddenly the drunken father enters the house and demands more money from his wife so that he can go and have one more round. The mother had very little money left from whatever odd work she can do and with that money she had bought some rice and vegetables – it will not be enough to fill all 5 stomachs, but it is better than going to bed with empty stomach. The elder daughter ran to a corner and the two younger brothers ran behind her. They can't see one more fight between their parents – they have been witnessing this dreadful scene every time their father comes home.

Mother started screaming at the top of her voice: "I have already given you enough money to go and buy your alcohol. You are already fully drunk. What more do you want? Atleast with the remaining money, I have to feed my children. Get lost. I have no more money for you". The man's ego is hurt! His wife has the audacity to refuse what he is asking. How can this be allowed? War of words starts, followed by beating and kicking. Whatever he does, the poor lady has no money to give. She

is in tears and pleads with her husband, "I have no money. Even if you kill me, I can't give you any more money today". This gives new idea to the drunken man and he suddenly pulls out the burning fire wood from the stove and pours kerosene oil on his wife and throws the fire wood on her. The lady screams for help and the only person who comes for help is her four year old daughter – yes, she is the eldest and the other two smaller boys don't even understand what was going on. Daughter jumps on her burning mother and hugs her tightly expecting she can put out the flame if she does that. The man runs away. Then the neighbors come in and both mother and daughter are taken away to hospital – mother dies and the daughter is saved with burn injuries on her full body.

These kids had an old grandma and suddenly the responsibility of bringing up these three kids falls on her. As she herself was very poor and old, she could not manage the kids more than few days. From Dharmapuri, which is 300 KMs away from Chennai, she brought the 3 kids to Sevalaya many years ago. "I was told this is the best place, best school for such children. I will die very soon. Only Sevalaya should take care of these kids", was her emotional appeal.

All the three kids grew up in Sevalaya. The girl is married and well settled. The first boy after completing schooling in Sevalaya, completed diploma in mechanical engineering and just last month got a job in Titan Watches Company. The third boy is doing final year schooling in Sevalaya now.

When the Alumni Association of Sevalaya decided to sponsor education of 50 kids who are currently studying, this boy had just got his first salary of Rs 12,000. He called up Ilayaraja, the President of Alumni association and a Trustee of Sevalaya and told him that he would not be able to attend the Republic Day function as he would be away from Chennai but would send his entire first month salary as donation to Sevalaya.

This was announced on stage during the Alumni function on Republic day and the money was donated to support the education of two kids.

This project of Alumni is rightly named as "Aalaum Vizhuthugal" – Banyan tree.

(Names of children withheld to protect their privacy)

Thanks & Regards

Murali

## "Health & hygiene HUL's CSR focus" - Sudha Shankar

*In conversation with Sudha Shankar, Head of CSR, South, Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), India's largest Fast Moving Consumer Goods Company. With over 35 leading household brands spanning 20 distinct categories, it touches the lives of two out of three Indians.*

### On HUL's CSR focus

Health & Hygiene is our major CSR activity. Poor hygiene, lack of safe drinking water and poor sanitation are the cause of millions of preventable deaths.

These issues are closely interconnected. Evidence shows that individuals will be healthier and communities more productive if they have access to clean water and better sanitation and if they adopt improved hygiene practices.

Encouraging people to adopt new behaviors is essential if we are to achieve our goals. Underpinning our approach is our model of behavior change, Unilever's

Five Levers for Change – a set of principles which, if applied consistently, increases the likelihood of creating a lasting impact.

We first used this model to develop our behavior change programs with Lifebuoy soap and our oral care brands. We have learned a great deal through our health and hygiene campaigns and we are now applying the methodology to improve our performance in other areas, for example we are using it to understand how we can motivate consumers to reduce their salt intake.

### On her experience with Sevalaya

When I visited Sevalaya, it looked homely



and worthy. Anyone visiting Sevalaya will be reluctant to leave that place - the environment is so very pleasant and peaceful. It was inspiring to see the alumni supporting Sevalaya, even after leaving the institution.

### On employee volunteerism

HUL employees participate in our CSR activities, in our surrounding areas. Without that, we would not have had such success.

# Sevalaya hattricks at Vivega



Sevalaya has retained the overall championship at Vivega competitions held at Anna University on 9th February 2014. This is the third consecutive year that the overall championship has been won by Sevalaya. Organized by Youth Red Cross, the competition attracted 11 NGO's of Chennai, each represented by teams of 25 students.

The Sevalaya team consisted of children

from Std VI to IX. They had a rich haul of first prize: in Elocution, Painting, story writing, and Mono acting, Quiz, CID, Just a Minute and Oru varthai oru Laksham and Poetry.

The children were ecstatic at the great opportunity to prove their talents. They uniformly confirmed their keenness to participate in more events and bring fame to their School.

Behind the thumping success were many teachers who guided the children. Leading the team was J.Selvanayagam, Tamil



Teacher, who also coached the children in Just a minute, Poetry and Oru varthai oru Laksham. Selvanayagam recalled that during his school days the children did not have much opportunities to prove themselves, unlike today. He was all praise for the children who showed lot of interest to participate in this competition and they also worked hard to win the prizes.

## 300 SBOA school visitors



300 children from S.B.O.A Matriculation School, Annanagar, visited Sevalaya on 7th February 2014 to celebrate the valedictory of their various clubs. The students of the JRC, Scouts and Guides, Eco Club of Sevalaya also took part in the function.



## Top draw!



On February 2nd 2014, 6 students from class VI to IX attended a drawing competition conducted by Vasantha Memorial Cancer Centre.

The students bagged the first prize in the competition.

Call it top draw?

**How did you get introduced to Sevalaya?**

It's a long story. I was introduced to the house of TATA in 1976. I worked with Tata Consultancy Services as a client for about 10 years, and then since 1985, I represented them in Switzerland. So I have been associated with India for more than 30 years. I handled some large projects for my Swiss customers in Madras. In Madras, I got in touch with Mr.Murali. so every time I go to TCS in Madras, I would visit Sevalaya . Once I sold my company to TCS in 2006, I set up a foundation which supports Sevalaya in Switzerland, which is why I am coming every year once or twice to see what is going on here and how they use the funds which are made available.

**How do you see Sevalaya's growth?**

Ten years back it was a much smaller organization, and specifically now that we have built the dining hall and the new boys' hostel, you can see the size of the organization. Before, you did not have the impression of size. It was scattered.



**Page Pierre**  
Philanthropist and  
Owner-Manager,  
Page Pierre SA.

Now you see the massive size, and what Sevalaya is doing for poor children.

Of course, one dollar in Switzerland does not even pay for your coffee, but here something can be done with it .In

Switzerland 20 children for one teacher is too many. But in India you have 50 children per teacher I am just really amazed to see how many children you can educate with so little resources!

Here you see the massive numbers of people that you don't see in any place else except in Asia. You realize that your advice will be presumptuous, because you don't manage one a billion plus population like how you manage 8 million people in Switzerland. Its just not possible. Seeing India since 1983, the first time I came to India,its a miracle that the country is not tore apart!

**How do you see the future of Sevalaya?**

The pressure of the large population of India is so high, that I believe we can grow the school strength to 2000-2500 people, because that many more children who can join here and to them Sevalaya can make a difference. I don't believe you have a demand problem here. You have a supply problem. But again, I am happy to help.

Switzerland-based Page Pierre Foundation has been a staunch supporter of Sevalaya. The Foundation has funded the construction of buildings that house the Girls hostel and the Boys hostel, as also the dining hall and the kitchen.

**Professor, what are your impressions of Sevalaya?**

I have been here about 6 times, and every year we see tremendous progress here, in the sense that here are always more activities, and we can see that everything has become very professional. We are very impressed, and we can see that it is also very well managed here, in Sevalaya.

**What do you think of the systems here in Sevalaya?**

We do see that people work hard. We see that they are also educated according to the cultural context, which we believe is a very good thing. People are very humble here. I am happy to be here with my sons this time, so they can see this place, and people look happy, they smile all the time, they are very polite...so it's a good lesson for the kids from the western world.

**What is that special reason why you,**



**Dr. Daniel Oyon**  
Academician &  
Consultant,  
Page Pierre Foundation.

**as part of Page Foundation, want to support Sevalaya?**

We evaluated the project for the first

time, about 6-7 years ago, and we could see that Mr. Murali is a very serious gentleman, that the project was very sound, so we decided to support it.

Also, don't forget Page Piere's long association with India, and Madras now Chennai. When I come here with Page Piere, I always tease him, that you are home now...! Because he feels at home here. He likes to come here once a year to remember the good times he had since 30 years ago when he started to do business with Indian people. So we can see that he has a lot of close links here, good friendships, so that has influenced him to do something here.

**Being an educationist, what do you think is the next step forward for Sevalaya?**

There are no limits in education. You can even build an university. This country is huge, it's hard for us to say what is the next good thing to do. Murali will come with ideas, and of course, our support will be there.

# Good show at rural sports tourneys



Competitions under Panchayat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA) have been on through February. Sevalaya's children have been enthusiastic participants.

38 Panchayat Board will combine to form one union(block). The children won total cash awards of Rs.7,765 in the three Pykka tournaments.

Pykka Tournament for union level was held on 1st February 2014 at Sports Development Authority of Tamilnadu Stadium in Tiruvallur. The

children participated under 16 levels in tournaments like Basket ball, Foot ball and Badminton for both boys and girls. Girls were the winners in Basketball and Football. Boys came in 3rd place in football and runners in basket ball. In badminton - singles, boys were the runners up and girls were runners up in singles and doubles.

The Pykka District Level Basket Ball tournament was held on 5th February 2014 at Nazreth College of Arts and Science, Avadi. The girls team under 16

were the runner up in basket ball.

Pykka District Level Table Tennis Tournament was held on 6th February 2014 at SDAT Stadium in Tiruvallur. Girls under 16 were the winners in singles and doubles. Boys were the runners up in singles and doubles.

Representing Tiruvallur district at the Pykka State Level Basketball championships held at Anna Stadium, Madurai on 9th February 2014 were Sevalaya girls K. P. Bhuvaneshwari and S. Geethanjali

## Inspiring story

The girls were coached by PT master A. Sankarapandian without a basket ball court in the school. He taught them the rules and regulations and the girls did whatever practice was possible without a court. "We practiced dribbling, passes and guarding. With that knowledge we proved ourselves in the state level", explains Geethanjali who is a throw ball player at the district level.

Sankarapandian: " These girls are very good in throw ball and with that practice only they started playing basket ball. Unlike most players who can only make short passes, these throw ball players can throw far, to make end-to-end passes. The girls who played with them were shocked to see this".

Truly an inspiring story of overcoming odds with sheer grit.

## Training on Prevention of Sexual Abuse



The students of Std VI to IX attended training on Prevention of Sexual abuse among girl children, on 12th February 2014.

The training was organized by the District Child Protection Unit and conducted by Shrusti, a Bangalore based NGO

The Speaker of this function, Dr. Rajalakshmi from Shrusti, educated

the students about good touch and bad touch. She and her team enacted a skit and explained the precautions to be exercised by each child when talking to strangers. They also conducted sessions for the primary school students. Each session was designed to suit the age group they were addressing and the programme was very educative.



## Three firsts at Electro fest

The Std VI to IX students of Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School attended the "Electrofest" conducted by the Department of Science of Dharmamurthy Rao Bahadur Culavala Cunnan Chetty's Hindu College on 11th February 2014. The children participated in Debate, Quiz, Speech, Junk art and won the first place in Debate, Quiz and Junk art.

That is a remarkable three out of four!

S. Sarath of Std XI recalls: "The electrical equipment placed in the exhibition which made the tube light and fan run through Bluetooth was so interesting that I also wanted to do such equipment in my school. This is a great opportunity for me to learn more about electrical and electronics."

# National award for Sevalaya



V. Muralidharan receiving the "NGO of the year" jointly presented by Dr. Vithal Venkatesh Kamat, Executive Chairman and Managing Director of Orchid group and Mrs. Rajashree Birla, Director of Aditya Birla Group.



V. Muralidharan, chief guest at the 125th founder's day at DRBCC HSC, Thiruvallur, with Hon. Correspondent C. Venkatachalam and head master S. Ravintharan.

## Road Safety Lessons



The children of Std V guided by their teachers did an activity on 24th February 2014 based on their Social Science lesson "Attention needed".

The lesson explains about the traffic rules and the symbols used in the roadside.

The children were very much enthusiastic to do this because, they had already witnessed this type of activity when children from SBOA visited Sevalaya for the valedictory of their clubs.

## A long distance story

A story telling session through video conferencing took place on 13th February 2014 for the children of Std III. Ms. Seema from United Kingdom told the students the story of "Teddy Bear". She also showed the living area of her house and asked the children to name the things they saw.



## Thirukkural Thiruvizha

"Thirukkural" Elappan from Chengalpet along with his three students Yazhisai of VIII std, Hemalatha of VI Std and semparuthi of VI Std, students of Sri Ramakrishna Mission School, who were trained by him, were the special guests at the Thirukkural Thiruvizha organised by the Tamil Club of the school on 6th Feb 2014.

Elappan is a prodigy who can recite any Kural from any athikaram. If a child asked him to recite the 2nd kural in the 3rd athikaram he recited the 2nd kural in all the following athikarams.

He also recited kural in the ascending and the descending order and played many games using Kural. If a student specified a part of the body, say, Eye, he recited all the kural in which there is a reference to the eye. If a student mentions a specific word, for eg., nanri, he recited all the kural containing the word.

It was interesting to note that he also



recited the kural in reverse direction.

The three students who accompanied him were also well versed with the kural.

He made the programme lively by playing some interesting games with the months of English and Tamil.

The children enjoyed the session since it was very interesting.

S. Punitha and D. Kayalvizhi of Std IX of Sevalaya school recited 100 Kural and they felt that this programme is an eye opener for them to know more about this great literature and learn more about it.

# Stranger donates a calf



On the morning of 8th February 2014, there were two unexpected visitors at Sevalaya's Kasuva campus: R. Premkumar and his mother R. Mahalakshmi. They had come in an auto from Madhavaram and had a calf with them.

Premkumar, a construction supervisor, had rescued the calf from a butcher, by paying Rs.1000 for it. Premkumar said "When he was getting ready to cut the

calf I could not bear it and I immediately bought the calf from him". Then he brought it to his house but did not know what to do with it.

His brother went online and found out about Sevalaya. The next day they came with the calf.

When they were taken to Goshala they started to pay obeisance to the cows there and were impressed by the work done by Sevalaya is taking care of cows.

Ravikumar said there was one more cow with the butcher which would cost Rs.7000 and he would pay that money also and would donate the animal to Sevalaya.

Son and mother left, promising regular visits to Sevalaya, not before donating Rs 500, which was pretty much what they had.

## Organic Farming Training

Organic farming training was conducted for the villagers of Sethupakkam village on 8th February 2014. 12 farmers participated in the training. They have started practicing organic farming techniques in their field, following Sevalaya's initiative of introducing it to all the villages in the vicinity. The training was conducted by L. Loganathan and C. Felix Raja.



## Medical Camps

A General Camp was held in Ayalur village on 10th February 2014. This camp was organized as part of the NSS camp of Pachiappa's college for men.

A Dental and General camp was held on 2nd February 2014 at Thamaripakkam village. Dr. Ramlal and team from the Indian Dental Association screened 165 villagers. The team also distributed free Toothpastes sponsored by Colgate.



## Training update



Eight volunteers from VRINTREPID, an NGO working for the underprivileged gave a motivation class for the students of std IX and Std XI on importance of team work, developing the quality of fearlessness to face any adversity in life and developing self confidence to enable one achieve success in life.

S. Mariammal and S. Meera, teachers of Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School attended a training programme on Adolescent Behaviour in Thakkar Baba School on 1st February 2014.

S. Lakshmi and R. Poongavanam, teachers of the Mahakavi Bharathiyar Primary School attended a training conducted by Navadisha Montessori School from 10th February 2014 to 14th February 2014.

The training mainly focused on the Montessori Methodology and handling the children from the age group 3 to 6 years.

Poongavanam said: "This training gave me a great exposure to Montessori Methodology. Even though I am handling the children in the environment, this training has given me more ideas of handling the children still more interestingly and effectively."

## Sevalaya in High Court decree

While granting anticipatory bail to a person alleged to have illegally transported river sand, the Hon. Madras High Court stipulated a few conditions. Number 1 condition: "The petitioner shall produce 100 Kgs of good quality of rice to Sevalaya, Thiruvallur District and shall get receipt from the said Sevalaya."

# Service to people - His Master's Voice

Sri Ramakrishna was discussing with Narendranath and other disciples about the essence of Vaishnava religion. While elaborating its principles, he said that according to Vaishnava religion, compassion for all beings is what one should practice. As soon as he uttered the words, "Compassion for all beings" he suddenly went in to an ecstasy. Regaining partial normal conscious in a short time, he continued, "Talk of compassion for beings! Will you, all little animals, bestow compassion on beings? You wretch, who are you to bestow compassion on it? No. no; not compassion to Jivas but service to them as Siva."

None of the disciples other than Naren could understand the hidden import

of that utterance at that time. But Narendranath coming out of the room at the end of the Master's ecstasy said, "Ah, What a wonderful light have I got to day from the Master's words!. In synthesizing Vedantic Knowledge, which was generally regarded as dry, austere and even cruel, with sweet devotion to the Lord, what a new mellowed means of experiencing the Truth has been revealed to-day! In order to attain the non-dual knowledge, we have been told so long, one should have to renounce the world and the company of men altogether and retire to the forest and mercilessly uproot and throw away love, devotion and tender emotions from the heart. But from what the master said in ecstasy today, it is gathered that the

Vedanta of the forest can be brought to human habitation and that it can be applied in practice to the work-a-day world..... It is work of the service of the Jivas as Siva that should be performed. Action that is done in that spirit will enable....to reach the goal sooner than otherwise. If the divine Lord ever grants me an opportunity, I'll proclaim everywhere in the world this wonderful truth I have heard today. I will preach this truth to the learned and the ignorant, to the rich and the poor, the Brahmins and the Chandalas!

The seed for a new order of Sannyasis with service as their mission was sown that moment!

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## Champion hoopsters without a hoop!



Sevalaya's girls' basketball team are champions at many tournaments. Team members K. P. Bhuvaneshwari and S. Geethanjali represent Tiruvallur district at the State-level competitions.

"What is so great?", you may wonder, recollecting your own playing days, the hours of practice, taking rebounds and the endless shooting practice sessions. Surely you can hear the 'swish' of the ball passing through the net. What a heavenly sound...

Believe it or not, Sevalaya does not have a basket ball court, not even a half court, nor even a board. But that did not deter the gritty girls or PT master Sankarapandian.

If only they had the basic infrastructure, these village girls can realise their proven potential and blossom as sportswomen...

As a sports lover, if you would like to help them realise their dream, call Sevalaya, 044-24950204/9444620286.

### Donation Form

*(Donations to School Expenses, Children's Home and Old Age Home Projects qualify for 100% exemption under section 35 AC and rest 50% under section 80G of Income Tax Act, India)*

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Please make your donation payable by cheque to SEVALAYA and send to:

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