



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

December 2014

Children's Day at Sevalaya

A day celebrating the joy of childhood...



Children are visibly happy to receive the prize from the Chief Guest, Sunil Upadhyaya, Vice-President and Head-South Zone, ABB India Ltd.

The Birth Anniversary of the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal

Nehru is celebrated all over the country as Children's Day. Celebrations

were held at Sevalaya also on November 14th. The children and the teachers presented a variety entertainment programme on the occasion. The children sang songs, recited the poems they wrote, performed dance etc. The teachers also sang songs. The children enjoyed the performance of the teachers.

The Chief Guest for the function Sunil Upadhyaya, Vice-President and Head – South Zone, ABB India Ltd, Chennai in his address said that the celebrations and the cultural events took him back to his school days. He expressed his joy on being a part of the occasion and commended the staff and children for the show put up by them. He also administered a pledge wherein children promised to respect elders, parents, be a good citizen & human being, help the needy and keep their home, school and surroundings clean. The 2000 children also received special gifts.

... and sharing the joy with those in distress

Sevalaya believes in making this day a special one for all children and every year entertains children at General Hospital, Thiruvallur. This year also the children of Sevalaya performed a variety entertainment programme for the children admitted in the paediatric ward and gave fruits and biscuits to all the children there. The main aim of this celebration is to cheer up the children in the hospital on this day.

After the function, a parent of a child in the hospital spoke to our children with tears in the eyes “ My child is very happy today. Thanks to Sevalaya's children for this noble initiative to entertain the children suffering from various ailments”.



Joy of giving: *the way of life*

Dear Friend,

Wedding is a big event anywhere in the world. In India the practice is to invite everyone known to you right from your childhood, all relatives, all colleagues, etc. We have huge wedding halls which can accommodate a thousand people; still they will be overflowing! Once someone asked Kanchi Maha Periyava (a saint who lived till few years ago) how many people are really required to conduct a wedding. He replied that the maximum can be 20 people!

After wedding comes the honeymoon. The couple would have already planned where to go – may be in the country or overseas, stay in luxurious hotels, travel, fly, cruise, swim, dance, whatever! Obviously, lot of money is required for all this. They would have saved or the parents will be happy to pay for it.

But one couple decided that they will not pour money on themselves for any

celebration. They both enjoyed helping others, so why not spend money on others and enjoy the joy of giving? After all, honeymoon means you have to be happy together and if both enjoy giving, that is the best way to celebrate their honeymoon. They decided to travel to all the 50 states in United States and take up different helping activities in each state. Mark and Ismini Svensson have traveled by various modes of transport - air, road, and railways - since they got married. They've been crisscrossing the country to help those who need it.

The New York couple has decided to do "50 Acts of Giving Back" –and they estimate it will take two years to complete this. The programs include Giving out meals, care for rescued animals, donating gifts to sick kids, supporting domestic abuse victims etc. They have also started a charity of their own, "Stay United", which is working on education and health for youth.

They didn't find it difficult to take the decision to forgo the typical honeymoon experience, according to Ismini. "We both realized that what makes us happiest is helping people in need" she told CNN. In fact Ismini's father died just after a charity event he organized for the benefit of the poor. Ismini realized that her father won't be alive to take part in her wedding. She wanted to do something in honor of her father's memory and the couple decided to do 50 times, what her father did just before his death.

Their message to others? Get involved in acts of kindness. you do not even need money for that. Even a positive compliment to someone will have a great impact on that person. So money is not the requirement, only kindness.

Thanks & Regards

Murali

Cooking is in his blood

Tasty food of good quality, in sufficient quantity, served on time and with the least wastage – these can well be the mission statements of catering. Ever since S. Srinivasan joined as 'Kitchen Supervisor' of Sevalaya, these qualities reflect in Sevalaya Kitchen. "I am happy to work for children and senior citizens through my contribution in kitchen" – Srinivasan says proudly. Whenever a sudden requirement comes for additional food, here is the man who nods with a smile and ensures that food is cooked and ready within the time. When he was asked to prepare a grand lunch on 18th September for 2500 persons and that too with the same regular work force to accomplish it, he smiled and said, "Yes, when 2000 and more children are happy to taste the food, the efforts behind it is a joyful experience! What else do I need!"

A master of food craft and employee management skills, astonishingly, Srinivasan has no experience in these areas. He just retired from Southern Railways, after a 30 year-long career, in the stores/materials management team at the Engineering department. About his interest in cooking food and managing the kitchen, he says, "My grandfather Krishnamachari used to prepare sweets and snacks and sell them in the Madras High Court Complex. Catering is my family passion that runs through a few



generations". He has dabbled in cooking as a part time vocation, occasionally cooking for marriages and earned a good reputation. He has a happy family with two daughters, both married and settled and one son, with gainful employment.

Ever since joining Sevalaya kitchen on 10th April 2014, Srinivasan has given tasty proof of his expertise in making sweets such as Laddu, Jangry, Mysorepa - practically anything except Bengali sweets. All kitchen staff fondly calls him "appa" (meaning father) as he settles with love, tenderness and care occasional disputes among the women staff working

in kitchen and motivates them with positive strokes all the time.

Srinivasan is very proud of the Sevalaya kitchen which he says is large and well equipped, with modern gadgets, alternate power for ovens like firewood for steam boilers, LPG gas, Bio-mass stoves, bio-gas and above all plenty of provisions and vegetables! His wish list is modest: "If I had a Chapati maker and a Dosa maker, I could have served some variety of tiffin to the children and the senior citizens! Could that be possible?" We could see enormous amount of anxiety in his eyes!

Maiden batch of Community College students pass out

Out of 43, ten net jobs at passing out event



The students of Community College with their certificates and employment orders

The first batch of 43 students passing out of Sevalaya's Community College, in trades - Carpentry, Electrician, Garment Making, Beautician and AC & Refrigeration Mechanic, received their certificates at the Children's Day celebrations on 14th November 2014, from the hands of Nagalakshmi Yeshwanth, Head CSR, SCOPE International. Ten students received their appointment orders also on the same stage. They were employed by Masilamani of Sekar electrical and Ramesh of R.R.AC Service Centre.

The Community College is sponsored by SCOPE International. The Community College was started with the aim to provide Life Skill Education to the youth who were drop outs from the school. Students who were enrolled for the college were given quality education through qualified teachers and they were also given exposure visits and training in various organizations including Naturals Beauty Parlor and Tube Products. Many training sessions by experts from various fields were also organised for the students.

R. Devaraj, who is placed as Assistant Technician in Sekar Electrical Works was

overwhelmed. He said: "I didn't expect that I will get a job immediately after completing the course. This will be a major support to my family. When I joined here I just came to enjoy college

life. But the methodology followed here and the environment had brought me to the college regularly and now I have got a good job. I am happy for everything that Sevalaya has given me."

Srinivasan takes over as Director

K. Srinivasan has taken over as the new Community College Director. He has over 16 years of experience as the Head of the Department of Electronics and Communication Department of a reputed Engineering College.

This career switch, after his academic career of over a decade, is well thought out. A resident of Puliur village which is in the vicinity of Kasuva, Srinivasan has known Sevalaya for so many years. When he decided that he wanted to do service for the poor and needy, he preferred to join Sevalaya.

Srinivasan's focus, on taking on as Director was to instil a sense of discipline in the students and to create more employment opportunities for the students who pass out. He has been successful in getting employment for 10 students.



Srinivasan is determined to bring more students to the college by spreading the awareness about the free training on offer and how it can benefit the youth of the nearby villages. Also on his agenda is adding a few more trades.

Functional English toppers feted

Sarath Chandra Divella, trustee of Sevalaya distributed prizes to 8 students on 8th November 2014, who were the toppers in the Functional English class that is conducted regularly at Sevalaya. Functional English is a special coaching programme that is conducted for selected students who are more interested in English and show eagerness to learn things. The class is conducted



regularly in the morning from 8.30 to 9 and 5 teachers are specially trained for taking classes for these children. The teachers also effectively use the English Lab sponsored by Chennai Willingdon Corporate Foundation during their functional English class. The programme is the CSR project of M/s. Lionbridge Technologies.

Spreading the BGV gospel

In the last one decade over 6,00,000 children have taken part in the open book exam

Education, which integrates inculcation of fundamental values, prepares a child for life. Mere rote learning of facts, concepts, information does not train the heart to think or feel. Hence an ideal education requires that the values so essential for life are taught by creating the right atmosphere.

Sevalaya's guiding lights Bharathi, Gandhi and Vivekananda (BGV) are the soul of all activities, services rendered by Sevalaya. Hence their principles and ideologies are a part of the education offered at Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar School.

In the Bharathi Gandhi Vivekananda Class (BGV Class in Sevalaya's parlance) children learn about the three guiding lights, their life stories, incidents in their childhood which moulded them, their philosophies and the like. The classes are mostly interactive sessions where children are encouraged to talk freely about their ideas on topic of the day. The broad syllabus for the classes was framed with experts in respective subjects. The free book published by Sevalaya recently, building on this base, now serves as the framework for BGV classes. The book facilitates discussion of the topics in the present day context, thereby making the classes more relevant to day to day life. In the late 1990's, Sevalaya decided to spread the message wider, by conducting competitions for schools on BGV, as part of the birthday celebrations of these three leaders. Thus, oratorical, poetry



writing, essay writing, quiz and drawing competitions are being held every year since 1999. The competition, is open for for students of Thiruvallur district. Subsequently these competitions were extended to include students from Chennai and made bilingual (Tamil and English) to cater to the students from English medium schools. But later on due to academic pressures in December and January these competitions were

clubbed together and are being held as BGV competitions in September. The prize distribution on September 11 (widely known now as 9/11 for the Twin Tower attack) an important day in the lives of Sevalaya's leading lights: the day Gandhi launched the historic Satyagraha in 1906, the day Vivekananda's thundering Chicago speech in 1893 brought India's humanitarian ideals in world's view, the day in 1921 the fiery soul of Bharathiyar left this mortal world.



Former Headmaster G. Chittibabu receiving the TCS Education World Award for Innovative Value based education in 2006 from Mala Ramadurai, Head CSR, TCS.

Ever convinced of the universal value of BGV, Sevalaya expanded the scope by holding free open book exams on Bharathiyar, Gandhi and Vivekananda, for all of the schools of Tamil Nadu, since 2005. Progressively, the competition was thrown open to colleges and later prisons (after Sevalaya held a series of lectures on BGV for prison residents).

Participants prepare by studying the books sent to competing institutions, who conduct the open book examinations and select the top 3 papers which are sent to Sevalaya out of these, the state toppers are selected and prizes awarded during the birthday celebrations of the respective leaders. With the advent of technology all the institutions can download their copy of Sevalaya's free BGV book to prepare for the exam. These examinations have had participation from over 2000 institutions, with over 6,00,000 students getting to read about the inspiring trio and be moulded by their teachings. Just as it does for Sevalaya staff and management who give talks on the trio, these students and those who help must have unconsciously imbibed the values and formed habits to last a life time.

Sevalaya's BGV education won the TCS - Education World Teachers' Award for Innovative Value based education in 2006.

Catching the imagination of the prisoners

In 2009 Sevalaya was invited to hold a series of lectures on BGV, for residents of Central Prisons in Tamilnadu. Encouraged by the interest it generated, the BGV open book examination was thrown open to prisons.



(L) Picture of Bharathi drawn by a prisoner in his answer sheet. (R) Bharathi Exam answer from a resident of Central Prison, Coimbatore.



A 2009 photograph showing a prisoner receiving the prize from Shyam Sundar Director General of Prisons, Tamilnadu.

The SCOPE of employee volunteerism

It has been a relay with a difference.

For over a week, batches of around 50 employees of SCOPE International have been visiting Sevalaya this November. Like a large relay team, from 14th November to 22nd November 2014 they took turns to accomplish the task: painting the Old age home and the School Auditorium. They had brought their own materials. It was an interesting sight to see the girls with their duppattas tied and boys with towel tied as turbans, enthusiastically climbing up the step ladder and painting the wall.

Though they were not professional



painters, general consensus was that they did a very neat job. And a very useful one at that.



S. Karthikeyan, proudly says, " This is my first visit to Sevalaya. When our CSR team asked us to go over to Sevalaya, little did I expect to visit such a huge and green campus with over 2000 enthusiastic children. I really enjoyed the time I spent here and I am very proud to be a part of this team".



"I remembered my school days after coming here. Such a big school in a village and with all the facilities - that was a surprise to me. We had only one Library in our school but here there are three libraries", said S. Anupriya.

Weekends of this November were interesting for over 1600 children of Sevalaya. They were taken on picnics to Guindy National Park and Chennai Musuem 15th, 21st, 22nd and 29th November 2014. The whole programme was organised by SCOPE International, with the employees playing Annas and Akkas to the children and accompanying the children along with the class teachers.



Challenging, yet a position to prove myself

" A Challenging position for me, yet I will prove up to it", is how B. Prabhakar, the new Vivekananda Head of Sevalaya, reacts to his new responsibility.

After joining Sevalaya a few months back as a Public Relations Officer, Prabhakar got noticed through his hard work, to earn his challenging new assignment.

Born and brought up in Coimbatore, with a Diploma in Electronics and Communication, he first joined Airtel as a Telemarketing Executive. Later he worked in a paid Old Age home, as a Manager for 10 years. He used to browse the net to know more about



B. Prabhakar, Vivekananda Unit Head

various NGOs and learnt a lot about Sevalaya. When he came to know about the opening in the PR team through

a relative working in Sevalaya, he immediately applied for it. His wife Sweety was a Computer Teacher in the Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School till recently.

As a Public Relations Officer, Prabhakar used to visit so many organisations in Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram districts and talk to the HR team about Sevalaya. In his new role, he wants to help the children the best by concentrating on their education and security. " I want to be a good Appa or an Anna for these children and I am sure I will be", he says with confidence!

Clear 'Vision' for villagers

Over 11,500 in 40 backward villages benefit from eye camps



The role of Sevalaya in providing good quality education to the poor underprivileged children free of cost is well known. Sevalaya also focusses its attention on another area, health, which is neglected by the villagers for various reasons like poverty, inaccessibility to hospitals and doctors as also lack of awareness.

The villages do not have proper medical facilities and for any medical assistance the villagers have to travel 18 kms either to Tiruvallur, the district capital

or Velliyur Primary Health centre. For major eye problems they have to come to Government Ophthalmic Hospital, Egmore. Most of the villagers cannot afford to spend money on travel and treatment.

Earlier camps on Siddha medicines were organized in Sevalaya Campus for the residents of Sevalaya as well as the villagers.

About 6 years back, a large eye camp was organized by Sevalaya in association with Sankara Nethralaya and many

villagers got benefitted from the camp. From then on regular eye camps are conducted by Sankara Nethralaya and Udhi Eye Hospital. The Gandhi Team of Sevalaya plays a major role in organizing the camps and so far the camps are held in 40 villages.

The Panchayat leaders extend great support and co operation to hold these camps in their villages. The camps are conducted in Panchayat President's office, Village School or Community Hall. The panchayats also sponsor lunch and snacks to the team of doctors and volunteers.

"These camps have helped the villagers to gain their vision back" says K.Datchayani, Puliur Panchayat President.

V. Muralidharan, the Founder and Managing Trustee of Sevalaya says on many instances there were villagers who would stop his car and wish him for providing glasses free of cost.

"We wish Sevalaya organises many more camps like this. My cataract was removed and I got my vision back, only because of Sevalaya. Hadn't this camp been held in village I would have lost my vision" a villager says with tear in the eyes.

Noble Service Award for Sevalaya Founder



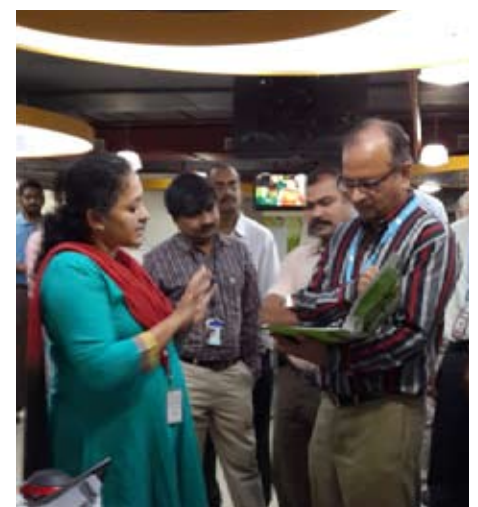
Noble Service Award was presented to V. Muralidharan, Founder and Managing Trustee of Sevalaya at the Aram Seya Virumbu Programme during the Joy of Giving Week by Consumer and Peoples Right Protection Centre on 9th November 2014.

Founder Honoured



V. Muralidharan was selected as the Best Social Worker for 2014 by Tamilnadu Brahmin Association. He was given the award by the state association President Sriraman.

GE Director at Sevalaya's Stall



Dileep Mangsuli, Engineering Director, GE Energy listening to Radha Srinivasan, PR Head, at Sevalaya stall in an event Samaj Seva held at Thiru vi Ka Industrial Estate on 13th November 2014. The core team of GE- Volunteers also visited and promised to visit Sevalaya.

Personality Development Training

S.N. Padmaja of Madras Management Association visited Sevalaya on 28th October 2014 to conduct Personality Development training for 25 teachers and 5 care takers. The focus was mainly on Personality development with emphasis on positive thinking, understanding one's talents, and enjoying one's work.

V. Poongothai, a teacher of class VI said: "This class was very useful to me. I realized that comparing one child with

another will undermine the talents of the child".



Gita Chanting contest



About 90 students of the school participated in the annual Gita Chanting Competition conducted by Chinmaya Mission. This year a new competition "Sagalakalavalli Recitation" was also conducted by Chimaya Mission, Thamaraiakkam. 20 students got prizes in this competition and one girl was selected for the finals of Gita Chanting to be held in December 2nd week in Chennai.

Students visit Science expo



35 students of Std VII visited 'Science Spectra' held at SKMM Vivekananda Vidhyalaya, Thiruniravur on 15th November 2014.

Cummins India sponsors Eco Education



As part of its 'Coach Them Young' programme Cummins India sponsored iVolunteers to conduct an informative session on Environmental Protection. Students of Std VII to IX participated in the session held on 10th November 2014.

10 schools take Ramanujan Exam



Annual Ramanujan Exam was held on 21st November 2014 and 99 students from 10 schools participated in the competition. The winners will be selected and will be given prizes during the Ramanujan day in the month of December 2014.

"Oor Sandhai": market enacted



In yet another instance of learning by demonstration, "Oor Sandhai" (meaning, village market) was enacted in Std II, with materials brought by the children.

Four Prize winners

Rotary Neeta Talent Competition was held on 22nd November 2014. This competition was organised by Rotary Club of Madras, T. Nagar.

13 students participated in the programme.

P. Pavithra of IX std won the first prize for drawing.

In Cultural events G. Icepriya, J. Gomathipriya and M. Keerthikabhavani of IX std were adjudged as the best performers.

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On True Friendship

In boyhood, Gandhiji had a friend who was a bad character. His wife, elder brother and mother tried to wean him away from this friendship, but young Gandhi would not budge. His reasoning was, "I know he has the weaknesses you attribute to him, but you do not know his virtues. He cannot lead me astray, as my association with him is meant to reform him. For I am sure if he reforms his ways, he will be a splendid man."

In the event, this friendship proved to be a disaster. The friend persuaded Gandhi to take to meat-eating. The English were able to rule over the country because they were meat-eaters. Meat-eating makes people strong and daring. If only all Indians take to meat-eating the English could be overcome.

One habit led to another - of lying to parents.

Providentially truth dawned on him before it was too late. He thought: "Though it is essential to eat meat, and also essential to take up food 'reform' in the country, yet lying and deceiving one's father and mother is worse than not eating meat. In their life-time, therefore meat eating must be out of the question. When they are no more and I have found my freedom, I will eat meat openly, but until that moment arrives I will abstain from it."

The same company would have led him to faithlessness to his wife. But he was saved by the skin of his teeth. He attributes it to Divine mercy. The friend also tried to create disaffection between Gandhi and his wife. Apart from this, Gandhi came to

know of some of the lapses of his friend that were quite unexpected. Finally Gandhi called it quits.

He sums up the lesson learnt by him from this episode.

"A reformer cannot afford to have close intimacy with him whom he seeks to reform. True friendship is an identity of souls rarely to be found in this world. Only between like natures can friendship be altogether worthy and enduring. Friends react on one another. Hence in friendship there is very little scope for reform. I am of the opinion that all exclusive intimacies are to be avoided; for man takes in vice far more readily than virtue. And he who would be friends with God must remain alone or make the whole world his friend."

Hatsun sponsors Kancheepuram trip

45 Std XI students of Sevalaya had a wonderful one day trip to Kancheepuram on 22nd November 2014. The educational part was a visit to the Hatsun Dairy Farm near Kancheepuram. The group also got an opportunity to visit Kancheepuram's Kailasanathar temple and Rajiv Gandhi Memorial in Sriperumbudur.

The entire day's programme including transportation was sponsored by Hatsun Agro products.



Making the cake and having it, too



19 residents of Sevalaya Children's homes were the "Chief Guests" at E-hotels in Chennai's Express Mall on 17th November 2014. They were there to take part in the cake mixing function, ahead of the year end season.

Naturally the 19 lucky children got to make the cake and have it, too.

Published by: Bhuvanewari 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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