



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

November 2014

26th Annual day:

Acknowledging stakeholder contributions



Heavens opened up to shower blessings on Sevalaya as it celebrated its 26th annual day on 20th October. Rains could not dampen the spirits of the children and the elders as they joyfully celebrated the day with a colorful programme including a scintillating cultural show.

Various stake holders who have contributed to the growth of Sevalaya were felicitated. Among long serving employees, N. Ravichandran, the longest serving, with 20 years, J. Manivannan with 10 years and V. Mahariga, S. Santhi and M. Subramani with 5 years of experience were presented with awards.

Residents of the nearby villages who have been exceptionally supportive were honored. T. Munuswamy of Thamaraiakkam village and S. Dakshinamurthy of Ramanathapuram village, the members of the village welfare committee, were felicitated.

Many elders of the old age home have also been willing contributors. They volunteer themselves by helping in office work and in the kitchen, including vegetable cutting. K. Gajendran, S. Sundarambal and Michael Raj were honored for volunteering their service.

10 students coming from the villages which do not have proper bus facility were given cycles sponsored by Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi of Besant Nagar.

Chief Guest at the function Anil Kumar

Jain, Group chairman and Managing Director, Fortunes Communication Pvt. Ltd facilitated Sevalaya for its service to the underprivileged. He also mentioned that he considered it his good fortune to be associated with Sevalaya and participate in its Annual Day Celebrations. He also released Sevalaya's 26th Annual Report.

Earlier, welcoming the gathering, V. Muralidharan, Founder and Managing Trustee cited greening of the Kasuva campus as a milestone, now with 70% of the energy needs met by solar power and bio-gas used to make coffee and tea. Another highlight is, an English medium section has been started in 6th grade. The community college recognized by Tamil Nadu Open University has completed its first year of operations at the Kasuva campus. A new Community College for vocational training has been planned at Thirumalaiavaiyavur

Present at the celebrations was a gathering of 500 from the neighboring villages, the leaders of the village panchayats, the alumni, the staff and students of Sevalaya.



From Top :

The Chief Guest Anil Kumar Jain giving away the long service award to R. Devi, W/o N. Ravichandran.

Best Village Participation award to T. Munuswamy of Thamaraiakkam village.

Volunteering award to K. Gajendran, the resident of Sevalaya's Old Age Home.

Cycle to S. Geethesh of Std VI from Sivanvoil village.

Left :

Zoe Abbott and Charlie Palmer, UK volunteers performing during the celebrations.

Joy of giving: the way of life

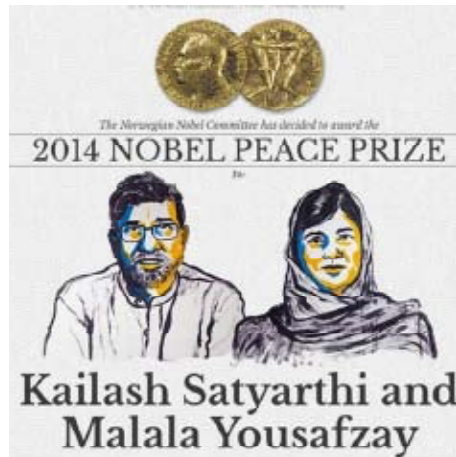
Dear Friend,

If anyone anywhere in the world wants peace, they must come to India. India is the only country which has won independence by a peaceful struggle and Mahatma Gandhi showed the world the power of "Satyagraha", his new weapon. His methods are more and more relevant now when we read and hear about violence everywhere. Anyone going west with a saffron robe from India, attracts a large following and the meditation, yoga and anything which propagates inner peace and through that external peace, becomes a instant hit in any country. People may have difference of opinion with some of Gandhian thoughts, but no one is against non-violence and peace. "Peace" is the greatest gift India has given through Gandhi to this world.

The top prize in the world for peace was denied to Gandhi. As it is said, "Gandhi can live without Nobel prize, but Nobel prize can't live without Gandhi". As admitted by the Nobel prize committee, it was their greatest mistake that they failed to give Nobel peace prize to Gandhi. May be they are trying to make amends by giving this prize to Gandhi's followers! Martin Luther King in the past and now

Kailash Satyarthi who has won the Nobel peace prize go to prove that Gandhi can't be ignored, when it comes to peace.

It is a great matter of pride that an Indian has won the Nobel peace prize, along with a Pakistani. Kailash has worked all his life to free children from child labour and Malala has risked her life to ensure girl child education. Both peace prize



winners have worked for the welfare of the children – one of the winners herself is a child – she is just 17 years only. It gives us great joy that people working for child welfare have been recognized with the top prize in the world.

It also makes us wonder how come a Nobel prize winner never got any national awards in India. All the Padma awards and many other awards in India failed to recognize someone who is spotted by the Nobel Prize committee! Are we honoring the right people at the right time?

We hope with this award, the eradication of child labour and importance to girl child education will get better attention in the sub-continent – better education is the only key to remove mis-conceptions about other countries, other religions and with that there will be more peace in the world, and particularly in this sub-continent.

Cross border violence, terrorism, gun culture, atom bombs, nuclear weapons, hatred, heated exchanges, talks failing – the only one answer to all this is proper education at the proper time. Both Kailash and Malala are working on this, making them richly deserving the world's top award.

Let India & Pakistan lead the world to the path of Peace.

Thanks & Regards

Murali

Charlotte Palmer: Teacher by instinct

18 – year old Charlotte Palmer, fondly called 'Charlie', is in Sevalaya since 1st September 2014, for a one year 'Volunteering' program. A calm and composed young lady, she hails from Cambridge, England. Having just completed her schooling 6th form, she is all set to pursue her B.A., degree course in English literature and History at Nottingham University from September 2015. She decided to utilize this break period of one year to do service in Sevalaya as a volunteer

Charlie has always dreamt of travelling to different countries, although this has been her first outing away from England and the first time away from her parents for such a long time. The Charity Project Trust organized her volunteering activity. Out of the three options she had, namely India, Guyana and Peru, she chose India. Knowing about the services of Sevalaya for disadvantaged children through website, she chose to join Sevalaya. On reaching Sevalaya she felt homesick initially. But after staying here for a



few days with the children, she was so much captivated to the Sevalaya' life, she now says, "I love Sevalaya". She enjoys working with Kindergarten to class IV children in school, conducting functional

English classes and additional coaching for children of class VIII to IX. She enjoys interacting with children in the hostel premises, helping small girls with their morning routines and giving her support in the kitchen which is vastly different from hers back home.

Already a goodwill ambassador of Sevalaya, Charlie proposes to contact Charitable Trusts in England on her return, to mobilize funds for Sevalaya.. She also plans to approach schools in England, to explore students exchange programme with Sevalaya.

Charlie eventually plans to do her master degree and Ph.D., in the English and History, to take up a career in Teaching. Why teaching, when there are so many lucrative vocations? Charlie asserts in her composed yet convincing manner her deep rooted desire to teach. Her enduring inspiration in her life's choice has been her parents : Dad Ian Palmer, who is an Educationist and Mom Louise Fletcher, who is a teacher.

Gandhi Jayanthi: state-wide open book exam winners felicitated



Gandhi Jayanthi was celebrated on 2nd October 2014 at Kasuva campus, attended by 600 students. A high point was the presentation of prizes to winners of the state-wide open book examination about Gandhiji held in the month of September. Prizes were distributed to the students from 16 schools of Kariakudi, Theni, Coimbatore, Chennai, Thiruvallur, Kancheepuram districts.

Since a decade, Sevalaya has been conducting this examination on the life of Mahatma Gandhi for State board, Matriculation, CBSE Schools. This examination is conducted in three levels.

1. VI to VIII std
2. IX & X std
3. XI & XII std

In synchrony with Gandhiji and truthfulness – cum-trust he exemplified, the examinations are conducted in these organizations by the respective authorities, who send the papers of their toppers to Sevalaya. From that, 3 prize winners in each category are awarded prizes.

The Chief Guest was T. Malarvizhi, District Education Officer. She distributed prizes and medals to the children.

The DEO in her address lauded the activities of the organization which is following the principles of Bharathi, Gandhiji and Vivekananda who had worked for the upliftment of underprivileged people in various areas.

On this day, the audience of 600 including children and staff took a solemn pledge to lead a life in harmony with nature, keeping the environment clean by avoiding plastics, and refrain from drugs and tobacco.

Sevalaya hosts Govt's National Girl Child Day Celebrations



resulted in physical and psychological trauma and the girl faces problems through her life. This need has resulted in the celebration of the National Girl Child day to protect girl children from sexual abuses from the community.

Speaking on the occasion Eliz Banu, Chairperson of Child Welfare Committee, Thiruvallur said that girl children are precious for the family and society

and they have to be treated with due respect and care. She said every mother has to teach her children what is good touch and what is bad touch and tell the children to be safe from strangers.

Also present at the occasion was Syed Rawoof, Probation Officer and District Child Protection Officer and Menaka, District Child Development Project Officer.

Sevalaya hosted The National Girl Child Day celebrations on 16th October 2014. The programme was a Government Programme organized by Department of Social Defense.

Girl children face many problems in society today. Girl children are sexually abused even at a young age. This has



Another joyous Diwali at Sevalaya

Deepavali spirit was in the air days before it was celebrated in a grand and safe manner on 21st October. Variety entertainment programme were presented by different units of Sevalaya. Crackers were burst and new clothes were presented to residents of the children's home & old age home. To top it all, a variety of sweets made the day sweeter for all. Behind the collective joy was, as always, the kind hearts of many donors.

Special guests

This Diwali, Sevalaya hosted some very special guests from Switzerland, led by philanthropist Page Pierre, one of Sevalaya's long standing well wishers who has been sponsoring much of Sevalaya's infrastructural improvements. He was accompanied by brother Michel Page, daughter Stephanie Page and grandsons Sebastien and Raphael.

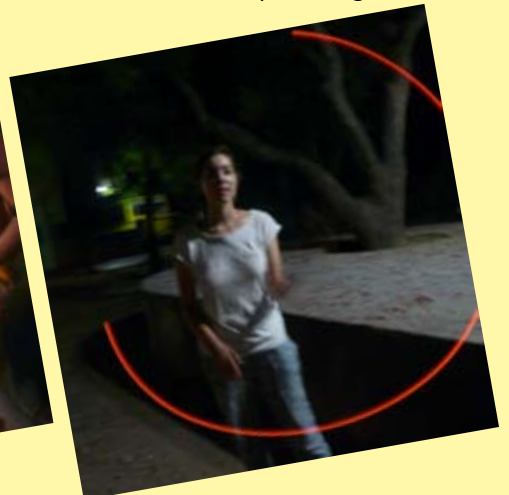
"I have burst crackers for the first time



and celebrating Deepavali with these kids was a totally different experience for me.", recalls Raphael. "Such a scintillating display of cultural, with a variety of

firework display was very new to me and I enjoyed a lot".

Sebastien and Stephanie agree.



Happy Diwali for 1000 children

'Udhavum Ullangal', an NGO dedicated for the service of children and also cancer afflicted families hosted a grand 'Diwali' on 12th October 2014. Sankar Mahadevan and other Members of the Trust Udhavum Ullangal invited 1000 children from various NGOs to participate in the celebrations. All 154 children of Sevalaya joined the celebrations, which went up to late evening. Children enjoyed the songs, dances and fun programs which ran for 8 hours continuously. Popular cinema artist and TV anchors also participated and performed cultural events for children. Children danced most of the

time in groups and on the whole as en masse, with these artists. The children were gifted with new dresses and matching accessories. It was a joyful evening for all children.



Sevalaya kids entertained

45 children and three staff attended the Annual Fun Mela & support to the Needy program of 'Friends Welfare Trust' at Nungambakkam on 5th October 2014 evening.

It was a long cultural bonanza, organized to entertain children of Sevalaya. Expert artists from TV and Cinema entertainment sector were invited to perform singing, dancing and mimicry. Children were thrilled and enjoyed the program. The popular film artist Srikanth was the Chief Guest. He addressed the gathering and interacted with children.

The program culminated with a grand dinner, along with the artists and members of the Trust.

Diwali party for Elders

Lions Club of Chennai East Coast hosted a grand evening party at Hotel Quality Inn Sabari, T. Nagar on 5th October 2014, celebrating the forthcoming Diwali, to all its Lion members and 14 NGOs involved with Senior Citizens care in Chennai. Sevalaya's senior citizens were accorded grand and cordial welcome by Ln. Mani Narayanan and

other office bearers, District Governor and President of the Club. Sevalaya received the gifts of 65 buckets and mugs at the hands of the Chief Guest of the occasion, M. Subramanian, Ex-Mayor of Chennai Corporation. All senior citizens of Sevalaya were served with a grand dinner and given a warm send off by the Lions Club members.

Annual Celebrations of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi



45 children, accompanied by 3 staff, attended Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi's Spiritual Program on 5th October 2014. Balavikas children, who are exposed to spiritual, cultural, educational and value imbibing activities, ranging between the age of 4 years to 17 years performed a variety of cultural programs exhibiting their talents in singing, dancing, and skits as also discussions on values and disciplined life and thought provoking expressions. All our children enjoyed the programs and appreciated the talents of these Balavikas children. Our children also exhibited their talents in dance to

the spiritual music.

The Samithi sponsored 10 cycles for the children of Sevalaya. As the token gesture L. Rangaswamy, President of the Samithi, presented a cycle. V. Muralidharan, Founder and Managing Trustee of Sevalaya outlined the long association with the Samithi and thanked the Samithi for organizing a trip to Puttaparthi for Sevalaya children every year and providing Nutrition supplement and gifts of needy things to Sevalaya. The Samithi members, Balavikas children and Sevalaya children had lunch together hosted by the Samithi.

Sevalaya doing survey for Govt's Beggary Eradication project

To implement the Government of Tamilnadu Eradication of Beggary Project in Thiruvallur District, the District Collector K. Veeraraghava Rao, announced the formation of a committee in a meeting held on 25th September 2014.

The collector selected Sevalaya to conduct a survey on the movement of beggars in various parts of Thiruvallur district. Sevalaya along with IRCDS and Childline conducted the survey and presented the result to the collector on 30th October 2014.



'The Learning sandwich', 'Gift Compassion' join Wish Tree at Daan Utsav

Sevalaya added 'Sandwich sharing' and 'Gift Compassion' to the traditional Wish Tree to mark Daan Utsav celebrated during 2nd October to 9th October 2014. Sevalaya also gave Daan Utsav a rural presence through its Seva Ratham, on a rural journey since September. Daan Utsav is the rebranded version of Joy of Giving festival which has been spreading the idea of sharing with joy since 2009.

Imbibing the spirit of Joy of Giving, Sevalaya adapted it to its own setting and socio-economic context. The purpose of Sandwich sharing was to combine learning along with the joy of giving and make students step out of their curriculum and experience something different from their classroom learning, by

The idea behind the Gift Compassion was to facilitate the interaction of students, uninhibited by the distinction of socio-economic status or background, each recognising the worth of the other human beings

Children from seven schools in Chennai

were no doubt less but they were worth a lot more, gifted as they were, with a lot of love and their new friends would definitely treasure these gifts.

Wish Tree

WishTree was set up in 9 organizations, namely, Paypal, Tube Products of India (Avadi), Ascendas, SP Infocity, V A Tech Wabag, Sundaram Mutual, BHEL Nandanam and L&T Finance.

Wishcards, carrying the wishes of the School Children were displayed in the wishtree.

Employees of organizations selected wishcards and donated the amounts required to fulfill a child's wish written on that card.



The Learning Sandwich

Learning: Experiencial, by sharing and listening to the stories of the people around them

Sandwich: Easiest to make, sure chat starter and different from normal rustic food

sharing and listening to the stories of the people around them. Why a sandwich? It is the easiest to make and arguably the best way to start a conversation. Moreover, it is different from the regular food culture of the villagers.

In total 100 sandwiches were made and distributed through students and teachers to the villagers. The students acted as the real soldiers of the initiative

and Thiruvallur districts visited Sevalaya with gifts for the less privileged children here. Children from well to do families have a lot of things and often take many things for granted. The gifts they bought might not have meant much to them, but for the children of Sevalaya who received these gifts it was a treasure they had longed for. The joy that could be seen on the faces of the children when receiving the gifts cannot simply be expressed in

Kind hearted Security men



Sevalaya's PR Head Radha Srinivasan was pleasantly surprised to receive a bundle of notes in small denominations from R. Rajasekar, Manager – Security and Facilities, SP Real Estate in OMR.

Seeing the wishtree at SP Infotech on 8th October 2014, Rajasekar told his men that they were welcome to contribute anything upward of Rs 2 for the underprivileged children.

In response, the security men who guard in the gates of the park chipped in from Rs. 20 to Rs.100, adding up to a bundle of Rs.1455

Gift Compassion

Gifts:

Exchanged across the socio-economic divide

Compassion:

Through interaction, each realizing recognising the worth of the other human beings



by actively taking part in the process.

Gift Compassion

The children celebrated the Gift Compassion programme during the Daan Utsav week starting from 2nd October to 9th October.

words. The children truly experienced the joy of giving and understood the value of the gifts they had given.

At the same time children of Sevalaya also had gifts for their new friends –small hand-crafted items made with love and care. The monetary value of these gifts

Manivannan plays an important role in Sevalaya by reaching its Founder Muralidharan and others to different places in time and safe. Manivannan has been driving the cars for Sevalaya for the last 10 years. He thanks one Pazhani, a launderer, who gave the information that Sevalaya was looking for a car driver. The City Office was then functioning from Adyar and Sevalaya had 800 students and a staff of under 45.

Muralidharan, in staff meetings very often cites him as example for how to keep smiling even in the midst of testing times in personal life. As a responsible

means to him, he says “Love and Care for all living beings (uyirgalidathil anbu vendum- Poet Bharati) and Work as a pleasure”. And what has he learnt from Sevalaya? Mani replies: “Among many other things, I will say ‘Courage of conviction’. When you have noble motives and your actions are founded on love and ethics, you can face any challenging situation in this world. I have had the opportunity to closely view how the founder dealt with each threat and challenge in an unperturbed way. Murali sir has demonstrated what courage of conviction is. I consider this as the single most valuable lesson for life.” This is

example, he will drive a hard bargain with vendors and get the best price for Sevalaya as he knows every penny of Sevalaya has to be saved and spent for the intended purposes. He cannot tolerate any loss to Sevalaya on account of any vendor trying to make abnormal profit.

Manivannan has a fine sense of humour and his jokes are original and spontaneous.

Recently, when Murali was travelling with Mani, he shared the news of Sunil Gavaskar’s cab driver dozing off and hitting another car in London. For this, Mani’s instant quip “Won’t any driver doze off, if he is driving all the way to London?”.

“I learnt courage of conviction”



J. Manivannan, Driver

member of the family, Manivannan shoulders the burden of the family and meets the requirements of his parents and his siblings apart from his wife and two young kids.

A senior colleague with supervisory responsibility says: “ Mani is one of the outstanding employees of the organization. His success can be attributed mainly to his total alignment with Sevalaya’s vision and mission”.

When asked to explain what Sevalaya

not mere theoretical understanding - those who move with Mani aver how he regularly applies the lesson learnt in his life.

Mani recalls various instances where Murali or Bhuvanewari Muralidharan or TSV Sir have tense moments in the office or meetings and yet once they step into the car, they start chatting jovially as if nothing happened.

Mani will walk (or drive) extra mile to meet organizational requirements. For

Music Lovers’ gift to Sevalaya

Sevalaya was the beneficiary NGO at a Hindi light music programme, ‘Tribute to Manna Dey’ held on October 12th at Chennai’s Museum Theatre by city-based music group Music Lovers. Two unique features: Music Lovers keep the ticket fares low, to benefit more rasikas; they also share the proceeds with an NGO selected through an elaborate screening process. M.R. Jambunaathan, Head- Donor Relations represented Sevalaya and received the donation..



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Gandhi in High School

Situation - 1: Gandhi during his High School days had to devote considerable time in nursing his father who was ill. At the close of school hours, he had to hurry home for nursing his father. On Saturdays, he had to go back to school for the gym class at 4.00 P.M. One Saturday, he went to the class late as he had no watch and the "clouds deceived" him. Mr. Gimi, the Master thought that he had deliberately avoided the class, as Gandhi generally disliked physical training. He refused to believe that Gandhi was attending on his father, and missed the class being unaware of the time. Gandhi was ordered to pay a fine being convicted of lying deeply pained him. His father wrote to the headmaster about the facts and also seeking exemption to Gandhi for Physical Training classes as he had to nurse him (the father). Ultimately

the fine was cancelled and he also got exemption from Gym class..One lesson learnt by Gandhi from this episode was: "A man of truth must also be a man of care."

Situation - 2: Having had a double promotion to 4th Standard, Gandhi found Geometry very difficult and he was completely at sea. However, diligently working, when he reached the thirteenth proposition of Euclid, he suddenly realized the simplicity of the subject. On reflection, he concluded that "A subject which required only pure and simple use of reasoning power could not be difficult"

Situation - 3: While in the 6th Standard, Gandhi thought that Samskrit was very difficult subject to learn. He chose Persian as in his view, it was easier to learn.

Reeling under the pressure of learning subjects in English, a foreign language, he took an option which seemed to him easier. But under the persuasion of a loving Samskrit teacher, he shifted to Samskrit, and found it interesting. Thinking of this episode, he writes:"It is now my opinion that in all Indian curricula of higher education, there should be a place for Hindi, Samskrit, Persian, Arabic and English, besides of course, the vernacular. This big list need not frighten anyone. "If our education were more systematic, and the boys free from the burden of having to learn their subjects through a foreign medium, I am sure, learning all these languages would not be an irksome task, but a perfect pleasure. A scientific knowledge of one language makes knowledge of other languages comparatively easy."

Would you help us discover the next Abhirami ?



Orphaned at five and abandoned by relatives, Abhirami grew up in Sevalaya Home. She showed exceptional talent in art. Having graduated from Government Arts College, Chennai, she has launched her career as an artist in Lionbridge, a leading Multinational Technology Leader.

Inborn talent has no demographic preferences and can blossom, with timely identification and encouragement. We have seen that in the last 26 years.

Would you help us discover the next Abhirami from among our 150 child residents?

It costs just Rs. 1,000 a month to transform a life.

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