



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

NOVEMBER 2016

## Daan Utsav : The joy of giving, gratitude, love and smiles



Sevalaya children exchange gifts with children from nearby schools



Student emulating Sachin Tendulkar with a 'smiley' in his index finger

Sevalaya has been a part of Daan Utsav 'festival of giving' since 2009. It is a week long program from 2nd October (Gandhi Jayanthi) to 8th October. Millions of people from all walks of life come together during this week to give their time, money, resources, or skills back to society, by creating or participating in events of their choice. A giving event could be as simple as a family taking out their maid's children for an ice-cream party, or as large as a 'Gift Compassion'.

### Wish Trees

As a part of the Utsav, Sevalaya placed Wish trees at various corporate houses and organizations like L&T Infotech, VA tech Wabag, Capgemini, CAMS, GE, Indian Oil Corporation, Aavin(Vannanthurai) branch and PVR Grandmall, Velachery. It was a terrific event for many 'Sevalayans' to experience firsthand the kindness and generosity of the staff of various multinational

companies. The eagerness of staff to know more about Sevalaya, bringing their friends for a second and third visit to the stall and donating for a cause close to their hearts were the hallmarks of the event.

### Gift Compassion

Gift Compassion is an event that has over thousands of school children across India making and exchanging gifts with their peers from different socio-economic backgrounds. Sevalaya planned the event in its campus in partnership with 10 urban schools.

On 5th October 2016, 240 students from various schools in Thiruvallur - Sri Kanaka Saraswathi Vidyalaya, Sri Niketan School, Oxford School and Grace Park School- visited Sevalaya campus. The children interacted with each other and exchanged small handmade gifts with bonhomie.

The highlight of the event was the gifts presented by Gayathri, Std V from Sri Kanaka Saraswathi Vidyalaya. She explained to her father about Daan Utsav

*"I am very happy. Last year also I participated in this event. I got a notebook from my friend Kumar, and presented him with a pen, pencil, and a pouch, in return. He accepted that happily. I talked with him for some time and I have got a new friend now.*

**E Manigandan, V Std**

*My teacher told about the this programme and the need to share with one another. I have read this in stories. I told this to my daddy and in the evening he took me to the shop and bought me a photo frame, which I presented to my friend, Bharath. He too presented a gift for me – rings and kerchiefs. I am very happy about the new friend whom I met today. My teacher taught me that even though gift is important, friendship is more important."*

**V Durgadevi, Std V**



*Continued on Page 2...*

# Homage to T M Lakshmikanthan

22nd October 2016, the day broke with shocking news! T M Lakshmikanthan, aka LK, a trustee of Sevalaya had passed away. A severe heart attack snatched him away from us suddenly.

LK had joined the Board of Trustees of Sevalaya on 11th October 2015. Though his association with Sevalaya was for a period of 1 year only, he actively participated in the meetings and offered his guidance on developing donor base and introducing new ways of fund raising. He was always at hand when we needed support.

A banker with 40 years experience, he was the executive director of Karur Vysya Bank and General Manager, Corporation Bank. He had a track record of consistently delivering exceptional results through branch business development, client management, and strategic planning and cultivating and maintaining key relationships. He was the President of PC Jewellers, New Delhi and also served as an Independent Director on the board of SMSO Nidhi, a private financial institution. He had handled many training



Prayer Meeting for T M Lakshmikanthan



*Continued from page 1*

and bought 22 pens, pencils, erasers and 10 notebooks for Sevalaya students. She came to Sevalaya with her teacher and presented all the gifts to the children and enjoyed the day with them. In return, the students of Sevalaya gifted her with a pencil, pen in a pouch.

It was an opportunity for the children to experience the joy of giving and learn to be compassionate.

Sevalaya children have new friends from other schools and their harmonious exchange of gifts and friendly banter was a sight to behold.

## Sevalaya Sandwich at Lionbridge

As part of the Daan Utsav celebrations, Lionbridge Technologies, Chennai, hosted a team of novice sandwich preparers, from Sevalaya community college, to make sandwiches for their staff. It was a wonderful sight to see the youngsters team up to slice vegetables, prepare the bread with butter and mint chutney, set up the tables with sandwich grills and other accessories in quick time. Sevalaya staff C Aadhimuthu rallied the team with pep talk, and was in charge of taking orders, while M Nadiya, from Sevalaya kitchen spearheaded the grill stations. Orders were flying fast and furious at



programs in business schools and corporates. He was very good in planning, motivating people and close mentoring.

With his passing away Sevalaya has lost a very good well wisher, guide, mentor and a very fine gentleman.

Our heartfelt condolences to the grieving family and friends and prayers to the Almighty for his soul to rest in peace!

Thanks & Regards,

Sevalaya Murali

snack time, and met with alacrity by the young team. As a surprise, the Sevalaya team organised an impromptu Mehendi stall. In all 90 sandwiches were sold in just under two hours and a few women took up the offer to apply Mehendi. The proceeds will benefit underprivileged students and elders at Sevalaya campus.

*Left: Staff of Lionbridge Technologies participate in the Sevalaya Sandwich event, as part of Daan Utsav celebrations*

## Sevalaya bags prestigious GuideStar Platinum award for transparency



GuideStar India, an organization that acts as an NGO Information Repository launched the GuideStar India NGO Transparency Awards to recognise organisations that practice and voluntarily demonstrate their transparency and accountability in the public domain.

Out of the 51,400 NGOs listed with GuideStar, Only 307 organisations emerged winners at various levels for the GuideStar India Transparency Awards 2016. Sevalaya is one among the 14 Platinum winners.

The award was received by Radha Srinivasan, Vice-President, Donor Relations, Sevalaya, in a colorful function held in Mumbai on 28th September 2016.



## Gandhi Jayanthi celebration

Prizes were distributed to 19 students from schools all over the state who were the winners of the free State level examination conducted by Sevalaya on the life and works of Mahatma Gandhi, at the Gandhi Jayanthi Celebrations on 1st October 2016 at Sevalaya's Kasuva campus. Prisoners from Central prisons in the State also wrote the examination and senior officials from Salem Central Prison participated in the function to collect the prizes on behalf of the prisoners who topped the exams.

The Chief Guest, Tom Ludke, Site Head (IKKT), Pfizer who distributed the prizes,



trophies and certificates to the winners, said he felt honoured and privileged to participate in the birthday celebrations of the Mahatma. He told the students that following the path shown by Gandhiji will be the best tribute to him. Tom's wife Chris Ludke, and Brenda Sullivan,



Top left and above: Tom Ludke, Site Head (IKKT) and officials from Pfizer India donated sports kits to the children

Director, Sterility Assurance, Pfizer also participated in the function.

## Pranaam to Kalam, with saplings



P Subramanian, an environment activist, and Chairman, Green Revolution Committee, planting a tree sapling at Sevalaya campus, while students look on

Sevalaya, in its constant quest to sustain and protect our environment, undertook a special initiative to plant tree saplings in its campus and nearby villages.

On 15 October 2016, on the occasion of

Dr A P J Abdul Kalam's birthday, Sevalaya's alumnus P Ruthra moorthy, currently a third year Mechanical Engineering student and his college mates contributed 1,500 fruit bearing tree saplings for planting in Sevalaya campus, and in 40

nearby villages.

An assorted mix of fruit bearing trees including Gooseberry, Custard apple, Guava, and Mango were given to the students to be planted in their homes. While distributing the saplings, P Subramanian, an environment activist and Chairman, Green Revolution Committee, asked the students to take them to their villages, plant, water and nurture them to ensure their growth. One student, delightfully expressed that when the trees grow and bear fruits they can be shared with other students and villagers. A laudable thinking in an adolescent mind indeed!

Our former President constantly advised each student to plant at least 5 saplings, which will have an everlasting effect in the protecting our environment. Sevalaya campus is home to more than 300 well grown trees.

## A 1000 students reading silently is worth a picture

On 8th October 2016, a thousand Sevalaya students kicked off the World book reading week with the Kasuva campus. It was picture perfect, the students and teachers sitting diligently reading a book, silently. Celebration of this event has triggered an enthusiasm for reading that is bound to last a lifetime. Sevalaya, in its campus, maintains 3 libraries, with more than 25000 books for the benefit of 2000 students, teachers, village youth, and the public at large. More than anything, Sevalaya seeks to explore and foster the cognitive intelligence in our students/children in a steadfast manner.

The highlight on the occasion was donation of 250 books to 5 nearby schools (50 books for each school) by



Sevalaya. These schools do not have library facility, and hence the books were distributed to the schools for the benefit of their students.

Commenting about the 'Readathon', R Vijaya, HM Academics, said "It was really heartening to see 1000 children from

KG to Std XII gathering at a spot, intently reading a book. There was pin drop silence in the area which is unimaginable in a large group of 1000 students of various age groups. The younger ones were inspired by their annas and akkas reading a book and followed suit."



## Sevalaya overall champs at Bhumi Culturals



*Sevalaya team won the overall champion award for the fifth year in a row*

This year, Bhumi's annual cultural programme was held at Kumararani Meena Muthiah College of Arts and Science, Chennai on 9th and 10 October, 2016. 300 students from eleven schools including Sevalaya participated in the

competitions which included painting, Adzaap, Adapt Tune, Elocution, Story Writing, Rangoli, Clay Modelling, Group Dance, Pot Painting, Junk Art, skit and Quiz. It was a pleasant sight to see the students participate with eagerness

and exhibit their multifarious talent. Sevalaya students won prizes in 21 out of the 34 events conducted by Bhumi, and were awarded the "overall champions." Sevalaya have been the overall champion in Bhumi cultural programme for 5 years in a row now. The students were presented with medals, certificates, and gifts from the organizers.



## From newspapers to bags – Sevalaya staff show the way

On 27th September 2016, Sevalaya Arts and Craft team visited BNY Mellon to teach their staff the art of making paper bags from newspapers. 3 types of paper bags – Small (Height -6.5"), Medium (Height - 10") and Large (Height - 13.5") which can hold weights upto 1.5 Kgs, 3 kgs, and 5 kgs respectively. These bags were from newspapers, with a patti

## BNY Mellon CSR Expo



*Prototype of the Kuvilai Kannan memorial mobile medical van*

BNY Mellon India organised an expo on 18th October 2016 to showcase their CSR Projects with various NGO Partners to their employees, all over the world. The expo was inaugurated by Dinesh Deo, CEO of BNY Mellon India.

The CSR activities of BNY Mellon focuses

on the areas of Health, Education and Rural Development and stalls were put up by NGOs supported by BNY Mellon in these 3 areas.

BNY Mellon has sponsored the mobile medical unit as well as the Nursing assistant course at Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Community College at Kasuva. Sevalaya Murali, Radha Srinivasan, L N Anupriya, P Rangarajan, A Anbukarasi, A Haripriya and L Rajalakshmi represented Sevalaya at the expo. The highlight of the Sevalaya Stall was the miniature Mobile Medical Van on display. The miniature model with great detailing created by our staff Andrews Jesudoss was a great attraction at the Expo.



*Bags made from newspapers, by BNY Mellon, India staff*

holding a nylon rope, for the handle. It took about 10-15 minutes to make a bag, and, the staff of BNY Mellon participated enthusiastically. They found it to be a new and rewarding experience. There were five batches in all and it was fun to see each batch busy trying to outdo the other. The staff donated the bags back to Sevalaya to sell and utilise the proceeds. Nice gesture, indeed!

## Sevalaya residents invited to celebrate Ayudha pooja

Each year, for the past 20 years, our hostel children are invited to participate in the Ayudha pooja celebrations by Annanagar auto association, Pattabhiram. The children take part in the festivities and present cultural programmes to mark the event. They are then treated to a sumptuous lunch. This year the students performed a dance programme which was very well received, by the audience. The Auto association gave gift hampers to the children on the occasion.

*Top : Students conduct cultural programme*

*Below : Sevalaya hostel children, Sevalaya Murali along with Auto drivers at the Ayudha Pooja celebrations*





## At 16, a state player

### R Pradeep

R Pradeep, studying in Std. XII has been selected to represent Tamilnadu Handball Team by School Games Federation of India.

Out of 90 students who participated in Tamilnadu State level selection trials held at Dindigul, on 27th September 2016, Sevalaya's R Pradeep has been selected for participation in Inter-State Handball tournament, to be held in Delhi from 2nd to 8th January 2017. He hails from a poor family. His father is a weaver and mother is a housewife. He joined Sevalaya as a hostel resident in Std XI. Although he was interested in sports and used to play kabbadi and cricket during his middle school, he evinced keen interest in joining the handball team. He is a natural athlete. His interest was in goal keeping



and he started to practice rigorously for the same. Even though he is in Std. XII now, he gives equal importance to studies and sports. His aim is to shine well in sports and will take this opportunity to play with passion.

Our physical director, A Sankarapandian and PT master M Nithyanandham view budding talent as a stepping stone for higher achievements, and aim to fulfill his ambition.

Kudos, to the sports team, and wish Pradeep brilliant success in New Delhi and beyond.



R Pradeep receiving confirmation certificate from the sports committee members

## Skilling initiative for rural youth at Vadanallur community college



Sudhir Sheno, City Head, L&T Infotech, Chennai, and Sharon Rebecca, CSR-L&T Infotech, Chennai at Sevalaya's Vadanallur community college

L&T Infotech and Sevalaya teamed up to initiate 'Seva Vidhya' a skilling initiative to impart basic PC skills, office correspondence and fundamentals of data entry to the village youth at Vadanallur village, about 80 Kms from Chennai.

Sudhir Sheno, City Head, L&T Infotech

Chennai, inaugurated the event and mentioned that these skilling initiatives have the ability to transform lives of the youth in the rural villages. He further lauded the consistent efforts of Sevalaya in transforming the rural economic landscape, by nurturing the youth by providing them with vocational training in various streams to make them

employable. He also mentioned the goals of L&T Infotech & Sevalaya, aimed at reaching inner cities and unearth local talent.

L & T Infotech donated 20 Computers, a printer, projector and screen, as well as an UPS to the Community College. It was heartening to see many women from the village enroll for the course eagerly. Sevalaya imparts skill training absolutely free of charge to all the beneficiaries.



Ayudha Pooja at Vadanallur and Mambakkam community colleges

With best compliments

*"Better is to educate an underprivileged child"*

*-MahaKavi Bharathi*

*"The soul of India lives in its villages"*

*-Mahatma Gandhi*

*"God comes in the form of Roti for a hungry man"*

*-Swami Vivekananda*

Well wisher

## From assistant to 'queen pin' at Gaushala

### T Kala

T Kala hails from Vilapakkam, a small village near Kasuva. Her husband passed away when her son was just 13 years old. Due to extreme poverty she could not educate her son. She used to work as a maid in households to eke out a living. She got to know about Sevalaya through her friends who work in the campus. She used to work in the Government's 100 day programme but could not get even that regularly. Hence she sought a job in Sevalaya and was first recruited as a cleaning assistant in Vinobhaji Gaushala at Sevalaya. Today, she is in charge of the Gaushala, through her sincere and hard work. She has gained enough knowledge about keeping the gaushala clean at all times, and cattle rearing, and, is always at hand to attend to any health related issues of the cows, especially when a

calf is delivered. During the last year's floods she played a prominent role in maintaining the Gaushala by taking the lead in clearing out the flood waters and ensuring that the cows were fed on time.

Kala says, "I was working in the fields for a very meagre income and struggled to bring up my son. Now, I have a steady income. Sevalaya helped a lot

in stabilizing my family. My son is now settled in life and lives with his family. I visit them once a month. I feel blessed to work for an organization that takes care of destitute children, elders and cows. My boarding and lodging is completely taken care of by Sevalaya. The trust Sevalaya has reposed in me must be repaid manifold. I feel privileged and am filled with gratitude."



*T Kala, diligently tending to the cows and calves at Vinobhaji Gaushala*

## Meet R Vijaya, HM in Charge of Academics

A bright, cheerful young person greets visitors as they enter Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School and takes care of all their requirements in a very calm, efficient manner. She is R Vijaya, Senior Manager, Education. After completing her B. Sc. Zoology from Madras University and B.Ed from Lady Willingdon College, she was selected in the campus interview by Sevalaya and joined Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Higher Secondary School as a teacher in 2002. Vivacious, effervescent and a lover of nature, Vijaya was given primary classes initially and she handled the younger kids efficiently, teaching and disciplining them playfully and lovingly. The timid, shy youngster enjoyed working in the rural atmosphere and the affection of the little ones in her class who would address her as Akka helped her to come out of her shell. Her good teaching skills, sincerity and devotion towards her work led to a steady promotion to higher classes. One of three siblings, Vijaya faced a lot of difficulties in her



childhood and youth since her mother had to overcome several obstacles to raise her 3 daughters with almost no support from her father. This helped Vijaya to understand her students even better and she knows how to motivate and cheer them up. All Sevalaya students belong to underprivileged class and Vijaya could empathize with them. Muralidharan's passion for service, his inspiring talks linking day to day affairs to lofty ideals motivated and inspired her and he became her role model. The free hand given to teachers at Sevalaya to experiment and put into practice

various skills learnt in B Ed, the culture of sharing experiences with others and implementing the best teaching practices of one another, coupled with training in aptitude increased her confidence in tackling issues at school, as well as motivate even slow learners score above 90% in Science. Sevalaya motivated Vijaya to pursue her Masters in Zoology from Annamalai University. She is one of the best teachers at school, who not only taught Biology passionately but has also been a good mentor and friend to her students, getting them to share their worries and urging them to do their best in the exams. Vijaya has taken over the reins of the school administration since 2014 and is adept in handling both, administration and teaching with equal gusto.. Her passion is to motivate and help students to secure State Ranks in the board exams. Recognizing Vijaya's work, Lions Club of Tambaram East, presented her with the 'Best teacher award' on 11th September 2016 at a function in Chennai.

On her experience in working with Sevalaya, "I joined Sevalaya as a fresher. I had no practical experience and was just like a child. Sevalaya has moulded me into whatever I am today. I owe everything to this organization" says Vijaya emotionally.



## Health and Yoga



A training programme "Energy in Life" was conducted in two sessions - on 24th September 2016 and 1st October 2016 by

V Ravindran, a doctorate in Accupressure. Ravindran emphasized on the correct breathing techniques and mudras which will help to improve and retain the energy level throughout the day and aid in healthy living. Yoga and basic exercises were taught to more than 50 teaching staff and 25 non-teaching staff.

Teacher D Aswini affirmed that she was able to practically see the result of the exercises immediately.

S Kaveri [Non teaching staff] said "I learnt how to eat and drink water, about the digestion process and how to take care of our knees and methods of walking."

## Film making - Nalandaway shows the way

UNICEF is supporting Nalandaway to empower children by teaching them skills to narrate stories. NalandaWay's experts in film making teach children from marginalized backgrounds to conceive stories, narrate them, write scripts, and finally to film and edit their stories. This provides a creative outlet for the children while they learn skills that they can take up professionally in the future.

As a part of this program, 26 children from Sevalaya School were selected to write and film stories on child abuse. The group had 13 girls and 13 boys who over the course of 7 days (September 26th - October 2nd) had a workshop on film making and later shot their films. The children were from standards 9th and



*R Simon George explaining the intricacies of film making to Sevalaya students*

11th. They learnt photography, basics of script writing and film making. It was a very creative learning experience for the children.

## Donor's gesture to Sevalaya residents



E Subramanian, Deputy Governor of Rotary Club of Thiruvallur and Managing Director Of Win Win Industries, Thiruvallur visited the campus and distributed snacks to the children and elders. He has been doing this yearly once through Rotary Club of Thiruvallur. He was the past president of the club.

## Annadhanam on Mahalaya Paksham, Purattasi Saturday



On 24th September 2016, Raghavendra Swamy Brindavanam Trust of Nanganallur, sponsored lunch for more than 2000 people which included the students of the entire school and the residents of the old age home, on account of *Mahalaya Paksha* and *Purattasi* Saturday.

## Tiny tots enter the world of Carnatic music



*Yuva rasika* is an initiative by the Music Forum and Music Academy to bring together school and college students interested in classical music under one umbrella and to mould them as future rasikas.

*Yuva Rasika* conducted a program to create young musicians on 24th September 2016. Dr Sunder, a medical Doctor with a passion for carnatic music talked about Carnatic music, various aspects of this music form, and how to develop a taste for it and appreciate. 70 students from Sevalaya in the age group of 9 to 13, who attended the programme were enamoured by the grand setting of Music Academy hall and listened with rapt attention. It was their first experience and we are confident that there will be many more.

## Corporates aid Sevalaya to conduct free medical camps



Sevalaya regularly conducts medical camps with the support of BNY Mellon. On 20th October 2016, a general medical camp was held at Periyapalayam village. 85 villagers were screened at this camp.



On 20th October 2016, Sevalaya and SCOPE International organised eye camp for villagers with doctors from Sankara Nethralaya eye hospital. Out of the 95 villagers screened at the camp, 8 persons were referred for cataract surgery. Free spectacles were distributed to 20 villagers.

# A smuggler saved ethically

Parsi Rustomji was a close friend and a client of Gandhiji. He got in to a bad scrape. He had been informing Gandhiji every one of his affairs, -except the fact that he was resorting to smuggling. He was able to carry on with this because of his stature, the Customs officials took his invoices on trust. Some of the officials had also connived with him. "Theft like quicksilver won't be suppressed" and Rustomji's offence was discovered. Rustomji rushed to Gandhiji, and tears rolling down his cheeks said, "Bhai, I have deceived you. My guilt has been discovered today. I have smuggled and I am doomed. I must go to jail and be ruined. You alone may be able to save me from this predicament. I have kept back nothing else from you, but I thought I ought not to bother you with such tricks of the trade, and so I never told you about this smuggling. But now, how much I repent it!"

Gandhiji calmed him down and said saving or not saving was in God's hands. But he would try to save him only if he would come out with a clean confession to the Government. Rustomji was mortified at this suggestion, but he agreed as he had full confidence in Gandhiji.

Gandhiji found out that this smuggling was going on for a long time, but the actual offence detected involved only a trifling sum. Gandhiji after studying the matter said, "I don't think this case should be taken to court at all. It rests with the Customs Officer to prosecute you or let you go, and in turn, he has to be guided by the Attorney General. I am prepared to meet them both. I propose that you should offer the penalty they fix, and the odds are that they will be agreeable. But if they are not, you must be prepared to go to Jail. I am of opinion that the shame lies not so much in going

to jail as in committing the offence. The deed of shame has already been done. Imprisonment you should regard as a penance. The real penance lies in resolving never to smuggle again."

Gandhiji met the Customs Officer and had all the books of Accounts submitted to him. He explained to him how penitent Rustomji was feeling. On the advice of the Customs Officer, Gandhiji contacted the Attorney General. He appreciated Gandhiji's complete frankness. The case was compromised. Rustomji was to pay a penalty equal to twice the amount he had confessed to have smuggled. Rustomji reduced to writing the facts of the whole case, got the paper framed and hung in his office to serve as a perpetual reminder to his heirs and fellow merchants.

Gandhiji had reasons to believe Rustomji would never again deceive.

## Importance of project management

As Sevalaya keeps growing, the importance of managing and executing projects assume vital importance. With this in mind project management training was conducted on 5th October 2016, by Dr Prof S V Mani, at the campus. Twenty three staff from all the units handling different projects attended this training. The aim of this training was to make the project managers work seamlessly with other divisions to complete the projects in a timely manner. The five phases of the project was discussed as well as the intricacies of project management, such as the basic contract, resource planning, schedule, monitoring, governance and budgets were succinctly put forward



by Dr Prof. S V Mani who has a rich experience in this area.

R Vijaya, Headmistress, said "I learnt that every activity is a project. I also know now that MoU is the heart of the project and that it has to be studied well to understand our responsibilities and vendor's responsibilities. I also learnt that a project plan should take into account all the various aspects, manpower, cost and materials."

L N Anupriya, Sr. Manager, Operations, opined that she was just executing tasks and ensuring that it was completed. Now, she says that she looks at projects holistically, from start to end, the steps to be followed at each stage of the project, setting milestones, monitoring variances and planning ahead for contingencies.

## Sevalaya unit heads meet at Yelagiri



All the unit heads of Sevalaya assembled at Yelagiri on 20th and 21st of October to, discuss issues and find ways to work together and find common ground. As with any organization, talking about issues raises questions and often times leads to productive results in the long run. Sevalaya's management team took this opportunity to invite family members and volunteers to participate in the event. The results of the meet was very encouraging as the unit heads vowed to find ways to resolve issues through constant communication and follow up. The staff and families took a relaxing boat ride in the evening in the serene Yelagiri lake, with lots of fun and frolic.

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