



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

NOVEMBER 2017

1100 children and 16 corporates celebrate giving at *Daan Utsav*



Staff from Sanofi fulfilling the children's wishes on the occasion of Daan Utsav

Sevalaya has been a part of *Daan Utsav* – a celebration of philanthropy since 2009. It coincides with a week long program from 2nd 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.

For many 'Sevalayans' this experience of seeing firsthand the kindness and generosity of the staff of various multinational companies was unique.

Sevalaya stalls were also located in all these corporate houses, which were manned by Sevalaya staff. They highlighted the various activities at Sevalaya mostly relating to the quality of education imparted by the school. Many staff expressed surprise about the range of services which are provided free of



Exchange of gifts strengthened the bonds of friendship between students of Sevalaya and other school during Joy of Giving Week

charge to all the beneficiaries.

For the corporate clan, getting to know about Sevalaya and fulfilling the wishes of rural underprivileged children was a very rewarding experience.

Sanofi Limited surprised 30 primary children by arranging a special bus and brought them to their office. The children were awe-struck on seeing the office space. They were lovingly treated to sweetmeats, and other eatables. Each child was then handed over their special 'wish' beautifully gift wrapped. The chatter of the children on the way back to school, after opening their gifts was a joy unto itself!

The staff of Sundram Fasteners Ltd descended on the campus on 16th October 2017 and personally fulfilled the 'wishes'

of more than 100 children.

Gift Compassion

This programme gave an opportunity for the Sevalaya school children to mingle

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Ayudha Pooja @ Annanagar Auto Assn.



For more than two decades, the resident children and senior citizens of Sevalaya are invited to participate in the Ayudha pooja celebrations conducted by Annanagar Auto Association, Pattabiram. 150 hostel students and 25 elders took part in the festivities. They were treated to a grand lunch on the occasion.

Wish Trees

As a part of the Utsav, Sevalaya placed wish trees at various corporate houses and organizations L&T Infotech, VA tech Wabag, Capgemini, CAMS, GE, Indian Oil Corporation, JK Fenner, PwC, Schneider Electric, Lionbridge technologies, Aricent technologies, Aspire systems, DTCC, Sundram Fasteners Limited (2 locations), Sanofi and Ericsson.



Joy of giving: the way of life

Dear Friends,

On a Sunday afternoon, I decided to go out for my usual deepavali shopping. I always wear Khadi dhoti and Khadi Kurtha. (Once a little girl in Sevalaya asked me "Looks like you don't have any other dress. You always wear this white dress. If you want something else, please go and check in the store room; many donors have donated used clothes. There will be some which will fit you. You can pick up one for yourself, I won't tell anyone!"). As it is customary in India, even at my age, the deepavali dress has to be a gift from parents. So my father gave me money for me to buy two dhotis and two kurthas. When I reached the Khadi shop, to my surprise I found the shop was closed. When all shops in that area are busy making huge business, when there is not even enough space to stand in other shops, this Khadi shop is closed for Sunday! Just few days before deepavali – when you can make the maximum sale! I was very disappointed and went home.

I returned to the same shop next day. It was open. As I am a regular customer, the people there knew me. As usual, they said they don't have the piece I asked for, which will suit my size. Instead they asked me to buy something else. I was not happy, but I had to buy something for deepavali. So I bought what was suggested. I asked them why they were not open the previous day. "You are right, we have to keep the shop open even on Sundays due to deepavali season, but only couple of people like you will come. People like you will come back on Monday. So we don't lose any business".

The staff saw me looking for something. They asked me what was I looking for and I asked "Don't you sell sarees? I don't see any sarees displayed". They said they have sarees and opened a bureau and took out the only saree they had! I had no choice and bought that for my wife. This was my deepavali shopping experience this year.

Khadi is the best suited dress for our

country, considering the weather. Also it is a symbol of our freedom struggle, it is a symbol created by Mahatma Gandhi to promote the idea of village level independence (Gram Swaraj). When we buy Khadi our money goes to poor villagers who know no skill other than weaving. Many poor families will get job opportunity in the villages if we buy Khadi. In Sevalaya we buy Khadi for all staff and ask them to wear it atleast 3 times a week. I have been wearing Khadi right from my childhood and I feel happy that my choice is helping a poor family. Also it is very comfortable, looks good and I see I attract lot of respect when I wear Khadi.

Can all of us atleast try Khadi once?

Thanks and Regards

Sevalaya Murali

Humanitarian award for Sevalaya from Vice President of India



Sevalaya Murali receiving the humanitarian award from Hon'ble Vice President of India, M Venkiah Naidu at a function at Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya

On 17th October 2017, Sevalaya received the Humanitarian Award from the Hon'ble Vice President of India, M Venkiah Naidu at a function at Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya Campus. The award was presented by Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya Samithi for the yeomen service rendered by Sevalaya for the welfare of the community especially during the 2015 floods which ravaged a few coastal districts of Tamilnadu.

Sevalaya rose to the occasion during the floods and plunged into relief operations by distributing food, clothing, blankets and other essential items to interior

villages, which were not easily accessible, Many homes and their livelihoods were washed away. Sevalaya then followed it up with taking up rehabilitation measures by constructing 30 pucca houses to villagers who had lost their huts and livelihood in the floods.

Sevalaya also reconstructed the Gandhi Study Centre Library within the Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya Campus which was totally submerged when the flood waters entered the centre. Many rare books housed in the library were permanently lost. With a futuristic view to prevent

such occurrences Sevalaya also helped in the digitization of the entire library, thus safeguarding the valuable collection of books, for posterity. The reconstruction of Gandhi Study centre and digitisation of Gandhiji's books were sponsored by L&T Infotech.

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with their peers from urban schools and experience the joy of giving and learn to be compassionate.

Students from 10 urban schools visited Sevalaya and exchanged gifts with Sevalaya students. Sevalaya children made new friends from other schools and their harmonious exchange of gifts and friendly banter was a sight to behold.



Staff of Sundaram fasteners presenting gift to Sevalaya children

Community Colleges - Developing skills, Shaping lives

Sevalaya community colleges are morphing into centres of optimism and livelihood. Each of the five colleges is unique and imparts vocational skills that enable students to get placement on finishing their course. Every effort is made to provide the best training and is aligned to the industry requirements. Guest lecturers are arranged by inviting specialists in the respective trades to talk to students about the latest developments in the industry.

Sevalaya also focuses on arranging internship for students to help them get hands on experience in their respective field of study. More often than not, a majority of students are absorbed in permanent positions, in the places where they intern.

Jouve India provides internship opportunities to the E publishing students of Ambattur Community College. The Nursing Assistant students of Kasuva centre get opportunities to intern with Portea Health Services. Imperial Garments India at Sriperumbudur and Suprajit Engineering offer internship opportunities for the students at Sevalaya's Mambakkam centre.



Industrial visit to Jouve India by E-Publishing students of Sevalaya's Ambattur Community College



Interaction between Jouve staff and E-Publishing students

Sevalaya's partners in various locations mention that the quality of the students who come out of the community college seem more knowledgeable and require very little training, once they get into the workforce.

At Mambakkam community college free arts and craft classes for making fashion jewellery with beads and other handicraft items are conducted on Sundays. Women from villages within a radius of 3 Kms of the college attend the classes.

Lakshmi Sarala, Accounts and Admin Manager, E-Animedia Solutions Pvt Ltd visited Sevalaya's Ambattur Community College



"Students who come out of Sevalaya community college have a good understanding of MS Word and MS Excel. Their communication skills are reasonably good, which makes our job in training the easier."

Joy Fernandes, Asst. Manager HR, Rural shores, Vadanallur, BPO

Lofty goals, down to earth service – Alumni R Janakiraman

R Janakiraman studied in Sevalaya school for a short time, but was enamoured by the philanthropy of the organization. To this day, he says that the encouragement he received from Sevalaya has shaped his life for the better.

This has spurred him on to start a free tuition centre in his village for the school students. The centre is located in Keelkondaiyur Balwadi and has been functioning six days a week for the past three months.

He teaches all the five major subjects for three days a week and has roped in another teacher for the other three days. About 30 students come each day to



Tuition session in progress

the centre in the evening to finish their homework and revise their lessons.

During his days at Sevalaya, Janakiraman was an exuberant student and has

represented the school in debates. He was a fearless speaker and had won a few prizes. He graduated out of school in 2013-2014.

He went on to finish his graduation in BA History in May 2017 and is now pursuing his PG in Indian History.

One of the highlights of his life was his meeting with Late President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. He expressed his desire to join the civil services to Dr Kalam. Former President blessed him that his dreams will come true. He is preparing to write his civil services exam next year.

Celebrating Deepavali with light, love and happiness



Children watching with glee the beginning of Deepavali celebration at Sevalaya campus

Deepavali, the festival of lights was celebrated at Kasuva Campus and off campus where the children and elders were invited to take part in the festivities marking the triumph of good over evil.

On 14th October 2017, all 175 hostel students and 25 students from Std XI went on a day trip to the 'Thala *Deepavali* celebrations' at VGP Golden Beach. The trip was organised by Rotary Club of Madras, T Nagar. Each student was given a gift by Rotary Club. They enjoyed all the sights and sounds as well as the various rides in the park. The children were treated to sumptuous meals and a snack as they were leaving the facility.

The one day trip was exciting. This is the first time I went on so many rides. It was very enjoyable.

M Girija, Std VIII

At the campus, *Deepavali* was celebrated with a lot of fun and bonhomie. All the children and senior citizens got new clothes, thanks to the largesse of donors. There were plenty of sweets and savouries to go around and all of them made merry.

The day started with prayers. The children and elders residing in the Homes were greeted by donors, volunteers and staff. The donors and volunteers kept streaming in throughout the day, and donated clothes, sweets and crackers. All the students were overwhelmed by the love and support shown to them.

Pre-*Deepavali* day and on *Deepavali* the

"I loved the train ride. I am very thankful to Rotary T Nagar for bringing me here. I had a very nice time."

S Bharathi, Std VIII



P Ekambaram, Probation Officer, Social Defense, distributing new clothes to the elders of Sevalaya's old age home

campus reverberated with the sound of crackers with the children having a lot of fun, under the watchful eyes of the Home care takers, teachers and elders.

Chief Guest P Ekambaram, Probation Officer, Social Defense Department, Thiruvallur District explain that the significance of *Deepavali* is to dispel darkness and light up our lives.

Sevalaya thanks the numerous individuals, and institutions who donated rice, wheat flour, sweets and savouries, fireworks, toiletries, and sponsored dress material to the children and elders for Deepavali.



The Volunteers from UK celebrating Deepavali in traditional dress



Children enjoying the various rides at VGP Golden Beach Resort, Chennai



Children receiving new clothes and sweets

College visits by Std XII students



Sevalaya students observing dental procedure at SRM medical college

On 25th September 2017, 50 students accompanied by 2 staff visited Shri Venkateshwara college of Engineering, Sriperumbudur. The students got an idea about the various courses offered by the college and the career opportunities available for each course, at the orientation programme. They also visited the labs of various departments, libraries and other facilities at the college.

"We got to know about Engineering and various streams like Bio-technology, Marine Engineering, Mechanical, Civil and Automobile. I am very interested in pursuing Marine engineering."

B Kumaresan Std XII

On 10th October 2017 another group of 50 students visited SRM Medical college, Kattankulathur, Chennai. Here they got to know about various specialties in Medicine. Apart from MBBS there were other courses like Para medical, Dental, Ortho, Pediatrics, and Diabetes. Dr Hari explained in detail about Dental department.

"We got to know that there many Para medical courses. First we visited dental hospital. And later we learnt about occupational therapy and employment opportunities in various fields."

S Deepika Std XII

Members of staff beautify the campus



In the recent past, members of our staff have found a novel way to celebrate their birthdays by donating and planting tree saplings within the campus.

B Dinesh Kumar, Physics teacher, has been planting trees near his village for a few years. This year, he donated 2 Crouton trees on his birthday on 24th September 2017.

Senior citizens day out on World Elders day



On 9th October 2017, a group of 32 senior citizens attended the World Elders day celebration organized by Department of Social Welfare, Govt of Tamilnadu, at Velappancheri Gajalakshmi Kalayana Mandapam, Maduravoyal. Grandma Geetha, sang a Tamil classical song 'Adi Kondar' which was received well by the audience. The elders were thrilled at the outing and got a chance to witness the talent of other NGOs as well.

Rotork Controls sponsorship



Floor cleaning machine by Rotork Controls India for dining hall

Rotork India, a market leader in actuator manufacturing and flow control has sponsored four projects in different areas around the campus- A floor cleaning machine for the dining room, which has reduced the cleaning time to less than one and half hours (for all three meals). This has freed up the man power to perform other activities around the campus. Rotork Controls (India) has also sponsored a steam boiler for the kitchen which has significantly speeded up the turnaround time for preparing dishes between meals. Simultaneously the tiling and painting of the kitchen was also taken up which has brightened the work environment and productivity. Last but not the least, pavement and reflectors to aid the senior citizens find their way to their rooms before dawn and after dusk has encouraged them to venture out with more confidence.

Sevalaya USA up and running

A group of friends of Sevalaya Murali, who have made US their home, banded together and have fructified the wish of having Sevalaya as a registered Non-profit in USA. It is a separate entity which has goals that are similar to that of Sevalaya India.

Sevalaya requests all the donors and well-wishers to inform their friends and family in the US about supporting Sevalaya and its various activities by donating from Sevalaya US website

<https://www.sevalaya.us>

They can be contacted at

<https://www.sevalaya.us/contact>

"Eager students make distance teaching fun"

Renuka Venkat

Renuka Venkat, the teacher from Sydney, Australia, has been teaching Sevalaya kids Science via video conferencing for the past one year.

Renuka who visited the campus recently says, "I met with my students. It was such a great feeling to speak to them in person. I am so impressed."

A teacher for the last 30 years, Renuka has taught in many countries including India.

When asked whether it was difficult to adapt to different curriculum and teach, she unhesitatingly replies in the affirmative. She further goes on to say that teaching kids in Doha, Qatar is almost similar to teaching in India. "But teaching in Sydney has been tough. We had to deal with classroom behavior – which is very



different" she says. She has been teaching in Australia for 17 long years.

The tug of wanting to do something for the children back in India was strong. She heard about Sevalaya from a friend of hers, who suggested VCON classes. After the initial skepticism she got in touch with another teacher who takes VCON classes for Sevalaya children from Melbourne. The rest, she says with a lot of happiness, has been a wonderful journey. "I have been lucky to teach some wonderful children" she remarks.

Her husband is also a teacher and he also has joined Renuka in teaching the kids at Sevalaya. They teach science, and are effusive in their praise for all the staff."

The medium of teaching is primarily in the native tongue. "Tamil is our mother tongue and I can read. Also, I have downloaded the text books online. The kids help me whenever I am stuck with a word. Besides, I know the concept and I need help with certain words and that is all. The kids are all smart and often, they

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Determined to succeed

Sivagami

Sivagami and her family were affected by both the floods of 2015 as well as the cyclone of 2016. Both times they lost their possessions, but not their will power.

Sivagami is determined to become a Chartered Accountant, and pursue studying even beyond. Her passion is driven by the fact that her elder sister who secured more than 900 marks in her Std. XII could not continue further studies due to family circumstances.

She joined Sevalaya three years ago and immediately was struck by the difference in the quality and methodology of teaching. She is very talented in drawing and essay writing. Her creative works find a place in 'Vidiyal' – the monthly manuscript magazine brought out by Sevalaya students. She also participates in



sports activities with interest and is good in Shotput.

Her father is a mason and mother is a daily wage earner. Sivagami knows how much of a struggle her family has gone through to bring her and her siblings up. She wants her sister to enroll in Sevalaya's community college and complete a course so that she will be able to get into the workforce and become independent.

Being a soft spoken person, Sivagami says her concentration power has increased

due to practicing Yoga, which is taught in school.

She says, "I am very lucky to get an opportunity to study in Sevalaya. My dreams are big and I am confident of my future. My teacher's advice and guidance are very inspiring. Yoga classes have helped me focus in studies and I am also able to tackle my adolescence smoothly. The volunteers from the corporate and their motivational talks helped me to set a clear goal in life."

Carnival and tour programme for students – thanks to Standard Chartered – GBS



Students posing in front of fighter aircraft

On 14th October 2017, Standard Chartered-GBS, Chennai organized two programmes for the students. One was a big bash at their office for 325 primary school children (Std II – Std IV). The music and dance events and games organised for the students held them in awe. There were many events designed for the tiny tots – like drawing, sketching, pool, and games with cartoon characters. The

"The experiments relating to sound waves was very informative. The models of Dinosaurs was very realistic. We also saw models various weapons missiles and tanks. We were thrilled to see the models of Rockets and Jet fighters used by our armed forces."

S Pavithra, Std XI



Sevalaya students at the India International Science Festival at Anna University

children soaked them all up and many prizes were distributed to them for participating and winning in the events.

On the same day, another group of 295 students from Std V – Std VII were taken in a chartered bus to the Children's park, Guindy. The students were given a chance to observe animals and birds at close quarters. There were rare plants and trees in the park. This trip helped the students

"We were very happy to see some wild animals in the park. I saw deer, snakes, as well as a few birds. There were many types of plants, which were explained by our Biology teacher. The trip was really enjoyable."

S Shobana, Std VII

understand the flora and fauna as they saw the lifestyles and habit of the animals.

Students visit Science fair 2017

100 students from Std VIII, IX and XI visited the India International Science Festival at Anna University, Guindy on 13th and 14th October 2017. The students were fascinated by the exhibits as it had a blend of the past experiments and future designs.

"The fun activities like drawing tail for animals while blindfolded, jumping game, ball pool were very joyful. Every fun activity won many prizes. We enjoyed the lunch and gifts given to us."

R Jeevanandham, Std IV

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are the ones who come up with words to help me out", she laughingly says.

"Besides, their observation skills are very good and I often tell them that there is no point in teaching what they already know", she continued talking with pride.

Renuka is very happy about her teaching experiences and the many interactions with the children of year 9, year 7 in Sevalaya. She also recounts how her husband now teaches year 5 kids of Sevalaya.

Deep down Renuka is confident that by educating our kids, there is a sense of gratification of sowing the seeds for a great future.

Sudha Subramanian, in conversation with Renuka Venkat. Sudha, a freelance writer from Dubai was in Sevalaya in the first week of August 2017.



Standard chartered GBS volunteers escorting Sevalaya children at the Children's park, Guindy

Setting sails on the sacred Mission...

After three days of penance at Kanyakumari, Swamiji resolved that he would earn money by the power of his brain. Returning to India from America, he would devote himself to the regeneration of his countrymen.

The next issue was to find the money for the trip to America. While he was at Madras, many spirited young men and prominent citizens felt convinced that "In Swamiji was a magnificent personality, a prodigal intellect, profound learning, fire of patriotism, sparkling wit and above all unbending spirit of renunciation." They were keen that he should be sent to America for participating in the Parliament of Religions.

The disciples went about collecting subscriptions, and were successful in mustering substantial money. But on seeing the money, Swamiji was uncomfortable. Was the Mission the will of the Master or was he being carried away by his own enthusiasm? He decided to wait till he got a definite signal from

the Master. He advised the followers to distribute the money to the poor. He convinced them that money would come anyway if the Master wills it.

The whole game started again. While at Hyderabad, the elite of the city impressed on him that he should go to America and offered their support. Persistent followers, led by his ardent disciple Alasingha went about collecting money s people, and raised a good sum. Swamiji was now in a state of stress, feelings alternating between thrill and misgivings. He decided to wait till a definite indication from the Master was received.

Master's blessing was received at last. Swamiji was lying half-asleep. He saw the figure of the Master walking from the sea shore in to the waters of the ocean and beckoning him to follow. He was overwhelmed with emotion and was now convinced that it was the will of the Master.

Next he wrote to the Holy Mother. Mother

was happy to receive communication after a long time from her "beloved child". She was however reluctant to send him to unknown lands. But what clinched the decision was a vision she had after the passing away of the Master. She saw Sri Ramakrishna entering into the body of Narenrdra. She suppressed her own sentiments and sent her wholehearted blessings to Swamiji.

Khetri Maharaja, learning about the developments, requested Swamiji to come to Khetri and proceed to America from there. He assured to take care of the logistics and supplement the resources adequately. Swamiji took the name Vivekananda as suggested by Khetri Maharaja. Earlier he was known as Satchithananda.

On 31st May 1893 with disciples in tears and entreating his blessings, he started off, sailing alone and unknown for a distant land, to meet strange people and deliver a strange message.

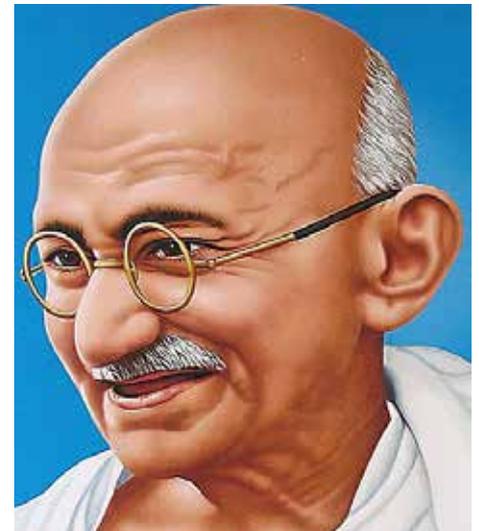
Fondly remembering the father of the nation



R Divyashree, Revenue Divisional Officer, Thiruvallur District, Lighting the lamp during Gandhi Jayanthi celebration. Sevalaya Murali, Founder and Managing Trustee; Amarchand Jain, Advisor, Sevalaya looks on

Gandhi Jayanthi, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, one of the inspirers of Sevalaya was celebrated with enthusiasm. Students participated in essay writing, drawing and quiz competitions. The theme for the competitions was the life and works of Gandhiji. Prizes were distributed to the students who won in various competitions.

In her address to the students, Chief Guest R Divyashree, Regional Revenue collector, urged the students to live in harmony. She further said that Gandhiji's birth anniversary on 2nd October is celebrated around the world as 'Ahimsa day' (day of non-violence). She continued by saying that by working for rural development, Sevalaya is following the path of Gandhiji in the truest sense.



Send your comments to:

City Office : Sevalaya, No 54, P S Sivaswamy Road (North), Mylapore, Chennai-600 004, Tamil Nadu, India.

phone: 7299064457, 9444333529, 044-24982204

email: sevalayaprhead@sevalaya.org, sevalayakasuva@sevalaya.org

www.sevalaya.org ; www.facebook.com/sevalaya ; www.youtube.com/sevalayacharity

Correspondents:

Anupriya Suresh, Kingston A A, Prasanna Parthasarathy, Radha Srinivasan, Vijaya R

Copy Desk: Rangarajan P

Layout: Rekha Perumal

Editorial & Design Consultant:

Thomas T Abraham