



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

OCTOBER 2017

## Sevalaya enters its 30th year



*K Pandiarajan, Hon'ble Minister for Tamil Language, Culture and Archaeology, Govt of Tamilnadu releasing Sevalaya's 29th Annual Report. First copy received by R Manimaran, EX MLA, Poonamallee*

Sevalaya's 29<sup>th</sup> annual day was celebrated with gusto. This year it was an elaborate affair, with the Hon'ble minister of Tamil language, Culture and Archeology, K Pandiarajan, as the Chief Guest.

Releasing Sevalaya's 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Report on the occasion, the Minister advised the students to do one great deed in their lives, and more importantly dared them to dream. He emphasized the need to work towards their goals and stressed the importance of KASH – Knowledge, Attitude, Skills and Habits to realize their dreams. He said, "In this fast changing world, new opportunities emerge every day and even if due to any circumstance one cannot achieve their dreams, one should not lose heart but be ready to enter new field

suitable to their skills and do great deeds."

The minister distributed prizes to the first three toppers in Std X and Std XII, gold coins as gifts to the staff who have completed 5, 10 and 15 years of service in Sevalaya, and prizes to select villagers who



*K Pandiarajan, Hon'ble Minister launching Go Digital, the automation project of Sevalaya*



*Cultural programme by Sevalaya students*



*Topper in X Std receiving award in hands of Hon'ble Minister K Pandiarajan*



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<http://sevalaya.org/reports/annual-reports/>

have supported Sevalaya in its activities as well as select resident senior citizens who take active part in the day to day activities of the Home.

Certificates were also distributed by the minister to the students of Community College who successfully completed the course.

The Hon'ble minister also launched Go Digital – a project to automate the functioning of Sevalaya and all its units.

The first copy of the annual report was received by R Manimaran, Ex-MLA of Poonamallee constituency. Putlur Chandrasekar, Ex Chairman, Thiruvallur, former Panchayat Union Presidents, ward members and Councillors, Sevalaya alumni and over 500 villagers also participated in the function.

Sevalaya children presented a cultural programme on the occasion.



*Minister presenting long service award to the staff of Sevalaya*

# Joy of giving: *the way of life*

Dear Friend,

Wish you a very happy *Diwali* in advance!

*Diwali* (the festival of Lights), one of the major festivals of India symbolizes the triumph of good over evil. As the festival approaches, there is a lot of celebration in the air, with people busily planning for the purchase of new clothes, sweets, savories and all the shops are flooded with new and novel varieties of clothes, sweets and of course crackers, to woo the people and make the occasion a memorable one! As donors and friends of Sevalaya ([www.sevalaya.org](http://www.sevalaya.org)), we are sure that you have included your extended family of Sevalaya also in the preparation of your *Diwali* celebrations. This extended family has 2285 poor, destitute village children and 71 poor and destitute grandpas and grandmas. These children are getting completely free education and doing very well in studies. Many of our students who completed school education have taken up higher studies and many of them are fully supported by Sevalaya. The grandmas and grandpas as well as the residents of the Children's Home which houses orphan and destitute children are

given very good, healthy and nourishing food, proper medical attention, love and affection. We estimate at least ₹ 1000 as the expense for one person and we need support from all of you to have a great *Diwali* for the 2356 people in the Sevalaya family. We are sure that as in the previous years, we will get your support. With all your unstinting support the evils of poverty and destitution which

plagued these 2356 residents are being successfully overcome. We invite you to join hands and help us celebrate this victory on the auspicious day of *Diwali*! Please do visit Sevalaya campus and join all our children and grandpas and grandmas for a grand *Diwali* celebration.

Thanks & Regards

Sevalaya Murali

## How to make a donation

Cheques in favour of 'Sevalaya', or donations in kind like clothes, crackers, sweets etc., can be sent to our city office at

Sevalaya  
54 P S Sivaswamy Salai (North)  
Mylapore  
Chennai 600004

Or money can be directly transferred to:

**For Indian Donors:**

Account Name: SEVALAYA  
Account No: 218601000134  
Bank: ICICI BANK  
Branch: Mylapore  
IFSC Code: ICIC0002186

Account Name: SEVALAYA

Account No: 029101000008743

Bank: INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK

Branch: Dr RK Salai Branch (EE Road Branch)

IFSC Code: IOBA0000291

**For Overseas Donors:**

Account Name : SEVALAYA FCRA A/C

SB Account NO 408048361

Bank: INDIAN BANK

Branch: DR R K Salai Branch

SWIFT CODE: IDIBINBBMAS

IFSC Code: IDIB000D035

## BGV (Bharathi-Gandhi-Vivekananda) day



Winners of BGV competitions from various schools and colleges proudly displaying the prizes won

Bharathi-Gandhi-Vivekananda are Sevalaya's inspirational fountainheads since inception. Each year, a combined event is organised on September 11, which is a significant day in the lives of the Trinity. It was on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1921 Mahakavi Bharathiyar passed away. On the same day in 1906 Gandhiji coined the word Satyagraha for the new technique to fight against oppression. On 11<sup>th</sup> September 1893, Swamy Vivekananda

delivered the historic speech at World Parliament of Religions at Chicago.

On September 11 every year Sevalaya organizes an event BGV (Bharathi Gandhi Vivekananda) Day. Various competitions including oratorical, poetry, quiz competition, on the lives and works of the three leaders, for school and college students in Thiruvallur, Kancheepuram and Chennai are conducted.

This year around 500 students from 35 schools and 8 colleges participated in these competitions.

C Meena, Social Welfare Officer, Thiruvallur district, Government of Tamilnadu, was the Chief Guest on the occasion and distributed prizes and certificates to the winners of the competitions.

## R Punitha receives award from TN Chief Minister



R Punitha, receiving trophy at the hands of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Edappadi K Palaniswamy

R Punitha the winner of the 1500 mts event received the trophy at the hands of Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, Edappadi K Palaniswamy at the Birth Anniversary Centenary celebrations of the former Chief Minister of Tamilnadu Bharat Ratna Dr MGR at Panchetti, Ponneri Taluk on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017. As part of the celebrations, an Inter School district sports meet were conducted earlier on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2017, at Sports Development Authority of Tamilnadu (SDAT) stadium, Thiruvallur. More than 700 students from Thiruvallur district participated in the sports meet. Sevalaya students won 2 gold, 1 silver and 1 bronze in athletics. They also won Gold in Handball and Basketball (both boys and girls).

## Overall champions for the seventh time at the Bhumi Nakshatra events



Sevalaya volleyball winners team

Sevalaya were declared the overall champion in the Bhumi Nakshatra competitions held at Sri Sai Ram Engineering College, West Tambaram.

Sevalaya students romped home with prizes in various art competitions. Out of the 22 events the 31 strong team participated, Sevalaya won prizes in 20 events. Out of these 14 were first prizes. 60 organisations participated in the competitions. Boys won gold in Volleyball, Chess and Silver in 4 X 100 relay. Girls won gold in Throwball, Tennikoit and 4 X 100 relay. Sevalaya won the Overall championship for the seventh year in a row.



Sevalaya boys' gold medal winning performance



S Amsa receiving gold medal in 200 mts



R to L: S Sharmila, Gold medalist and V Kiruba, Silver medalist in 600 mts

## Teacher's day celebrations



**Chief Guest 'Siddhartha Semmal' K Gurumurthy, presenting silver coins to staff**

September 5 is celebrated across the nation as Teachers day. Teachers are the backbone of Sevalaya and their contributions in the sustained growth of the children is a cause for celebration. Sevalaya honours its teachers and all staff on this day by presenting each one of them with a 10 gram silver coin. Books were gifted to the employees whose birthday fell in the month of September.

'Siddhartha Semmal' K Gurumurthy, proprietor, Indane Guru Gas agency, the Chief Guest on the occasion, said that students studying in Sevalaya are very privileged to get high quality education free of cost. He further said that teachers should feel the pulse of the students and be quick in understanding their needs. They should teach the subjects in a way that makes it interesting and easy to remember for the students.

## Grand navarathri function (Dussehra)

The beginning of Navarathri was celebrated at Sevalaya campus on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017, forenoon with active participation of the students, teachers and villagers.

The Chief Guest on the occasion Meena Subrahmanyam, President, Prayas Trust, lauded the efforts of Sevalaya and appreciated its great services to the poor and needy. There are three essentials for a good school: a hygienic place, quality education and good teachers. Since all these are made available in Sevalaya to its students totally free of cost, she exhorted the students to make use of these and make a good living for themselves.

Sathya Ravichandran, Secretary, Prayas



**Resident girls doing Navarathri Pooja**

## World Literacy Day



**Sevalaya students teaching cleaning staff to write their names**

World Literacy Day was celebrated at Sevalaya on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017. In what can be termed as a unique event, the underprivileged students of Sevalaya, all first generation school goers, brought their parents to school, all of whom are illiterate and taught them to write the alphabets and to affix their signature.

Sevalaya takes every effort to bridge the illiteracy gap among adults in the villages. The parents do not know how to sign their own names. So, this effort of the students to teach their parents is laudable.

"I felt thrilled when i wrote my name for the first time. I am interested to learn to read and write. I feel proud and happy that my children are teaching me now."

**V Bakiyalakshmi, Cleaning staff**

Trust, sang a Bharathiyar Song to the delight of all.

Rajni Kannappan, Trustee, Prayas Trust, encouraged the student to make the best use of the opportunities provided to them at Sevalaya.

**Meena Subrahmanyam, President, Prayas Trust lighting the lamp**



## Mambakkam centre



At Mambakkam Community College Vembuli, Ex President of Mambakkam Panchayat performing pooja.

Free training in tailoring and computers, a free library and a free tuition centre for school children are run at the centre.

The activities of the centre are sponsored by PPG Asian Paints.

## City Office, Chennai



A Kalaiyarasi, Admin Head, performing the pooja.

At Sevalaya's City Office Chennai, the accounts and admin section and the donor relations section operate to support the activities of all other centres.

## Ambattur Centre I

At Ambattur Centre I, free training in tailoring for the underprivileged youth is conducted. S Selvamathan, Vice President, Production, Ambattur Clothing Private Limited was the Chief Guest.



## Madhurantakam Centre

At Madhurantakam Centre where organic farming activities are undertaken. D V Sridharan, Sevalaya's donor who donated the land for organic farming, participated in the celebrations.



# Ayudha Pooja celebration at Sevalaya's 8 centres

## Ambattur Centre II

At Ambattur Centre II, free training in E Publishing and Tally for underprivileged youth is conducted. G Subramanyam, Director, Jouve India & Flatirons Jouve is the Chief Guest.

The centre is sponsored by L&T Infotech.



## Kasuva Centre



At Kasuva Centre, L Mageswaran, MD, Mark Air Particular Control Systems performing pooja. Free School and library, free homes for destitute children and seniors, gaushala, community college offering free training in 7 trades, free medical centre and mobile medical unit serving 40 villages and organic farming are the activities at the centre.

## Thirumalaivaiyavur Centre



M Bhuvaneshwari, Hon. Correspondent performing the pooja.

At Thirumalaivaiyavur organic farming activities are undertaken. The land was donated by Ambattur Clothing Private Limited.

## Vadanallur Centre

At Vadanallur Centre M Kesavan, Executive officer, Uthiramerur Panchayat performed the Pooja. Free training in tailoring is sponsored by N Subramaniam, free computer training sponsored by L&T Infotech, a free library and free Mobile Medical unit sponsored by Cholamandalam Finance and Investments are the activities at the centre.



## Cleanliness is Godliness

### Selvi T, Cleaner

Selvi has been working in the campus for 5 years. She has single handedly managed to keep all the toilets and bathrooms clean in the girls' hostel and the old-age home. Apart from that, she also clears the colour coded dustbins used to segregate the wastes into degradable and non-degradable categories. She doubles up to work in the kitchen and dining room during lunch and dinner to serve food for the senior citizens in the dining hall.

Out of her own free will, she stands near the wash area during the lunch break and watches the plates of those students who come to the wash area. She is quite a stickler for non wastage of food and either nudges the students not to waste food or watches over the students who try to throw the food away. She says, "We all struggle very hard for our daily morsel



and we should not waste a single grain. It is better if the kids fill their plates little by little – that way, they won't waste it. I also insist everyone washes up their plates. It is a simple discipline that all of us should practice. After all, this is what we all do at home – so why not do it here?"

"I love working here in Sevalaya. I don't like to miss even one day of work and even if I do, I keep thinking about everyone in the old age home. My

husband sometimes wonders why I think about Sevalaya so much; but I do, because, I love this place. This place gives me a lot of peace and happiness." Asked about the one thing she would like to see in the near future, she unhesitatingly replies, nice paved tar roads within the campus with lovely flowering plants on either side. I am sure, it is just a matter of time." Selvi says, before signing off.

## Finding solace through service

### Ramu thatha

Ramu came to Sevalaya in 2011. He was running a small mess for a few years and prior to that he was working for a lawyer in Thiruvallur. His wife was a home maker. He has one son and one daughter. His son is working as Sub Inspector in one of the suburbs of Chennai and daughter is in Dubai.

His wife lives with his son.

He has been ostracized by his family. He came to know about Sevalaya from the priest of a temple near this home decided to seek shelter at Sevalaya. He feels at peace in the old age home, doing some chores, spending time with friends in his



*Ramu thatha giving medicine to Heeralal thatha*

age group and has a set routine. He says, "most of us help around as much as we can because, that way, we spend our time constructively. I cut vegetables for the kitchen, read books, watch TV, chat with friends – there is no time to get bored!"

"I am treated with respect and the children from the hostel and school come

occasionally and spend time with us. They are like our own grandchildren. We have reached a stage in our lives where we can offer unconditional love to the children."

He turns melancholic and says, "I always pray to God to keep all of Sevalaya family well."

## Essential lessons on values from Aparajitha foundation

On 7th September 2017- M Senthil Kumar, Chief Executive Aparajitha foundation visited the campus and played a set of videos to std VII students on the basic etiquette at school (grooming, behavior and personality). It helped the teachers to assess the student's behavior and share the values to the students. This is a continuous process and the sessions are organized for all classes.



Top right: M Senthil Kumar interacting with students of Std VII

## Mentoring programme for undergraduates



### Mentoring programme in progress

On 6th September 2017, 16 alumni now pursuing higher education in various colleges, were invited to BNY Mellon office in Chennai for a primer session on mentorship. The students got an opportunity to interact with the management and staff of BNY Mellon and got to know the corporate culture and

work atmosphere.

As a follow up session, 4 BNY Mellon volunteers visited at Kasuva on 10th September 2017, and continued their mentorship programme. The volunteer team brought PPT slides and videos relating to mentorship. They broke the team into groups and asked them to converse and interact with each other in English. It was an exciting session and many new ideas floated around. Volunteers from BNY are planning to continue this mentorship programme for the next few weeks to mentor the students. 17 Alumni attended the programme.

## Importance of education and gratitude



Sudha Uma Shankar, freelance journalist, visited Kasuva centre on 8th September 2017 and spoke about the importance of education. She impressed on the need to understand the concepts thoroughly, setting of goals and working towards the same, learning to grab opportunities that come our way, and emphasized that poverty need not be a restraining factor in furthering one's education. 207 students from Std VII-IX benefitted from these sessions.

She quoted as examples, (Late) Dr APJ Abdul Kalam and Barack Obama, who came from very humble backgrounds, studied in Government schools and went on to become Presidents of India and US respectively. She mentioned that education built their confidence and faith

and their hardwork took them step by step to the highest level.

I learnt that being satisfied with what we have is very important, rather than think about what we do not have. I also learnt that being positive is vital in life, and to thank people for their help.

**Shobana S, Std VII**

## Baby Rhino Rescue - Global Art Competition

Sevalaya students participated in the Baby Rhino Rescue Global Art Competition conducted by Pencilsrock Academy for conservation Art to fundraise for a rhino orphanage by Helena Kriel, a nature lover based in USA.

Raghunath Krishna of Pencilsrock Academy had a discussion with students about the importance of rhinos in conservation of Mother Earth. He then drew a rhino on the board with easy step-by-step instructions, the children promptly got to work and let their imagination run wild.

## MS office suite for teachers



### MS office suite session in progress

P Surendar, consultant, and J Ajay Krishna, Assistant Manager from PwC India, visited the campus on 4th September 2017. They took a session on animation in PPT and shortcuts in navigating and working on PPTs. They also conducted a session on working in Excel, using formulae to add, subtract and calculate the percentage of marks and some easy shortcuts. 20 teachers benefitted from this training. Animated PPTs make the class livelier and interactive.

## Yoga and meditation



Sri Yogasharan (V S Prakash), Retd GM, The Hindu, currently affiliated with Atma Niranjana Yoga, taught the art of meditation and yoga postures to 360 students of Std IV to Std IX, for four weeks on Thursdays during August and September 2017.



"The session was so energising that it gives hope for a bright future for our earth if we are able to work with more children in this age group and with institutions like Sevalaya."

**Raghunath Krishna, Director, Pencilsrock Academy for Conservation Art**

## Indians first, all of us!

In these columns, we are looking at some of the highlights in the life of Swami Vivekananda, as also the various incidents, events and situations in his life which shaped him as the ultimate Swamiji.

Swamiji's outlook underwent some changes since he started out from Baranagore as a wandering monk. Of these, his biographers write:

The Swami was tirelessly in search of unity in the world of Indian ideals. He finally came to see that underlying all the diversity of customs and traditions was the oneness of the spiritual vision. The differences between the Muslim and Hindu worlds he found to be more apparent than real; for the Muslims as a

race were as generous and human, and as Indian, as the Hindus. The enlightened among them appreciated Hindu culture, and were aware that there was an affinity between Sufism and Advaita Vedanta. To him Muslims and Hindus were Indians first; hence the distinction between them by reason of their different beliefs was subordinate to their identity as compatriots.

The Swami's horizon had now so widened that he saw the intrinsic perfection, and could sympathize with the aspirations, of all forms of religion. He saw that, given a spirit of brotherhood, the peoples and sects and castes of India could unite in an organized civil life, especially if a feeling of responsibility to the poor were cultivated

by the educated classes. He felt that the choice of religious ideal, and the practice of it, should be a personal matter, neither affecting, nor affected by the affairs of the State; and further, that the several latter-day religious movements which were tinged with Western religious thought or Western culture, were also, though perhaps unconsciously, contributing to the crystallization of the modern transition. It was his hope that, with more discrimination between essentials and non-essentials, sectarian bitterness would die out and all would join together in the common task of reappraising and restarting, according to modern needs, the content and significance of the ancient Indian culture.

## Resident boys and girls win drama competition at Sparsh '17



Sevalaya students, winners of the drama competition at Sparsh 2017 receiving prize at the hands of Dr Fatima Vasanth, Deputy Principal, Loyola College

On 10<sup>th</sup> September 2017, Agni College, Thalambur conducted Sparsh 2017-Youth helping hearts programme. 452 children from 10 homes participated in the event. Dance (both solo and group), and drama competitions were held. The girls and boys of Sevalaya were declared the winners in the Drama category.

"I enjoyed the whole day. It was fun to watch colourful dance performances by students from various Homes."

**J Lalitha, Std VI**

## Audio screening for elders



Audio screening for elders conducted by Rotract Club of Chennai, Muthamizh

## NSS Camps by City Schools



NSS Volunteers from Lady Sivaswamy Ayyar Girls HSS interacting with elders



NSS volunteers from Gill Adarsh HSS conducted Dengue Awareness camp in the villages

### Send your comments to:

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