

## Kamarajar Day celebrated in multiple locations



Film Music Director Kalaimamani Baradwaj distributing prizes to winners held on the occasion of Kamaraj birthday at Kasuva centre. N Veeraraghavan, Retd. Assembly Secretary, Adhavan, Film Director and R V Ramanandan, Tamil Poet, look on

The birth Anniversary of former Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, K Kamaraj, was celebrated at Sevalaya's Community College, Ambattur on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

The Chief Guest T Saju, Assistant Editor, Times of India recalled the contributions of Kamaraj to the nation in general and as Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, in particular. He particularly mentioned that the late Chief Minister's decision to provide mid-day meals to the students was not only to feed the poor children, but also to ensure

larger enrolment and regular attendance in schools. He said that opening up of over 6,000 schools was the hallmark of Kamaraj era.

Earlier essay writing, oratorical and quiz competitions based on the life of the great leader were conducted for the students. Prizes were distributed to the winners by the Chief Guest T Saju.

Sekar, *Manavakalai Mandram* who conducts free Yoga training sessions for the students of Sevalaya's two Community Colleges in Ambattur, twice a week also participated.

Certificates were also distributed on the occasion to the 22 students who had successfully completed the E Publishing and Tally Courses.

G Subramanian, Director, Flatirons Jouve India Ltd., distributed the certificates and issued appointment orders to all the 7 students who had completed the E-publishing course.

On 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018, the Thanjavur centre of Sevalaya celebrated Kamarajar Day at Corporation Higher secondary

school, Thanjavur. V Gopalan, Director, *Bharathi Ilakkiya Payilagam* and K Muthuramakrishnan, Advisor, Sevalaya spoke to the students about Kamaraj's achievements in promoting education. The school Head Master Vadivel and Sevalaya Trustee A Mageswaran participated in the function.

Earlier oratorical, essay writing and drawing competitions were conducted for the students. V Gopalan distributed prizes to the winners.

Music Director Kalaimamani Bharadwaj was the Chief Guest for the Kamarajar Day celebrations at Kasuva centre on



V Gopalan, Director, *Bharathi Ilakkiya Payilagam* distributing prizes to the winners in Kamaraj competition at Thanjavur centre

22<sup>nd</sup> July 2018. Speaking on the occasion, he told the students how Gandhiji, Bharthiyar and Swami Vivekananda had to face hurdles and hardships to reach

*Continued to page 2...*



G Subramanian, Director, Flatirons Jouve India Ltd. distributing prizes to the winners in Kamaraj competition, at Ambattur centre. T Saju, Assistant Editor, Times of India looks on



Prize winning drawing by K Dinesh Kumar, Std X

# Joy of giving: the way of life

Dear friends,

Barun Chakraborty from Dumdum, Kolkata, is a rickshaw puller. He has to cycle the rickshaw, carrying people, sweat it out in the hot sun or get drenched in heavy rains. Only then he can support his family of four. Even then, he could not educate his son beyond 4<sup>th</sup> grade and asked him to discontinue and go for a job. He has a daughter to be married and he has started saving money for that life time expense.

On 16<sup>th</sup> June, his mother Bela, passed away. Barun is not educated at all but he knew about organ donation. He didn't want his mother's eye sight to go waste. He wanted two blind people to see with his mother's eyes. But his relatives and people around him talked to him against eye donation as it is against their religion. All superstitious stories were told to persuade him not to make the organ donation.

He was told that if he donates his mother's eyes, she will be reborn as a

blind person! The spirit will be blind, and will not know the way to hell or heaven! His grand child will be born blind and all his descendants will be born blind. This scared Barun and he started hesitating. How can he take this risk and make all generations in his family go blind?

Finally, he decided to talk to doctors. They assured him that an act of donating his mother's eyes will have nothing to do with the children's eye sights that are going to be born in his family. Some pandits told him that body and spirit are not connected and during death the connection is fully severed. So the spirit anyways does not need the services of physical eye! In any case we either burn or bury the eyes! By donating eyes, two blind people will be able to see and hence the good deed, may help the spirit and help the kids that are going to be born in his family.

Barun recalled that his mother was helpful lady, would spend time for others when they had emergencies in

their families. She was not educated lost her husband at a very early age and worked hard to bring up her five children. She could not give education to any of them, but the minimum she could do was to give them food every day and teach them morals. "Always help others" was her message to her children.

Barun thought, that it will be fitting if her eyes are donated and two blind people get to see the world because of this kind act and that will be the tribute to be paid to her.

Finally Barun's love for his mother and her life which taught him to help others, was more powerful than the fear created by the superstitions and Barun decided to donate the eyes. His children were weeping and taking part in the funeral of their grandmother. Barun called them aside and told them "When this happens to me, do the same thing".

Thanks and Regards

Sevalaya Murali

...Continued from page 1



out to the people and how they could rise above only due to the self-confidence they had. He exhorted the students to believe in themselves which will definitely make them succeed in the path they choose. He also assured his support for all the new initiatives of Sevalaya in his native village, Ravanasamudram, Tirunelveli.

Solomon, President, Traders Association, Aadhavan, Film Director and anchor of *Amutha Gaanam* at Mega TV, N Veeraraghavan, Retd Assembly Secretary, R V Ramanandan, Tamil poet participated in the function. The speakers

spoke to the students about the great leader Kamarajar's simplicity, integrity, concern for people's welfare, the noon meal scheme he introduced to bring children to the school and his selfless service for the development of the State.

Earlier oratorical, essay writing, drawing and poetry writing competitions were conducted for the students of the school and community college. Prizes were distributed by Bharadwaj to the winners. The students of Sevalaya School and community college presented a colourful cultural programme.

## Apollo Aushad programme for Old Age Home



Sevalaya's Old Age Home has been receiving free medicines from Apollo Hospitals, Chennai under their Apollo Aushad programme. An annual review meeting of the programme was organised by Apollo on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2018. Dr Gajalakshmi J R, Medical Officer, Sevalaya and Anupriya L N, Senior Manager Operations, Sevalaya represented the organisation in which representatives from 15 other NGOs participated. Mythili Sriram, CSR Head, Apollo announced that they will be distributing generic medicines from Cipla. She also said that they were planning to cover Children's Homes also under Apollo Aushad Project. An appeal has been made to Apollo to support Sevalaya's free childrens home in Kasuva, Thiruvallur and free old age home in Thanjavur.

## New course at community college, Kasuva

### Lab technician Assistant



Rural village students using state-of-the-art equipments as part of lab technician training

The community college at Kasuva offers free vocational training courses, which will enable the poor youth who have dropped out of school or completed school but could not pursue higher education for various reasons, to learn a skill/trade and earn their living. This year a new one year course for Lab technician

assistant has been introduced. Those who complete this course can have more opportunities in the field of Pathology and can assist the Lab technicians in pathological laboratories.

40 students from the neighbouring villages have enrolled for the course now.

## Donate blood, save lives, stay fit



An awareness campaign on blood donation was organised on the occasion of World Blood Donation Day on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Community College at Utharamerur.

"Blood donation not only helps the person receiving the donation but also the donor. The immediate benefit of blood donation is not just the impact it has on the patient whose life may depend on it, but also on all those who

depend on that patient. The entire community will benefit from this spirit of generosity. For the donor, every time she/he donates blood, new blood cells are produced in her/his body. It improves the health of the donor. Regular donors feel reenergized after donating blood" explained Sevalaya's Dr Abdul MBBS and Dr Nandini MBBS from Manampathi Block Medical office who conducted the campaign.

## Awareness rally on ill effects of plastic



Sevalaya kids spread "no plastic" message in Thiruninravur

Visai, an NGO working for environment protection, organised a rally to create an awareness about the ill effects of plastics on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2018. 50 students of Std IX represented Sevalaya in the rally in which 300 students from various neighbouring schools participated. The students carried placards and raised slogans about the harmful effects of plastic.

Visai team enacted skits and delivered speeches on the theme of how plastic threatens environment. Sevalaya student Ravi from Std IX A won a prize for singing a song about the ill effects of plastic.

Nearly 100 villagers and students of Sevalaya's community college at Vadanallur were benefitted by the session. The immediate impact of the campaign was felt when 7 youngsters from the village readily came forward to register themselves as blood donors and provided their contact numbers.

"I understand the importance of blood donation. I am ready to donate blood when needed."

Satish, Villager, Vadanallur

## NGO Day



Dr R Jagannathan, President, Soka Ikeda College of Arts & Science for women honouring Sevalaya Murali on the occasion of NGO day

## Dubai volunteers engage children in creative games



*Siddharth training children in chess*

Sudha Subramanian is a regular visitor to Sevalaya every year with her son Siddharth. They stay at Sevalaya for a week, volunteering their services. This year Sudha, along with her son Siddharth and niece Simran was at Sevalaya from 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018 to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

Sudha had planned a slew of activities for the children. She conducted a training session on 'Innovative thinking' for 10

students from Std VI to Std IX. She gave a plot and asked the students to develop that into a story, thus bringing out the creativity in them. Sudha also held a counselling session for boys of Std VIII and IX and spoke to them about not to abuse or hurt girls, treat them as equals and value their worth.

Sudha's niece Simran taught Bhajans to 15 children from Std VI & VII. She also



*Rubic cube competition in progress*

gave training for drawing pictures from numbers and alphabets and Calligraphy.

Sudha's son Siddharth taught Chess to 10 students who showed interest and promise in the game. He also taught students to solve "Rubic cube". He also conducted chess and cubing competitions.

In chess J Vishal of Std X C, won the first place and Jagan of Std VIII A won the second place. In the Rubic cubes competition Jagan VIII A won the first place by solving the cube in 4 minutes and 7 seconds. R K Joel Neptha was the winner among girls in the Rubic Cube competition.

## Shining stars in Sports



36 students of Sevalaya participated in the Thiruvallur District Basketball championship organized by the Thiruvallur District Basketball Association at ICF, South Colony ground, Villivakkam on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018. 7 teams from various schools participated. G Ammu of Std IX won the player of the tournament Award at the hands of M K Shahul Hameed, Secretary, Thiruvallur Basketball Association. Sevalaya's under 12 boys and under 14 boys team and girls team were the runners up.

The School Education Department of Tamilnadu conducts Bharathiyar Day/ Republic Day Games and Sports every year at the Zonal level.

In the Avadi Zonal Level basketball tournament held at Sevalaya on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018, 4 schools participated. Sevalaya's under 14 and under 17 boys and girls were the winners and were selected for the District level competition.

In the Zonal level Handball tournament held at Government Boys Higher Secondary School on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2018, Sevalaya's under 14 and under 17 girls team won the first place. The teams are now qualified for District level competition.

Sevalaya's sports programme is sponsored by Lionbridge Technologies.

## Revathy back again for daughter's birthday

Noted film artiste Revathy celebrates her daughter Mahi's birthday every year at Sevalaya with the residents. This year Mahi's fifth birthday was celebrated at Sevalaya Kasuva centre on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018. Revathy and her family participated. The children presented Mahi with a beautiful handmade greeting card. A special birthday cake was presented as a surprise gift to Mahi from Sevalaya's bakery. After cake cutting, the residents were treated to a festive lunch sponsored by Revathy.



## Capacity building for teachers

S Swaminathan, Retd Professor from IIT, New Delhi, has been playing an important role in guiding teachers of Sevalaya for the last 2 years. He has been conducting various training sessions for all subject teachers. He also encourages the teachers to continuously update their subject knowledge and suggest ways to improve the teaching techniques.

Prof Swaminathan, Manivannan, IT Executive, Tamil enthusiast and educationist and Badri Seshadri, Managing Director of New Horizon Media Pvt. Ltd, visit Kasuva centre regularly to mentor the teachers and the students.



*R Jeevendran, Chemistry teacher presenting in seminar. Badri Seshadri looks on*

Badri Seshadri conducted a model seminar session for the teachers. In the following weeks, teachers take turns to conduct a seminar on any given topic, which is assessed by Prof Swaminathan, Manivannan and Badri, who give their inputs for improvement. With the active involvement and support from the three academicians, the knowledge levels and teaching capacities of Sevalaya teachers is sure to improve.

Sevalaya's teaching improvement programmes are sponsored by Mara Breech Foundation.

## Volunteers from DTCC engaged in various areas



Bob and Mike, from DTCC visited Sevalaya's Kasuva centre on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018 to see the various activities at the centre.

28 volunteers from DTCC also visited Kasuva centre on that day and engaged

themselves in various activities. The volunteers split themselves into 4 teams. A team went to Gaushala and organic farm area. They did de-weeding at the organic farm. Another team visited Std

VI and interacted with the 30 students of the class. They again asked the students to form two teams, and conducted spell bee games. They gave a set of 50 English words, and taught the students the pronunciation and the meaning. Then they gave oral and written dictation to the students from those 50 words. They also conducted word building games for the students. Another team conducted training in basics of Gmail for the Computer Science students of Std XII, using a power point presentation. A team of volunteers planted tree saplings in Kasuva village.

***I will come back again...***

***- Jyotsna,  
Volunteer from USA***

Jyotsna, a second generation American, who migrated to the United States from Hyderabad, India when she was 5, is a new volunteer at Sevalaya. A 3<sup>rd</sup> year sociology student, she has been interested in social work from a young age participating in several initiatives of her church and is an office bearer of the "Alpha phi Omega" club in her college since the past 3 years. This club conducts fund raising drives and other activities to support the lesser privileged sections of society. Her college also offers scholarships for students to interact and gain a better understanding of different communities across the world. Jyotsna won this scholarship to come to Sevalaya.



"The teachers here are willing to let volunteers choose and execute their own way of teaching. The students here are quite unique as they learn a wide variety of topics and respond well when they are asked to participate in different ways than what they are used to" observes Jyotsna who has been taking classes for primary sections and montessori children. She

enjoys interacting with the girls in the hostel and the old age home residents and learning about the different customs and traditions followed here.

Jyotsna is still not very sure of her future plans but wants to work in the health care sector. "I would definitely come back to Sevalaya sometime in future" says a beaming Jyotsna.

## Training and counselling sessions

Jayanthi Srivatsan, former teacher of DAV group of schools, who does freelance training and counselling for students conducted 3 sessions at Kasuva Centre on 7<sup>th</sup> July 18.

14 students from Stds VI to IX, who were identified as children having challenges in paying attention in class and learning were referred to her. To begin the session she spoke to them generally about the importance of education and encouraged them to speak about their classroom experiences.

Then she spoke to the children individually, assessed the issues faced by the children. She suggested to them ways to overcome the issues.

In the second session for teachers, 50 staff participated. It was an interactive



session with teachers sharing with her the problems they faced in classroom control, dealing with children with disciplinary issues and learning difficulties. She then spoke to the teachers about approaching children with positive attitude and gave suggestions on

making classrooms interesting.

Jayanthi Srivatsan also conducted an Easy Maths Session for 50 students of Stds VI to IX. She spoke to them about how Maths is an interesting subject and a part of our life. She stressed that there is nothing to fear about Maths. She taught the students shortcuts in addition, subtraction. She also taught them shortcuts to multiply 3 digit numbers. She gave an introduction about Digital Root method.

"Mental calculation is very interesting like a game. I always felt that multiplication is very difficult . But with the short cut method I learnt today I can do multiplication sums easily."

*J Pavithra VII D*

## Safety training in Sevalaya's all locations

M Yuvaraj Safety Officer, India Japan Lighting P Ltd, conducted an one hour session on safety measures in kitchen. 12 kitchen staff participated in the training.

A 15 minute video on safety measures to be adapted in kitchen was played.

The kitchen staff were advised to wear only cotton clothes while cooking. In case any gas leakage is detected, they were advised to take away their mobile phones to farthest areas. He also said that sprinkling of water in the room where gas leakage is suspected, will help dissolve the leaked gas.

He also insisted that electricity supply should be cut off to the area of leakage. He warned that no electrical appliances should be used when there is a leakage of gas. In case of fire, he cautioned that water should not be poured on fire. He advised that a wet gunny bags/sand should be used to put out fire.



S C Suresh, Staff in charge of the solar energy project at Kasuva Centre conducted training on safety measures for the students and staff of Community College at Ambattur. He spoke at length about fire safety measures, and showed videos on the precautions to be taken during earthquakes and usage of electrical equipments and how to act in an emergency situation.

## Yoga Training



Yoga is an art practiced for the wellbeing of the body, mind and the spirit. Yoga makes one physically fit, improves memory and concentration, reduces stress and ensures a healthy and happy living.

Yoga classes are organised for the benefit of the students of Sevalaya's community colleges in Ambattur (2 locations), Mambakkam and Sunguvarchatram.

Volunteers from Manavalakkalai Manram, affiliated to World Community Service Centre founded by Swamiji Thathuvagnani Vethathiri Maharishi, conduct an hour long session at the two centres in Ambattur. 75 students are benefited and sessions are conducted weekly twice.

Basker, yoga master conducts Yoga classes weekly twice for the students of community college at Sunguvarchatram and Mambakkam. 45 people are benefited by these sessions.



It was a very useful session. It helped us understand how we have to be alert and the dos and don'ts during emergency in the kitchen.

*Bhuvanewari M, Kitchen staff*



*Senior citizens at Alamaadheeshwarar temple, Alamaadhi, Redhills*

## The first Doctor from Sevalaya



- **Narmatha Inbaraj**

“The powerful, galvanizing, uplifting words of Vivekananda and my mother’s strong support helped me realise my dream of becoming a doctor” says Narmatha Inbaraj the first doctor alumni of Sevalaya.

Narmatha completed her schooling from Sevalaya in 2012 and got her medical degree from Davao Medical School Foundation Philippines in 2017. She has appeared for the FMG exam conducted by the Medical Council of India and is waiting to complete a year’s practical training before embarking on her dream mission of serving others as a doctor.

Not an easy feat considering her background. Her parents have a vegetable shop in Pakkam but her mother who could not study beyond std XII due to her family circumstances was determined that she would do whatever was necessary to help her daughter realize her childhood dream of becoming a doctor. Narmatha has always been a bright student but she could not secure a medical seat after completing XII. Her grandfather came to know about the college in Philippines and encouraged



*Dr Narmatha interacting with higher secondary students*

her to apply and Narmatha went to Philippines to study medicine. Narmatha went to Philippines to study medicine.

Stepping out from a village background to a different place where she could communicate only in English was indeed a big challenge. “The exposure I got at Sevalaya and the participation in various extra-curricular activities helped me” says Narmatha. “My friends were an excellent support for me. Whenever I felt down, the words of Vivekananda imbibed through the years in school helped me to regain confidence and overcome all obstacles” she observes.

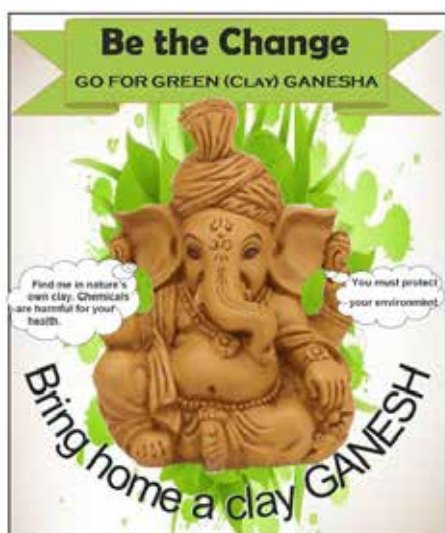
She recalls a particular experience where students had to do service in interior villages of Philippines working with the natives, identifying the root cause of their health problems and suggest solutions for them. Narmatha took the

lead in her team of 5 to organise the work, planning the meeting with the villagers, explaining the results of their analysis and suggesting practical ideas for improvement leading to the team getting appreciation from their superiors. “Similar team activities during the annual exhibitions at Sevalaya were a great learning experience and helped me” says Narmatha.

The battle is only half won. She has to start working and clear all the loans but she is confident that she will be able to do it. For now till she starts her practical training, she has volunteered to teach biology to students of the Higher Secondary classes and share her experiences with the students.

After the training period for a year she has agreed to serve as a doctor in Sevalaya’s Medical centre.

sevalaya



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Interested persons may send their CV to

[hr@sevalaya.org](mailto:hr@sevalaya.org)

## Gandhiji's imprisonment April-May 1930

The unjust salt tax which had been falling heavily on the shoulders of the poor has been exercising the mind of Gandhiji for over 40 years. He decided to highlight the issue of Salt Tax in the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930.

He wrote to the viceroy requesting him with, "bended knees" to consider the issues with an unbiased mind. The response was contemptuous. There was no other alternative than to proceed with the programme.

Gandhiji and 72 inmates of the Sabarmati Ashram set out on the march on 12<sup>th</sup> March at 6:45 AM to Dandi on a route and itinerary already well planned. On the previous evening there was prayer in the Ashram where over 10,000 people participated. Planning was made on all the aspects to the minutest detail. Places where to halt, the frugal food to be taken, details regarding shelter, information regarding the villages like the number of untouchables, liquor shops, salt consumption by the people cattle etc were ready on hand. Gandhiji spoke to the people enroute on the evil of untouchability, drink and about the constructive action programmes. Diary keeping was meticulous and Gandhiji examined the diaries of the volunteers. Nobody was to join enroute in the march



without permission. Yet complying with this condition, the strength of marchers swelled. The volunteers had to sign a pledge expressing their complete faith in the Purna Swaraj and adherence to strictly non-violent means. Gandhiji's exhortation to them was, "Cultivate the strength of will to see that a fist holding salt does not open even if the wrist should be cut off."

Dandi was reached on April 5 1930. "On 6<sup>th</sup> April Gandhiji scooped up a handful of salt to the cry of Sarojini Naidu,"Hail, Deliverer" There were similar marches and programmes in different parts of the

country. So far the Government did not think much of the event. He sarcastically said, "I was told that his horoscope predicts that he will die this year and this is the explanation of his dangerous throw, It would be a happy solution."

On April 7<sup>th</sup>, a volunteer was injured while holding salt, by an attempt of the Police to seize it. The village men and women who were not enrolled volunteers rose up as one man started digging up salt. Seeing the tremendous response to the call, the Government became jittery and resorted to repressive measures. Leaders were arrested. Gandhiji himself was arrested at the dead of night and imprisoned without trial on the strength of an Act taken out of the dusty shelves.

The period of his imprisonment was tumultuous with agitations and repressions on the one hand and the negotiations on the other. At the end, Gandhiji and other leaders were released on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1930. Gandhiji was called for discussion with the Viceroy, to the chagrin of Winston Churchill who was alarmed at the nauseating sight of the half-naked fakir striding the steps of the Vice Regal Palace to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King Emperor.



### Homage to

Mahakavi Bharathiyar,  
Mahatma Gandhi &  
D K Pattammal



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