



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

OCTOBER 2018

500 donors partner Sevalaya in Green initiative inside eco friendly *Ganesha*

Can *Ganesh Chaturthi* be eco-friendly? Can the festival double up as a greening initiative?

Sevalaya answered in the affirmative both these questions, with the support of its committed donor community. Sevalaya helped 500 willing donors to celebrate the festival in an eco-friendly way. Around 500 idols of *Ganesha* were made by the students of Sevalaya's community college and the staff. Each idol encased a few vegetable seeds or thulasi seeds with vermi compost. 50 students and 30 teachers, led by Headmistress R Vijaya and Drawing teachers V Devaraj and P Abirami were involved in making these mud creations – most of them 30 cms in height, and not contaminated with any artificial colours. Some *Ganeshas* stood as tall as 90 cms.

Orders were sought through word of mouth and social media. Delivery routes



up their hands to go on delivery trips, on jeeps, trucks and own two wheelers. Among them were teachers, hostel wardens, Managers and office staff. Each donor was called and a convenient time ascertained. The idols were door delivered to 500 donors. All of them were appreciative of the novel initiative of Seed *Ganesha* and enquired about the process.

The response was so overwhelming that the idols could not be delivered to some donors. When meeting the donors, the volunteers explained what to do: after the *pooja*, the idols have to be placed in a pot and watered regularly, when the seeds inside will sprout and grow into plants.

A small step to create an awareness on how to save the environment through eco friendly alternatives proved inspirational for all involved.



"A very new experience for us... gathering clay from the ground, preparing it and using moulds to make *Ganesha*. We also made some *Ganeshas* without using the mould. It was fun to work with clay and create figures. We now want to try out creating other figures."

Devanesan L, Bakery Student, Sevalaya Community College

"I was impressed by the idea of Seed *Ganesha* and that it was made by students made me buy an idol".

Abraham Thomas, Donor, Anna Nagar

"Our only focus was to deliver the *Pillayars* on time and without any damage. The last *Pillayar* was delivered around 11 PM on 12th September 2018, just in time for the festival the next day. All were very warm and welcoming. They were thrilled that *Pillayar* arrived at their door steps this year. In fact when I called up a donor to check the route to his place on my way, he stayed on line for around 10 minutes guiding me to reach his home. It was a really novel and satisfying experience."

B Dineshkumar, HR Manager

were planned to cover a large geography. Two dozen from the Sevalaya family put

Vinayaga Chaturthi (*Ganesh Chaturthi* in the North of India) celebrates the birth of Lord *Ganesha*. Traditionally, idols of *Ganesha* made of clay used to be worshipped at homes and then immersed in water bodies. This household festival turned into a gala

event when Lokmanya Bala Gangadhara Tilak adding the spirit of nationalism, with life sized decorated idols taken in huge procession to the sea to be immersed. The event has gone bigger and fancier over the years.

Sadly, idols made of Plaster of Paris or

similar materials, can take months or even years to dissolve. Toxic paints used to decorate the idols, including oil paints containing mercury and lead, can have devastating impacts on the environment and marine life.

Joy of giving: *the way of life*

Dear friends,

What a positive news!! This is a real life story that will inspire the world. !!

"I was born in a Dalit family, in a village in Akola. When I was 12, everyone pushed my dad to get me married to a man, 10 years my senior, who lived in Mumbai. My dad didn't want to, but because of societal pressure, I was married off.

I came here and learned that his family lived in one room in a slum and he didn't even have a job. I was treated horribly – if there was extra salt in the food I cooked or any mistakes I made, I was beaten up by my in-laws... It was my personal hell.

After 6 months, my father visited me – he couldn't even recognize me. I was in ragged clothes and I'd lost my smile. He fought with my in-laws and took me home. Telling me to forget about it like a bad dream. But people started blaming me. I even tried to commit suicide - and they still said that I was giving up because I HAD done something wrong, not the other way around. It was then that I realised that if I was going to be blamed in any case, I'd rather live.

With this new leaf turned, I returned to Mumbai and worked as a tailor. That was the first time I saw what ₹.100 looked like. I rented a room in Kalyan with my savings and called my family here. We were managing fine - but when we couldn't afford to save my sister's life, I realised that I needed to make more money for my family. So I took a government loan and started my own furniture business. It was doing well and we began living a better life.

But there were so many people out there struggling, just like I used to. So I started an NGO to help them get loans. Sometimes, I helped them out of my own pocket and slowly built a good reputation for my social work.

Which is why the workers of Kamani Tubes asked me to help save their company. It was tied up in 140 litigation cases, with a debt of 116 crores. Everyone told me that it was suicide – but 500+ families were starving! So I chose to help, wanting nothing but justice for them in return. I spoke to the finance minister and he got the debt reduced. I gathered a team and shifted factories. Everything I

tried was new – but there was no fear left in me.

In 2006, I became the chairman. We were told to pay off the bank loans within 7 years. We did it within 1 year and we even managed to pay the workers. Slowly and surely, things changed and today, the turnover is more than we could dream of. I was even awarded the Padma Shri in 2013 for my work. I've had an unbelievable journey, from a Dalit Child-Bride to an owner of a multi-million dollar company. It's been tough - but I've made sure to never let the fear of challenges overpower me. I took me a long time to learn that, but now that I have, I can't choose to face life without having full faith in myself."

Story of Kalpana Saroj, Chairman Kamani Tubes...The Original Slumdog Millionaire...

From the facebook page of Balakrishnan Ramaswamy Iyer

Thanks and Regards

Sevalaya Murali

Sevalaya's second own campus at Thanjavur

Sevalaya has been sponsoring breakfast for 1,000 children in government schools and Panchayat Union schools in Thanjavur. The services there took a new dimension when K Muthuramakrishnan, Advisor sevalaya donated 3,400 Sq. ft of land at Thanjavur. A free Home for the destitute elders is constructed in that land. The home is named Gandhi Ashram Krishnan Memorial Senior Citizens Home. Gandhi Ashram Krishnan a veteran freedom fighter was the father of K Muthuramakrishnan.

The construction of one wing of the Home was sponsored by Petrofac Engineering Services P Ltd. The Home was inaugurated by P C Krishnan, General Manager, Petrofac Engineering Services P Limited on 23rd August 2018. R Sathiyamurthy, AGM of the company unveiled the portrait of freedom fighter Gandhi Ashram Krishnan on the occasion.

Nearly 100 people from Thanjavur, including the family of Gandhi Ashram Krishnan graced the occasion. Muthuramakrishnan and Dr K Kannan, his elder brother, recollected their father's



P C Krishnan, General Manager Petrofac Engineering Services P Ltd. addressing the gathering

contribution in the freedom struggle and their dreams of further services that are envisioned at this centre. V Gopalan, Director, *Bharathi Payilagam* offered felicitations. The Chief Guests expressed their happiness at being present on this momentous occasion and wished the organisation more success in their future endeavours

To begin with, one wing of the Home which can accommodate 10 senior citizens is constructed. The accommodation is dormitory type with 10 cots, mattresses and pillows. Each elder is provided a steel cupboard to keep his/her belongings.

Vinayaga Chaturthi celebrations at multiple locations of Sevalaya



Pooja at Sevalaya's Ambattur community college in which students and alumni participated



Chief Guest Auditor P Ganesan and Sevalaya's well wisher Paneerselvam at Vinayaga Chaturthi celebration in Thirubhuvanai centre, Pudhucherry

Below: Dr K Krishnaraj (Deputy Director of Health Services, Tiruvallur) Chief Guest for Vinayaga chaturthi at Kasuva, distributed seed Ganeshas to 25 poor people. This was sponsored by donor Sriram



Below: Vinayaga Chaturthi at Sevalaya's Vadanallur Community college



Vinayaga Chaturthi at Sevalaya's Gandhi Ashram Krishnan Memorial Senior citizen home at Thanjavur



Vinayaga Chaturthi celebrations at Sevalaya's Sunguvarchathiram Community college

BGV sessions reach out to other districts of Tamilnadu

Two staff members from Sevalaya's BGV team S Kanchana and A Arasani conducted 3 day session on BGV at Namakkal from 28th August 2018 to 30th August 2018. The team covered totally 8 schools, 2 Government Higher secondary Schools and Panchayat Union Primary School in Valayapatti, Government Higher Secondary School in Pudhupatti, Panchayat Union Primary School in Melapatti and Panchayat Union Middle School in Arur, Thoolur and Parali. Totally 1230 students were addressed during this trip.



A Arasani conducting BGV session

Each session started with a 9 minute video on Sevalaya, which gave the school Principals and students an idea about the activities of the organisation. This was followed by a PPT presentation on the life of the 3 leaders Mahatma Gandhi, Mahakavi Bharathiyar and Swami Vivekananda. After the PPT session, a quiz competition on the life of the 3

leaders was conducted. Books were given as prizes to those who answered the questions correctly.

Basic and essential values like truth, simplicity, love, fearlessness, self-confidence, nationalism, empathy were explained to the students through anecdotes from the lives of the Trinity. Sevalaya's publication, Virtuous and Vactorious always – is the reference book for this session. The book can be downloaded from

<https://sevalaya.org/reports/competitions>

The sessions were interspersed with puppet shows based on the incidents from the lives of BGV, playing of interesting videos downloaded from internet emphasising the human values,



Puppets prepared by Sevalaya teachers



Explaining Gandhiji's life at Panchayat Union Middle School in Arur, Namakkal to attract and retain students interest and ensure active participation. The students themselves were asked to do puppet shows with the puppets provided by Sevalaya.

At the end of the session, the students were encouraged to sing Bharathiyar songs, and recite important quotes from Vivekananda. BGV program is sponsored by Mara Breech Foundation, USA.

"The sessions conducted by Sevalaya teachers were very interesting. They narrated interesting stories, sang songs and encouraged the students by giving prizes. I thank Sevalaya for this very effective programme which is essential for the future generation."

P Subramani, Headmaster, Govt. HSS, Valayapatti

Guest Lecture at Ambattur Community College

At Sevalaya's Community Colleges, guest lectures are regularly organized, inviting experts from the respective industries. This is to give an idea of the industry requirements and opportunities available to the students.

Felix Raja, Manager Training from Exeter Premedia, visited the Ambattur Centre as Guest Lecturer for the E-Publishing students on the 10th August 2018. He shared his experiences in the field of E Publishing. He explained to the students about the recruitment process

"The lecture was very interesting and informative. We came to know about the company's policies and opportunities for freshers."

E Sathya, E Publishing student

for freshers in his company and skills expected. He also conducted a session on XML and non XML processes in In-Design.

Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Community College at Ambattur is sponsored by LTI.



Felix Raja, Manager Training, Exeter Premedia addressing E Publishing course students

Medical camp at Utharamerur



Dr Abdullah examining a child

Sevalaya conducted a Medical Camp at Government Panchayat Union Medical School at Utharamerur on 28th July 2018. At the camp, Dr Z Abdullah MBBS, did

basic screenings for 45 school children studying from Std I to Std V.

The doctor detected a congenital heart problem for a child K Shalini (9 years) and referred the child to Karpaga vinayaga Hospital, Madhuranthakam for further treatment. The mobile medical van program at Vadanallur is sponsored by Hyundai Dymos.

"I thank the dedicated Sevalaya medical team for their commitment."

Selvi V, Teacher, PUMS Utharamerur

Remembering our saviours at the border..

We live in peace because there are valiant soldiers guarding our borders. But we rarely think of them in our day to day life. *Yuva Shakthi* organized a competition titled "Marathal Thagumo" (Can we afford to forget) in colleges across the city and 11 best speakers of the 150 who



Students in rapt attention at the Marathal Thagumo programme

participated were felicitated at Anna University on 15th September 2018. Sanjeev Kanal, Lieutenant General, AVSM Commandant, Officer training Academy was the Chief Guest at the function.

100 students from Sevalaya got an opportunity to hear excellent orators speak about the lives of soldiers, their daredevil acts, their sacrifices and hardships. The impassioned speeches about martyrs like Major Saravanan, Captain Vikram Batra and others stirred up patriotic emotions and touched the hearts of the students.

Seeing the deep impact it had on the students the Social Science club has decided to share detailed biographies of 2 soldiers every month with all students. Students will also pray for soldiers, their families and the families of martyrs during the morning prayers.

"I want to join the Army. The slogan *Jai Hind* stirs up patriotic feelings deep in me."

S Sharmila, Std VIII

Drawing Competition



Drawing competition at Standard Chartered Global Business Solutions on the occasion of Independence Day

Spoken English session



15 volunteers from BNY Mellon were at Kasuva Centre of Sevalaya on 8th September 2018, and conducted Spoken English Class for 40 children of VI Std. They encouraged the students to introduce themselves in English, converse with them in simple sentences like enquiring the way for an address. They organised games like word building, introduced new words, their synonyms and antonyms, construction of simple sentences and giving a situation and developing it into a story. It was a fun session with children actively participating. This activity boosted the confidence level of children to converse freely in English.

Associated with Sevalaya since inception

Dr Lakshmi Rajesh

The kitchen staff were all smiles when the new batter machine consuming less electricity and time was delivered some time back, a generous contribution of Dr Lakshmi Rajesh and her office team at Medgenome, Bangalore. She had recently contributed ₹ 75,000 in her father T S Soundarajan's name to purchase 12 sets of benches and desks for the primary school children and while visiting Sevalaya had come to know about this kitchen need. Immediately she had arranged for the same.

She comes from a family that had known Sevalaya since its inception and her father used to regularly contribute for lunch



during his parents' memory days. Till date her mother P S Sudha (Headmistress, Jaya Matriculation HSS, Thiruninravur) donates money in memory of her late son S Anand. However after marriage Lakshmi had been out of touch with the organization for many years.

Later when she was doing her Ph.D in immunology under Dr Soumya Swaminathan, she met children of several NGOs including Sevalaya and old memories were rekindled. Her work with HIV and AIDS affected children brought

about a deeper understanding of the transient nature of life and a desire to help the underprivileged started growing in her mind.

Having known about Sevalaya's good work since her childhood she decided to contribute a substantial amount in her father's memory and came to visit the Kasuva campus with her daughters. She wants them to understand the reality of life. Dr Lakshmi desires to be of some help to the organization and serve Sevalaya in whatever means possible.

The wonder boy

V N Jagan

V N Jagan from Mamandur near Thiruthani lost his mother when he was 7 years old. He has a younger brother. His father earns a living by grinding idli batter and selling it from door to door. Jagan's grandparents stay with them but his grandfather is blind and grandmother is too old to take care of the children. Jagan who is now in Std VIII and his brother came under Sevalaya's care this year.

"I love this place. I feel at home here. My appa (he refers to Boys Home caretaker G Krishnaswamy) takes very good care of me. I like the school very much. I get a lot of opportunities to learn new things. My teachers are very caring" says a happy Jagan.

The teachers are also all praises for this boy. Sudha Anand, a volunteer from Dubai and her son Siddharth who were recently at Sevalaya teaching Chess and Rubik's Cube to the children is amazed by



Jagan's intelligence. "He quickly grasps and understands the concepts" observes Sudha. Jagan surprised everyone by quickly grasping the techniques. On the last day of their stay, the volunteers had organised competitions and Jagan bagged the first prize by solving the cube in 4mts 7 secs. He had learnt the techniques only for 5 days and practiced for an hour daily. He also bagged the second place in the chess tournament. "My mother taught me the basics of chess game. I got an opportunity here to learn the techniques in a proper, systematic way" says Jagan.

Jagan, who has always been a topper in his class, shows keen interest in sports. He used to play badminton and cricket but is now concentrating on volleyball.

A very friendly boy, he is also ready to teach other interested students after class hours and is very happy with the various opportunities he gets to explore his talents.

"When I am well settled in life, I will come back to Sevalaya and be of service to the organisation which serves the needy" concludes Jagan with a bright smile.

Sevalaya's Trinity BGV Day

11th September 2018 is a significant day in the lives of Mahakavi Bharathiyar, Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda, (BGV) the Trinity, whose life and works are the inspiration for Sevalaya. 11th September 2018 was the Day, Mahakavi attained immortality, Mahatma Gandhiji coined the term Satyagraha for the novel strategy of protest based on nonviolence and Swami Vivekananda addressed the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago representing India and Hinduism.

To spread the message of Bharathi, Gandhi and Vivekananda among school students, Sevalaya conducts competitions like essay writing, oratorical, and Quiz were conducted for school students.



S Santhanalakshmi, HM, Utharamerur distributing prizes to the winners

This year competitions were held for schools in Chennai, Kanchipuram, Thiruvallur District on 6th September 2018. BGV Day was celebrated at Kasuva centre on 11th September 2018 and prizes were distributed to the winners of the competitions on the occasion by the Chief Guest M R Tamilselvan, Tasildar, Thiruvallur.

G Pugazhenth, Village Administrative Officer, Nathamedu, Tiruvallore district,

BGV Competitions at LIC Tambaram

On 7th September 2018 Saturday LIC Tambaram conducted BGV competitions for our students. Students from Sevalaya participated in this competition. A warm welcome Speech was given by the Manager Padma. After lunch Oratorical, poem and singing competitions were conducted. Our students participated with enthusiasm and won many prizes. All the staff of LIC joined our students and conducted many games. Students enjoyed the day at LIC.

"I thank LIC for the wonderful opportunity. LIC gave us plant saplings as prizes. I will plant the sapling I won in my school campus and take care of it. Whenever I see my tree, I will feel proud."

R Tamilselvi, Std X A



M R Tamilselvan, Tasildar, Thiruvallur distributing prizes

Jayadevi, Revenue Inspector, Tirur, Kesavan Village Officer and M Radhika, Village Administrative Officer, Puliur participated in the function.

On 14th September 2018, BGV Day was celebrated at Sevalaya Vadanallur, Mambakkam and Sunguvarchatram Centres. Drawing competitions were held for 70 students from Panchayat Union Middle schools (PUMS) in Vadanallur, Mambakkam and Sunguvarchatram. S Santhanalakshmi, HM, PUMS, Utharamerur, V Kasthuri, HM, PUMS Sunguvarchatram and A Sagayamary,



V Kasthuri, HM, Sunguvarchatram distributing prizes to winners



Student S Yuvaraj participating in competition conducted by LIC.

HM, PUMS, Mambakkam were the Chief Guests. Prizes were distributed to the winners of the competitions. V Pradap and S Kanchana, BGV Team staff from Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar HSS, Kasuva, delivered an inspiring lecture on the Trinity to the students. BGV program is sponsored by Mara Breech Foundation, USA.

Training of BGV team

K Mohan, Chairman Gandhi Study Centre conducted a model BGV teaching session for teachers on 8th september 2018. He shared a many information about Gandhiji and reviewed lots of points in Sevalaya's BGV book. Moral values like self-confidence, truth, peace, punctuality, impartiality etc were reinforced through real incidents that had taken place in Mahatma's life.



K Mohan, Chairman, Gandhi Study Centre addressing BGV staff

He also suggested a questioning pattern that would help students know more about our leaders. 45 teaching staff who attended the session found it extremely motivating and said that the session kindled an interest to read more about Mahatma Gandhi.

Teachers Day celebration



Isaikkavi Ramanan, musical poet distributing Silver Coins to staff

Sevalaya celebrated Teachers day in its Kasuva Centre on 3rd September 2018. Isaikkavi Ramanan, a well know musical poet and an eloquent orator was the Chief Guest. Quoting interesting anecdotes from his school days, he stressed the importance of a teacher's role in shaping a child. He also appealed to the teachers to instill a sense of pride about our motherland in students mind which according to him is the need of the hour.

S Krishnamoorthy, a retired officer from



Donor Krishnamoorthy performing gau pooja

Life Insurance Corporation, celebrated his 80th birth day with his family on that day and he sponsored the programme as well as a festive lunch for the residents of



Krishnamoorthy and his wife cutting a cake baked at Sevalaya on the occasion of his 80th birthday

Sevalaya. He also performed *Gau pooja* at the Gaushala. Krishnamoorthy also created a permanent endowment for the education of 3 students of Sevalaya.

The students provided a colourful cultural programme.

All the staff of Sevalaya were given a gift of 10 gms silver coin each on the occasion of Teachers Day.

Choir class



Guhaprasath Subramanian session on choir music

Saturdays' fun classes at Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar HSS are opportunities to explore new talents and interests. 8th September 2018 saw all students of Std VI and VII trying out a new skill –Choir singing.

Singing together is a pleasant exercise, a spirit booster and confidence raiser and when the teacher is someone like the exuberant Guhaprasath Subramanian, the exercise takes on a different dimension.

Guha grew up in an atmosphere of dance, drama and music as his father K Subramanian was a veteran music director with *Shivaji Nataka mandram* and mother Prema Subramanian is a noted Bharatha Natyam dancer, singer and choral music instructor with Madras Youth choir. A recipient of several awards for music direction in plays, Guha an accomplished guitarist and keyboard player has also learnt to compose choral compositions.

English club activity

Students of Std III, IV, V actively participated in a speech competition on the topic "My favorite place" on 13th August 2018. The topic had been given much earlier and they had prepared various visual aids with the help of their teachers. It was wonderful to see the children speaking boldly without any stage fright, using their aids effectively. Nearly 85 students participated in the competition.



A Student holding up the chart prepared by him at the English Club

Ethical Religion - M K Gandhi

Introduction

Ethics tells us what the world ought to be. It enables man to know how he should act. It is necessary to know about the evil effects of injustice, wickedness vanity and the like and the disaster they spell when the three are found together. Mere knowledge is not enough. It should be followed by appropriate action.

If a man does a good deed, he does not do it to win applause. He does it because he must. For him doing good is a higher kind of food. If someone should give him an opportunity to do a good deed, he would feel grateful just as a starving man would be grateful to the giver of food and bless him.

Ideal Morality

Anyone who observes the laws of morality for their own sake and not for any selfish end can be regarded as religious. When we know a particular

path to be right one, we should set out on it without fear. We can progress only if we observe the laws of morality in this way. True morality, true civilization and true progress are always found together. If we take out the essence of all moral laws, we shall find that the attempt to do good to all mankind is the highest morality. If we open the treasure house of morality, we shall find in it all the other principles.

What is a moral act?

A moral act must be our own act. It must spring from our own will. If we act mechanically, there is no moral content in our act. To illustrate, it may be moral of a king to pardon a culprit. But the messenger carrying the order plays only a mechanical part in the king's moral act.

It is not enough if the act done is good. It must be done with the intention to do good. Emperor Alexander, wherever he

went in the course of his conquest, he took Greek language and Greek culture, art and manners. But the intention of Alexander behind all this was only conquest and renown. His was not a moral act.

It is not enough if a moral act to have been done with a good intention, but it should have been done without compulsion. There is no morality in my act, if I rise early out of the fear that if I am late for my office, I may lose my situation. Likewise it is only selfish, and not moral, of an employer to sympathize with his employees or to pay them higher wages lest they leave him.

For an action should be considered moral, there should be no self interest behind it. That is not to say that actions prompted by self interest are worthless. But they are not moral acts.

(To be continued)...

Children's parliament at hostel

Children's parliament is held every month in Sevalaya's children's home. The beginning of the academic year starts with the election of office bearers at the general meeting and portfolios of ministers are announced. M Saikarthick is currently the Prime Minister and A Eswari the Deputy Prime Minister. The students

will take care of all issues raised by the children by informing the head warden and finding a solution for the same with the caretakers. This system teaches the children about leadership and team work, also improves their problem solving and communication skills. It creates a healthy atmosphere of democracy in the campus.



Children Parliament in session at Sevalaya Home

Chennai's got talent



Sevalaya students at the Chennai's Got Talent event

Sevalaya students won the 4th prize at the event Chennai's Got Talent – a dance competition organized by Divya Sitara, Director of Dance off Dance and Fitness studio at Egmore Museum Theatre on 28th July 2018 in which 11 homes participated. The children received their prize from the renowned dance master Salsa Mani. Sarada's solo song and Ammu's and Rajesh's solo dances won a lot of applause. Children were taught basic etiquettes to be followed in life. All children were given stationery items as gifts by the organizers.

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