

31 years in the service of the underprivileged

Colourful Rangolis, traditional festoons, bright balloons and radiant faces with wide smiles adorned the Kasuva campus on 13th October 2019, as well wishers, residents and students gathered to celebrate the 31st Annual Day of Sevalaya.

The event started with a beautiful cultural program by the students of Sevalaya depicting the principles of service advocated by Bharathi, Gandhi and Vivekananda through colourful dances and mime.

Releasing the 31st Annual Report, the Chief Guest J Balasubramaniam, Managing Trustee, Savithri Foundation, shared the trials and tribulations faced by him as a young boy, the struggles undergone to get education, the support received from a kind benefactor and stressed the importance of education in improving one's lifestyle. He also donated ₹ 1 lac to Sevalaya on the occasion.

Chief Guest Auditor NRK was appreciative of the dream of a free university for the poor. He suggested that a campaign to collect just ₹ 10 from each person in the country/ state, would pool in the funds required to convert the dream into a reality. He also assured a donation of ₹ 1 lac for this grand initiative.

S Krishnamoorthi, Retd. LIC official and a



L to R S Krishnamoorthi, Amarchand Jain, Sevalaya Murali, J Balasubramaniam, Auditor NRK, E Lakshminarayanan, Thomas T Abraham, K Muthuramakrishnan, N Annapurna, Bhuvaneswari Muralidharan

long time donor of Sevalaya also offered his felicitations. He donated ₹ 25,000 on the occasion

It was time to honour the supporters, best employees, achievers and toppers.

S Subbiah of Thanjavur, D V Sridharan of Madhuranthakam and R S Nallaperumal of Ravanasmudram were awarded the Best Supporter of Sevalaya Awards.

J Manivannan and Dr J R Gajalakshmi won the Best Employee awards.

Prizes were distributed to the toppers in Std X and XII in the board exams and community college.

Staff who have completed long years of service were given gold coins. Staff celebrating birthdays this month were also awarded gifts.



J Balasubramaniam handing over cheque for ₹ 1 lac



N Ravichandran - longest serving employee receiving gold coin

Joy of giving: the way of life

Daan Utsav is a great opportunity for many people to get into the act of giving. Nearly 10 years ago this was started by a group of enthusiasts and it has spread all over the country and also outside the country.

Sevalaya does its bit to create opportunity for giving. As this *Utsav* (festival) falls around the time of *Navarathri*, *Gandhi Jayanthi* and *Diwali*, we try to combine all ideas and make it more interesting to the donor. We involve school children, villagers, common man and corporates and take the message of giving to all.

Sevalaya created job opportunities to poor village ladies by getting orders for cloth bags and wire bags. Our donors started ordering such bags which can be used as gift items during *Navarathri*. Also *Auydha pooja* sweets and snacks orders were taken from donors and underprivileged ladies prepared the products and got an earning. Same was repeated for *Diwali*. Donors, instead of buying these items from big shops, gave orders to Sevalaya which was used to

create jobs for village and urban poor.

School children were invited from many schools to visit Sevalaya. This program is called "Gift compassion". Many schools sent their children for a one day trip to Sevalaya. Children from upper middle class and rich background in the city have never seen underprivileged children. Here was a chance given to them to spend a day with the latter and become friends. They brought gifts and handed them over with love and affection, and Sevalaya kids also gave away gifts, hand made by them. This program brought in a bonding between children. The school managements also pitched in and sent various gifts.

Corporates opened their office area for Sevalaya stalls. This program is called "wish tree". Children write their wishes in a card and they are hung in a toy tree. Corporate employees pick up the wish they want to fulfill and either donate cash or buy the item and give it. Children wishes range from simple chocolates to sports shoes, to new dresses for *Diwali*, crackers, sports items etc. Many

corporate employees came to Kasuva campus, met the children whose wish they are fulfilling and personally handed over the gifts.

Battle of Buffet is a major event during *Daan Utsav*. Many five star hotels give free food and top artists come and perform for free. NGOs can distribute donor passes for this event and collect the donations at no expense to them. This event is arranged by Oriental cuisines. Sevalaya is happy to be part of this every year.

Sevalaya also takes out a "Seva Ratham" – this year called *Gandhi Ratham* to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhiji. This goes to all the villages and schools, involving them in various service activities.

Though the official *Daan Utsav* is only for a week from *Gandhi Jayanthi*, in Sevalaya it is still going on.

For us, *Daan Utsav* is 365 days in a year.

Thanks and Regards

Sevalaya Murali

L & T sponsors Dining hall pathway for elders



Bino Mathew Jose inaugurating the pathway as Sevalaya Murali and Rajasekara Panday looks on.

A 300 ft paver block pathway connecting the Integrated Homes, Old Age Home and Dining Hall, worth ₹ 3 lacs was inaugurated on 18th October 2019. The project was sponsored by L & T Construction and facilitated by Helpage AGE CARE. The pathways are very convenient as the elderly

people who walk to the dining hall from the Integrated Home and the Old Age Home find walking on the pathway much safer and more confident. The pathway was inaugurated by Bino Mathew Jose, Head - HR, L & T Geostructure. R Rajasekara Panday, Dy. General Manager, CSR, L & T

Constructions and Edwin Babu, Joint Director, Programs, Helpage India, participated in the function.



"The pathway is a boon for us. We are able to walk confidently without any fear of slipping and falling down even during rainy days."

Ramakrishnan, Resident, Old Age Home

Tamilnadu Social Welfare Department celebrates World Elders Day at Sevalaya

World Elders Day was celebrated at Sevalaya in association with the Department of Social Welfare, Thiruvallur. K Pandiarajan, Hon'ble Minister for Tamil Official Language, Arts and Culture and Department of Archaeology and Maheswari Ravikumar, District Collector, Thiruvallur were the Chief Guests. The elders performed cultural programme and were felicitated by the Hon'ble Minister.

A special medical camp was conducted at Sevalaya's Old Age Home by a team of 4 doctors from Primary Health centres, on the initiative of Health Department, Thiruvallur district, Government of Tamilnadu in association with Sevalaya's Mahatma Gandhi free Medical Centre.

Hon'ble Member of the Legislative Assembly of Ponneri, P Balaraman, Dr P V Dayalan, MD, Joint Director



Grandmas and Grandpas of Sevalaya with Honble Minister K Pandiarajan, Thiruvallur District Collector Maheswari Ravikumar

of Health Services Thiruvallur, Dr K Krishna Raj, Dy. Director Health Services, Thiruvallur, and B Senthil, Dist.

Child Protection Officer, Thiruvallur participated in the function.

Gandhi Jayanthi across locations



The 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was celebrated across many locations of Sevalaya. Various competitions like oratorical, essay writing, debate, drawing and storytelling were held for the school and college students and prizes were distributed to the winner at the function.

Gandhi Jayanthi was celebrated at Kasuva centre on 4th October 2019. G Ram Mohan, Retd. Railway Safety Commissioner and a Gandhian scholar was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

210 students from Stds III to XII participated in the competitions conducted and prizes were distributed to winners. The children presented a variety entertainment programme of

dance, music and skit based on Gandhi's ideology and incidents from his life. G Ram Mohan spoke to the children about Gandhiji's life.



At Ravanasmudram centre, Gandhi Jayanthi was celebrated on 22nd October 2019. V Vivekanandan, President, All India Gandhian Movement, Sengottai, C Ram Mohan, Correspondent, Jayendrar Vidyalaya, Sengottai and P Thirumaran, Vengadampatti, Kadayam were the Chief Guests. Prizes were distributed to the winners of the competitions in which 186 students from 8 schools participated. Certificates were also distributed to the students of tailoring and computer courses at the community college.



Sevalaya's Thanjavur centre celebrated the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in association with Kundavai Nachiyar Govt. Arts College for Women, on 3rd October 2019. Dr R Thiruvalluvar, Principal, Kundavai Nachiyar Govt. Arts College for Women, and Dr R Kurinji Vendhan, Professor and HOD, Department of Overseas Tamil, Thanjavur Tamil University participated as Chief Guests. Earlier oratorical competition was conducted for the college students and prizes were distributed to winners at the function.

Daan Utsav - the Festival of Giving



Exchange of gifts with children visiting from other schools

Daan Utsav, celebrated in India from 2nd to 8th October is celebration of philanthropy when people from all walks of life to do their bit for the needy and underprivileged. It is an opportunity to share resources, time and skills with others and experience the joy of giving.

At Sevalaya this festival takes myriad forms. Wish trees, small painted trees on canvas carrying wish cards of the children studying in Sevalaya's school and community colleges are set up in corporates. where individual employees pick up the wish cards of their choice and fulfill the wishes expressed. While some of them come in person to hand over the gifts, others send it to Sevalaya's city office. This year Wish Trees were placed in 17 corporates in Chennai.

Gift Compassion is another form of giving where children from private schools collect things like provisions, stationery and visit the campus with their gifts, interact with children from the same class in Sevalaya, exchange small gifts with them and entertain each other through songs, dance, skits etc. This intermingling

helps the children from other schools appreciate the sheltered, privileged life they lead compared to the rural children while the children of Sevalaya get an exposure to children from city schools. So far nearly 766 children from 6 schools have visited Sevalaya. The visit from schools continues.

As a part of *Daan Utsav*, Sevalaya shared with the children of other schools, long lasting gifts of moral values that would stand them in good stead through the journey of their life. Commemorating Mahatma Gandhi's 150th anniversary, a decorated Gandhi Ratham - a chariot with a picture of Mahatma Gandhi, was taken to various schools in Thiruvallur district and also covered schools enroute from Thiruvallur to Chennai. It was flagged off from Sevalaya's Kasuva centre by G Ram Mohan (Retd. Safety Commissioner Railways, a staunch Gandhian and covered 25 schools on its way. Each school saw more than 250 children from Std VI to XII participating in the function and listening to a talk given by Sevalaya's

senior teachers on the role of Gandhiji in shaping the destiny of India. At each school, children from Sevalaya enacted incidents from Gandhiji's childhood, which highlighted the qualities and values like persistence, honesty, love and respect towards elders and parents and the benefits of vegetarianism. The Rath Yatra culminated at ARC school, Royapuram in the presence of Shri Venu Raja Narayanan, Secretary, Bharath Sevak Samaj, N Lakshmi Narayanan, a long standing donor and S Usha, Secretary, ARC School. N Lakshminarayanan donated ₹ 5 lacs on the occasion to Sevalaya.



Thank you Corporates who participated through Wish Tree displays

Aspire systems

Bajaj finance

Caterpillar india pvt ltd

Casa Grande

Ernst & Young

Flatirons Jouve

Franklin templeton

Frost & sullivan

HSBC

Lionbridge

Olam net

Pwc

Spaces

Sundaram fasteners Limited

Thermax

VA Tech Wabag

Schools	No . of students	Items donated
DAV Matriculation School, Gill Nagar	25	Groceries
Bharathidasan Matric HSS	620	Notebooks
VGN Chinmaya Vidyalaya	72	Groceries and A4 sheets
Velammal Vidyalaya, Avadi	20	Groceries and Notebooks
Bhakthavatsalam Vidyashram, Korattur	29	Atta and Dhall
Sriniketan School, Thiruvallur	15	Groceries

Sevalaya's top 10 sports persons in State teams



10 students of Sevalaya are a part of the Tamilnadu Team in Handball, Netball and Basketball in the under 14 and under 17 categories. Another 5 have been selected as standbies.

SGFI (School Games Federation of India) organises games at Regional Levels to select State level players. Since the past

4 years the number of students from Sevalaya selected to play for the state has been steadily increasing.

In Under 14 category G Archana and J Lalitha of Std VIII for handball, P Lakshmi, and V Kiruba of Std IX and A Adhithya of Std VIII for netball and P Lakshmana of Std IX for basketball were selected for the

Tamilnadu Team

In the Under 17 girls category, V Krithiga of Std XI, D Keerthana and R Swetha of Std XII, and in the boys category, A Venkatesan of Std X have been selected to play handball for the State.

The State level matches will be held in the next two months in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. For most students, this will be their first train journey outside Tamil Nadu.

Basketball and Handball sponsored by Lionbridge Technologies, Netball sponsored by Standard Chartered Global Business Services (SCGBS)



Kaizen Blitz

200+ staff of Sevalaya from all locations got together on 19th October 2019, for a totally new experience, Kaizen Thiruvizha(blitz) at the Kasuva centre. This full day workshop on Kaizen - making small continuous improvements was facilitated by T M Venkatesan, Chairman and Mentor of Focus 5, a Hyderabad based Training services institute. SFocus 5 is mentoring and guiding Sevalaya to get 5S certification.

The program started with a soulful prayer song and the traditional lighting of lamp followed by a presentation on the importance of change.

The entire group which had been divided into 14 teams then spent an hour in the ground playing creative team games. The games not only charged up the spirit of the participants but also brought out the effectiveness of team unity in the performance of any action. Unit heads who had come up with Kaizens, made presentations of the same, highlighting the impact.

The afternoon session saw the teams going to their gemba (area of work) brainstorming and coming up with Kaizens which were then presented to the group which were evaluated by a board of Juries.



L to R R M G Murali, Sarath Chandra divella, V R Mahadevan, T M Venakatesan, Srinivasan

The Jury board comprised of Radha Srinivasan, Quality Head, Mobius Knowledge Services, Arun Kumar, Senior Vice President, Rialto and Raju Head (AGM) -TQM, WABCO India Limited. V R Mahadevan, Jt. Managing Director, BGR Energy pvt Ltd and Chairman Energy Panel, CII was the Chief Guest for the closing session .

The jury quizzed the teams on the effectiveness of their ideas and then zeroed in on the winners.

The Chief Guest appreciated the organisation for bringing in 5S and Kaizen and gave away the shields to the winners.

Overall champs @ Bhumi Nakshatra

32 students from Sevalaya were among the 500 students, from 35 homes who participated in the Bhumi Nakshatra competitions on 12th October 2019 at Adyar.

They took part in various competitions like Skit, Dance, Adzap, paper dressing, rangoli, group song, adapt tones, quiz, clay making etc in various levels. Besides winning the overall championship for the 10th time, Sevalaya students also won 12 first prizes, 2 second prizes and a third prize in the various competitions.

Special mention was made by the Judges of the competitions about the mimicry talents of Ashok Kumar of Std XII.

Sevalaya won overall champions in 9 consecutive years



Empathising with the underprivileged

- S Krishnamoorthi

Seshadri Krishnamoorthi is a self made, kind hearted man, who empathises with children struggling in life due to poverty.

Life was not always easy for him. "I grew up in a small village in North Arcot District with my parents and two sisters. I lost my father when I was only six years old. The burden of running the family and bringing up 3 children fell on my mother quite suddenly. She was a bold woman, who rose up to the occasion, and worked hard to provide for us. My sister and I studied at the Government school in Arani. I could not go to college after completing SSLC, as my family could not afford it. I got a job in Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) right after I finished schooling.



It was then that I could share family responsibilities and support my mother" says Krishnamoorthi.

Because of his upbringing he feels strongly about empowering rural children with free quality education so that they do not experience the same challenges he faced as a small boy. Impressed and inspired by the services of Sevalaya, he started contributing regularly to the organisation since 2009. He has created a permanent endowment for supporting the school education of 3 children of

Sevalaya by contributing ₹ 3 lacs. He also celebrated his Sadhabhishegam (80th birthday) at Sevalaya, Kasuva centre with his family.

"I wish to see Sevalaya grow from strength to strength, serving more rural communities, and extending their reach in Tamil Nadu and beyond. I enjoy the vibrant atmosphere at Sevalaya and the smiling faces of the children and senior citizens. I will come here more often." concludes Krishnamoorthi.

Sevalaya is my second home

- P Lakshmana

Sevalaya is my second home says P Lakshmana, Sevalaya's top basketball player. Lakshmana, a 13-year-old hostel student is studying in Std IX in Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyan HSS, along with his twin sister P Lakshmi.

Lakshmana lost his father at a very young age and his mother started working as a house maid to support her small children. Unable to take care of the children and educate them, she admitted them in Sevalaya in 2016.

Lakshmana, then in Std VI, turned out to be a natural basketball player. He was very regular for the practice sessions - twice a day - early in the morning and after school, all seven days a week.

In tournaments against other schools he is one of the key players. He won many awards for being the best basketball player of his team and at the tournaments. As a reward, he was



selected to play for the Thiruvallur District Team to compete at the State level games conducted by School Games Federation of India (SGFI). He was the only player selected for basketball from Sevalaya.

His biggest inspiration is the Chief Warden G Krishnaswamy, who is a father figure to all the boys at the Home. "My coach A Sankarapandian Sir taught me how to play the game and I credit him for all my achievements. I am very grateful to him for training me. He is my mentor," says Lakshmana.

Besides basketball, Lakshmana plays chess and loves cubing. In September, he

attended the annual chess and cubing tournament run by volunteer Siddharth from Dubai and won prizes. He dreams of doing well in both studies and sports and travelling to different places in the future.

Lakshmana found himself a second family in Sevalaya. "I am very happy about the strong bond in the Home and I have a very good relationship with all the staff, teachers and other students. The school has shaped me and instilled many values in me. Actually, I feel sad and homesick when I go home for the holidays," says Lakshmana emotionally.

Ayudha Puja Celebrations



Raghunath Ramaswamy lighting the lamp

Ayudha Puja was celebrated at Kasuva Centre on 5th October 2019. Raghunath Ramaswamy, Founder & CEO, Spectrum Consulting Chennai was the Chief Guest. The children presented a colourful cultural programme. The statue of Goddess Saraswati at the entrance of the Kasuva campus was decorated. Buses and all other vehicles including two wheelers were cleaned up and decorated with sandal paste and garlands and prayers were offered.



Memento presented to Revathi Surya

At the Ambattur centre of Sevalaya Revathi Surya, Senior Journalist and Editor, Iraiva.com was the Chief Guest. She spoke to the students about our traditions and quoted from scriptures how blessings from parents, Guru (Teacher) and almighty are essential for one's well being.



Meera Maya lighting the lamp

Murali Srinivasan, Managing Director, techno Products Ltd and Meera Maya, Director and HR Admin techno Products were the Chief Guests for the Ayudha Puja celebrations at Sevalaya's administrative office in Mylapore. Meera Maya spoke to the employees about the importance of positive attitude

Communication Training



Thomas T Abraham, Advisor, Sevalaya conducted sessions on Public Speaking for the senior leaders of Sevalaya over four Saturdays in September/ October 2019. In each session the participants were asked to present a prepared speech and deliver an extempore speech.

In the prepared speech category, the winners were S Mohanavalli, AVP Operations, M T Anandan, Primary School HM, P Prasanna, VP, Corporate Relations and K Gayathri, VP, Admin and Accounts.

In the extempore category, the winners were S Sumathi, HM In charge,

M T Anandan, Primary school Head Master, Dr J R Gajalakshmi, Chief Medical Officer, L N Anupriya, Head – Donor Relations Retail and A Srividhya, Systems Administrator.

M T Anandan, Primary school Head Master was voted the Best Trainee and the Best improved Trainee by the participants, in the final session on 19th October 2019. L N Anupriya and S Dineshkumar, Head of Vivekananda Unit were selected by Thomas T Abraham as Best supporters for conducting the entire programme.

Medical camp

Sevalaya and PPG Asian paints jointly arranged for a health and hygiene awareness programme and a free medical camp at Mambakkam on 9th September 2019.

66 students of Mambakkam Panchayat Union School were benefitted by this camp.

Dr Arun Kumar of Sevalaya spoke to the students about healthy habits and personal hygiene. He also did a general check up. Medicines were provided for common ailments like cold, fever and stomach pain caused by infection.



Review of the grievances

The agitation on their behalf was carried on by the philanthropic and patriotic Indian traders, actuated by motives of patriotism or of philanthropy.

The European traders of Natal carried on a similar agitation against Free Indians. The number of Free Indians increased and their trade flourished. Hence they were seen as competition to the European traders. According to law the free Indians were entitled to vote in the elections for the Legislative Assembly of Natal, and to stand as candidates for the same. Some Indians therefore got their names entered on the electoral roll. The first step, therefore, taken by the responsible Government of Natal, was to enact a law disfranchising all Asiatics save those who were then rightly contained in any voters' list. A bill to that effect was first introduced in the Legislative Assembly of Natal in 1894. This in Natal, the first piece of legislation affecting the Indians in which racial distinction was made. Indians resisted this measure. A memorial with four hundred signatures was prepared in one night and submitted to the Legislative Assembly of Natal.

But the Bill was passed all the same. A memorial bearing ten thousand signatures was submitted to Lord Ripon who was then Secretary of State for the Colonies. Ten thousand signatures meant almost the total population at the time of free Indians in Natal. Lord Ripon disallowed the bill declaring that the British Empire could not agree to colour bar in legislation. This was a great victory for Indians.

The Natal Government, then introduced another bill, indirectly disqualifying Indians. Indians protested against this as well but without success. This new Bill was ambiguous in meaning. Though the Indians could carry it finally to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council with a view to its interpretation, they did not think it advisable to do so. For the planters and the Government of Natal, the first step was to nip the political power of Indians in the bud but the real point of their attack was Indian trade and free Indian immigration. They were uneasy at the thought of the Europeans in Natal being swamped if India with its teeming millions invaded Natal. They

were ignorant of the helpless condition of India and of the manners and customs of the Indian people as they were under the impression that the Indians were as adventurous and resourceful as themselves. However that may be, the result of the successful opposition to the disfranchising bill was that, in two other laws passed by the Natal Legislature it had to avoid racial distinction and to attain its end in an indirect manner. On this occasion too Indians offered a strenuous resistance, but in spite of this the laws were enacted.

One of these imposed severe restrictions on Indian trade and the other on Indian immigration in Natal. As per the first Act no one could trade without a license issued by an official appointed in accordance with its provisions. In practice any European could get a licence while the Indian had to face no end of difficulty in the matter. The chief provision of the other Act was that only such immigrants as were able to pass the education test in a European language could enter the Colony. This closed the doors of Natal against crores of Indians.

Diwali Nite @VGP



198 children from Sevalaya participated in Rotary Diwali Nite at VGP, organised by Rotary Club Dist 3232 Universal Kingdom on 12th October 2019. The children were welcomed with breakfast. They then played on the various rides and had fun. Delicious lunch was served to them students. It was a fun filled day out for the children.

Gandhi 150 @Kalakshetra



70 students who learn dance at Sevalaya enjoyed watching a special dance programme at Kalakshetra on 17th October 2019, to commemorate Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary. A list of 22 basic values written on charts were displayed at the venue. The children signed against the values which they were interested to adopt.

Elders dance



At the International Day of Older Persons Celebrations organised by Helpage India on 1st October 2019 at Chetpet, elders from 25 NGO's participated. Sevalaya's elders participated in group dance, couple dance and fancy dress competitions. The group dance participants walked away with the 3rd prize.

Send your comments to:

City Office:

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

Phone: 97109 07675, 94443 33529, 044-24982204

E-mail: sevalayabhuvana@sevalaya.org; vpoperations@sevalaya.org

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

Correspondents: Anupriya L N, Kingston A A, Prasanna P, Vijaya R, Sumathi S, Dr Gajalakshmi J R, Phil Christoper Jay

Layout: Rekha Perumal, Arun G

Editorial & Design Consultant:
Thomas T Abraham