

## FCA's ₹7 lacs aid for 420 *Irula* and gypsy families

Sevalaya distributed grocery kits worth ₹7 Lakhs, sponsored by Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) to 420 families of *Irula* and gypsy communities in and around 25 villages in Madurantakam, Chengalpattu District on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

Each kit worth ₹1500 included rice, dhal, sugar, salt and oil were distributed to the beneficiaries, which included over 70 gypsy families living in the streets.

The beneficiaries who are from Zamin Endathur, Thatchur, Sirukaranai, Thandalam, Perukaranai, Devathur, Arungunam and other villages are all affected by COVID-19 lockdown and have no means of income.

FCA sponsored the project. Sevalaya, the implementation partner identified the beneficiaries, coordinated the purchase of provision items and organised the distribution event.

K Kalayani, Block Development Officer,



Maduranthagam, S Balasubramaniam, Revenue Inspector, Zamin Endathur, P Dharmalingam, Village Administrative Officer, Zamin Endathur, M Balaji, Village Administrative Officer, Ozhavatti and Murgumbakkam, Sevalaya Murali, and

Prasanna Parthasarathy, Vice President, Donor Relations, Sevalaya participated in the distribution event. All precautions as advised by the Govt like wearing face mask and maintaining social distance were strictly adhered to.

## Kamarajar's 118<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary celebrated



Karmaveerar Kamarajar's 118<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary was celebrated online by Sevalaya on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

Participating in the function online from Chennai, Mafoi K Pandiarajan (Hon'ble Minister, Tamil Official Language and Tamil Culture, Govt. of TN) in his speech, spoke about the contributions of the great leader in the fields of education, agriculture and industry in Tamilnadu.

Many schools were opened during the

leader's regime and his most popular midday meal scheme ensured a drastic improvement in primary school enrolment. Kamarajar was instrumental in the construction of many dams in the State which was a boon for the agriculture. The leader also ensured that many industries were opened in Tamilnadu thus securing a prominent place for the State in the industrial map of India and providing a boost to the economy of TamilNadu.

"Honesty, integrity and ability are the 3 qualities to be imbibed from the life of Kamaraj" observed the Minister in his speech.

The Minister also spoke about how Kamarajar, had a national outlook and was keen to protect the sovereignty of India, with Tamilnadu being an integral part of the nation.

Earlier online competitions were

conducted, in which 600 students from all over Tamilnadu participated. S Kanchana, Head, Value Education read out the names of all the prize winners.

Prizes were distributed by Amarchand Jain, Advisor, Sevalaya to the winners from local schools, in Thiruvallur District, on the occasion. For other winners, prizes will be couriered to their homes.



# Joy of giving: *the way of life*

Dear Friends,

One section which is very badly affected by the pandemic is the senior citizens section. If you are above the age of 65, as per lockdown rules, you have to just stay indoors. It is illegal to come out.

But we see many elderly couple staying alone in the city and they have no one to help. Such seniors have to come out for essential shopping and if they are not well, the problem becomes much bigger.

Some volunteers show interest in helping them, but many anti socials also make use of the situation and try to dupe the elders. They are in a fix to decide whom to believe and take help.

In many such cases the children are living abroad, not able to travel and come back home and meet their parents or even within India, they find it impossible to travel now. In many other cases, children are living in the same city, but they just don't care.

As aged persons are seen as vulnerable group, some of the flat associations are requesting families with elders to try and shift elders to hometown or somewhere

else, so that their building can be safe. Where can the own parents be sent, just to safeguard others in the building? There were some cases where it was found out that the elders were just sent out of the house and they ended up in pavements. One senior died on the road, not due to corona, but due to hunger!

When the pandemic started we got instructions from government departments that we should try and send out as many children and as many old people as possible, out of our hostels— whoever has family support should go back to families, so that we can reduce the numbers in the hostel and reduce the risk.

But in our case, we have only people who don't have families or rejected by families staying in our homes. Where do we send them back? In order to obey the government instructions, we tried to send some children back to their parents and some elders back to their children – in only a few cases, we had that possibility.

One elderly man was handed over to his son, after taking assurance from his son that he will be taken care of till the end of

pandemic and then he can come back to Sevalaya.

The son agreed and took him home. But it lasted only for two days and the third day the old man was left on the streets. He landed up in police station and I got a call from the police! The old man had complained that Sevalaya has driven him out! I had to explain the sequence of events and brought him back to our old age home.

During this global crisis, we are taking care of such 'unwanted' senior citizens, numbering around 80, in Kasuva village, Thiruvallur district and in Thanjavur. Our staff are working round the clock to keep the infection away, take care of their regular age related illnesses, provide regular medication, good food, entertainment and keeping them engaged and cheerful.

Fortunately, all are safe and they are completely unaware of what is happening to elders in the outside world!

Thanks and Regards

Sevalaya Murali

## 98% pass, 67% first division in Std XII Board



S Jayashree



S Pavithra



V Pavithra

Out of 123 students who appeared Std XII Board exams from Sevalaya, 120 had successfully cleared the exams with excellent marks. 83 students have secured first division marks. The top 3 ranks are secured by students of Commerce group.

S Jayashree, the topper scored 485 / 600. Her father, a driver met with an accident and has not been able to support the family. Her mother is a housewife. Her ambition is to study CA and become an auditor.

Two students- S Pavithra & V Pavithra - have secured second rank with a total of 481/600.

S Pavithra lost her father at a very young

age. Her mother works as construction labourer for daily wages. S Pavithra wants to join Banking Services.

The parents of V Pavithra work for daily wages and struggle to make both ends meet. But V Pavithra was focused on her studies and has achieved good marks. She aspires to be a lawyer. The results assume significance as the students of the school are all from families of daily wage labourers.

Many of these students live in small single room houses with no special facilities for studying. These children have to help out their parents and struggle to keep the family afloat.

The students have once again proved

that if given right opportunities, they can achieve success.

The credit for these achievements goes to the unstinted support of well-wishers, philanthropists and corporates who have always stood by Sevalaya.

The teachers of Sevalaya spare no efforts to coach the children and spend extra hours in the mornings, evenings and all holidays to sit with their wards and patiently guide them at their own pace.

The home atmosphere is not conducive for most of the students to study. In most of the cases, the alcoholic father comes home fully drunk and abusive.

Taking all these factors into consideration, the teachers of Sevalaya conducted night time special classes. The students got an opportunity to forget about all the troubles at home and concentrate on their studies and this has reflected in the results.

Sevalaya once again wishes to thank its well-wishers and staff for their support without which all this would not have been possible.



# Standard Chartered Global supports 200 residents for 2 months

Standard Chartered Global Business Services (SCGBS), a Subsidiary of Standard Chartered Bank UK Plc has been associated with Sevalaya for over 7 years and has worked on various CSR projects.

While schools and colleges declared holidays because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sevalaya orphanage had to still take care of nearly 200 children and elders living in Kasuva centre. They are orphans and have no place to go.

Due to lock-down, there are no visitors/donor visits to the centre. Several individuals have lost their own livelihood and this has resulted in a drop in the donations. Still, Sevalaya has to take care of the basic amenities like food, self-hygiene etc. for the children and elders.

SCGBS had fully supported 200 orphan children and elders for 60 days from



May 2020 - end June 2020 by supplying all meals and other hygiene amenities medicines etc. Due to SCGBS' support, all orphan children and elders received

healthy food during these critical times. Sevalaya thanks SCGBS for quickly responding to its appeal.

## Bharathi Chellammal 123<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary



Mahakavi Bharathi and Chellammal's 123<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary was celebrated online on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

Participating in the function online from Chennai, Raj Kumar Bharathi, great-grandson of Mahakavi Bharathi, narrated incidents that could help one understand the high level of understanding between Mahakavi Bharathi and Chellammal. Isaikkavi Ramanan in his speech talked about Mahakavi Bharathi's life and the difficulties faced by the poet.

On the occasion, 100 grocery kits worth ₹1 lakh were distributed to families of 16 physically challenged persons, 20 widows and 64 daily wagers, poor and destitute, affected by the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The distribution took place at Chatram Bharathi Higher Secondary School, Kadayam, Tenkasi district. The kit included 10 kgs rice, dhal,

cereals, spices, and oil.

M Murgaiyya, Circle Inspector, V Kaja Mohideen, Sub-Inspector of Police, M Maanika Vaasakam, Village Administrative Officer and S Meera, HM, Chatram Bharathi Higher Secondary School, Kadayam participated in the distribution event.

Earlier, online competitions were conducted, for school and college children in Tamil Nadu, on the life of Bharathi and Chellammal, Prizes were distributed on the occasion to a few local prize winners in Kadayam.

Wearing masks and maintaining social distance, were strictly followed. *Kabasura kudineer* was distributed to all beneficiaries. Hand sanitizer was also provided to all the beneficiaries.

## Session on menstrual hygiene



Latha Soundarjan, Lakshmi Venugopal, Shilpashree Nagendra and Sreekumari Kunnath under the guidance of Kavitha Natarajan, Senior Executive, CSR, CGI, Hyderabad conducted sessions on menstrual hygiene for 32 girls from std VII to community college.

The students were divided into two batches of 16 students each. The first batch had a session on 27<sup>th</sup> June and the second batch on 10<sup>th</sup> July.

The students were educated about the reproductive system, do's and don'ts and hygiene to be followed during monthly periods.

"The session was very useful for us, The presentation was very colourful and it was in Tamil. So it was very easy for us to understand."

**G Ammu, X Std**



## Online sessions by volunteers from BNY Mellon



22 volunteers from BNY Mellon have started taking sessions for 55 children who are residing in the hostel.

The various topics that are planned are Partnership Health, Immunity & Fitness, Climate Change and Types of Resources, Positive Thinking, Behaviour & Time Management, Emotional Intelligence, Identification of passions and providing support, Communication Skills, Value

Education, General Knowledge and Literature. The sessions which started on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2020 will continue till 8<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

Initially two sessions on introduction to Commerce were conducted on 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020 by Hariharan Sampathkumar, volunteer from BNY Mellon for 29 students of Stds VI and VII.

## BNY Mellon sponsors grocery kits



BNY Mellon sponsored dry ration kits to families of 70 maintenance and support staff at DLF building, struggling because of COVID-19 lockdown. .

The kit which included rice, dhal, cereals, spices and oil were delivered at their doorstep.

The beneficiaries were from Iyappanthangal, Govur, Kunrathur, Poonamallee, Thirumullaivoyal, Pattabiram, Ernavur, Kannagi Nagar, Thiruvannamiyur and Taramani.

Sevalaya, the implementation partner

coordinated the purchase of provision items and organised the distribution event, procuring and packaging the kits and organising the distribution event.



## Kits to Govt Hospitals

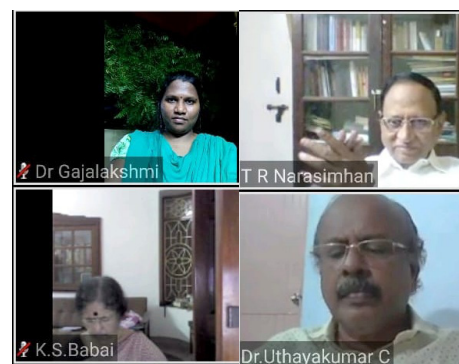


BNY Mellon, one of the largest investment banks in the world extended a helping hand to support in the fight against COVID-19 by providing 300 PPE kits and 1 ventilator each, to Tiruvallur Government hospital, Thiruvallur and Stanley Government Hospital, Chennai.

Along with the ventilators & kits, they have also provided high pressure sanitiser sprayer and Ultrasound scan for COVID-19 wards.

Sevalaya, the implementation partner, coordinated the procurement of the equipment and organised the distribution.

## Platinum Award for 5S



Sevalaya's health team won the Platinum Award for 5S at the competition on Best Practices in 5S conducted by Chennai Chapter of the Quality Circle Forum of India on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

Dr J R Gajalakshmi, who leads the Health department in Sevalaya and Vignesh Selva Kumar, Manager, Medical Centre received the award for their presentation which highlighted how 5S practices had improved the functioning of the various activities carried out by them making it more efficient.

33 teams from 17 companies participated in this competition. Sevalaya was the only NGO to participate in the competition while the rest of them were industries, educational institutions and hospitals.



# Continuing Nursing Education



Learning is a lifelong process and the field of nursing is no exception to this rule. The field of medicine and healthcare is constantly evolving and improving through advancements in technology.

Keeping the present situation and effects of COVID-19 Pandemic in mind and, to ensure preparedness to handle any emergency situations, Sevalaya's health department is put through various training programs.

One such training was initiated for the nursing staff at Sevalaya. The training is aimed towards improvement of personal

& professional growth of nurses and other personnel employed in Sevalaya's health sector.

After completing their course and getting employment, nurses tend to gain expertise only on treating the common ailments they see frequently.

Gradually they are out of touch with the other things they have learnt, like handling medical emergencies as they come across such cases rarely at Sevalaya's medical centre. Therefore, Sevalaya's senior health care professionals have started conducting

regular training for the staff nurses and nursing assistants. All the staff were provided reading material on topics like myocardial infarction, antenatal and post natal care and other ailments.

This is followed by seminars on the given topic. At the end of the session, there is a group discussion to ensure that they have understood the topic well. This is followed by a quiz. Rewards are announced, to motivate staff to prepare well for the quiz.

Sevalaya doctors share their real-life experiences, making the session even more interesting. Such sessions have also developed good interpersonal relationships between the doctors and the staff to a great extent.

"These training sessions have improved my knowledge and skills and I feel more motivated now. I now have a clear vision of what to do in the future. It has helped to increase my positive attitude"

**Glory, Staff Nurse, Alumna of Sevalaya**

## Virtual spoken English classes for students



Spoken English classes for children started from July 2020 through phone calls. Volunteers from all over the globe and different backgrounds, have come together with the help of iVolunteer, a social enterprise which connects volunteers and various NGOs, to mentor 40+ students from Stds VIII to X.

The classes are conducted weekly once, for about 1 hour fixed at a convenient time that works best for both the volunteer and the student. This program has been successful with most of the kids showing lots of enthusiasm and great

interest and passion towards learning. Parents are also very supportive of their wards about these classes.

Privacy of the students are also maintained and every volunteer is assigned a specific student and given the details of only that particular child. Syllabus is framed in general as guidance and volunteers are given the freedom to tweak it according to the capability and capacity of their wards.

Sevalaya hopes that at the end of this thirteen-week programme, these 40 Sevalaya students will gain confidence to speak in English without hesitation.

"My child is very much interested in this initiative. She speaks up, if she has questions and if something is not clear.

Above all, she tries and uses my suggestions. She is pretty excited and even wrote down new words. Overall, a great response."

**Ramya Ramasamy, Volunteer from USA**

## Birthday Celebrations



On 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020, R G Anand, Member, National Commission For Protection of Child Rights, Sponsored for a special Gau pooja at Kasuva centre on his birthday.

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time R G Anand is visiting Kasuva Campus. Previously he also gifted stationery kits to hostel students as a token of his affection.

He was delighted to celebrate his birthday with Sevalaya. He was impressed by the care given to the dry cows at the Gaushala and the range of services offered by Sevalaya for the welfare of the poor and needy.

## Happy Life at Sevalaya old age home

"I am leading a peaceful life here and we all live like a family" says Rajaram a 72 years old senior resident at Sevalaya's Old age home at Thanjavur.

Born and brought up at Darasuram, a village near Kumbakonam, his childhood was quite difficult. His parents worked for daily wages as handloom weavers. Due to poverty Rajaram didn't go to school and used to take care of his brother, who was a special child. Later, he and his brother also started working as handloom weavers along with their parents and he soon learnt the weaving techniques.

His experience and confidence made him install a hand loom in his own house and start weaving. Later he married and had 4 children (3boys and a girl). He got a house built for his mother but there were problems cropping up and he left



his house nearly 20 years ago. He started living with his brother and continued to work. But when he became too old, he was not able to continue his profession.

By now his brother's family were also showing reluctance in taking care of him. He did not wish to be a burden to anyone. It was then, one of his well-

wishers told him about Sevalaya old age home at Thalaivaipalayam and directed him to go there. That's how Rajaram came to Sevalaya, gave his details and requested that he may be provided food and shelter.

Rajaram joined Sevalaya old age home one and a half years ago. Earlier, he was struggling very hard to get 2 meals a day, but after joining Sevalaya he is at peace in his old age.

Rajaram likes gardening and spends his leisure time taking care of the plants and watering them regularly. He ensures water is filled in the water bowls in the hot summer months.

He is always ready to lend a helping hand to the other residents in the house. He lights the lamp in the *Puja* room daily for prayers.

All the senior residents do things of their interest and keep themselves occupied.

Sevalaya also organizes various volunteering programs, so that volunteers interact with the senior residents daily making them feel happy. Rajaram is grateful to Sevalaya for the peaceful life he is leading now.

## Perseverance paves the way to success

Monisha works happily as an accountant with SKP Travels. But a few years back life had been a struggle for this young girl from Sunguvarchatram.

"My father was in a house keeping job. He has lost that also now due to COVID-19 lockdown.

My mother goes for daily wages labour and that is not an assured job. My parents were struggling to educate me and my brother.

So after I completed school education I took a break and went for a job. I worked as a Assistant store keeper in Sresan." says Monisha.

She worked for one year saving money



for fees and completed graduation in English Literature. She also managed to complete Masters in Library Information Science from Annamalai University.

"Even though I completed Masters, I did not get a job. It was then I came to know about the free skill development classes being conducted by Sevalaya and contacted the career team there.

The discussion helped me understand that my weakness lay in poor computer

skills. So I joined the Computer Fundamentals course and completed it successfully." she says.

With a new found confidence she did well at the walk-in interview at SKP travels and is today a successful working woman supporting her family and her brother's education.

"I credit my confidence to the training and support I got at Sevalaya in her hour of need." concludes Monisha.



# Judges award full marks to Sevalaya



The Madras High Court had ordered that all Homes in Tamilnadu have to be inspected by Judges to check their preparedness to contain the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Pursuant to this order, J Selvanathan, Principal District Judge, Thiruvallur, along with Judges G Saraswathi and V Radhika did a surprise inspection at

Sevalaya's Kasuva centre on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The Judges visited the old age home, boys' home and girls' home, kitchen and inspected the maintenance of the homes.

They also inspected the records maintained, register of health check ups conducted including regular recording of body temperature of all the residents monitored twice daily, and register of

food provided to the residents.

25 registers are being maintained in the hostel and the team checked all the records randomly as also all documents to ensure everything is updated and maintained correctly. They also checked whether all sanitary arrangements are proper like providing hand sanitizers, face masks and cleanliness of the premises.

They also interacted with the children and elders asking them about their life in the home. When they enquired about COVID-19 and the precautionary measures being taken, one of the students Sudhan explained about all the precautions being taken in detail. He was appreciated for his clear answer.

The team of Judges expressed their appreciation to Sevalaya for taking all precautions to safeguard the residents against COVID-19 Pandemic. They also presented some drawing kits to students of the Home.

## Creativity of Sevalaya staff during lockdown days



Sevalaya started its operations at Kasuva 32 years back, but since the last few years, Sevalaya has been branching out to different districts of Tamil Nadu. Sevalaya runs community colleges in 8 locations in 5 districts of Tamilnadu and 1 in Puducherry.

Courses in tailoring and computers are conducted at all centres. In addition, some centres have courses in Refrigeration and Mechanics, E publishing, Tally, Bakery, Nursing assistant and Lab technician assistant. With the COVID-19 crisis and total shutdown of all educational institutions the staff at these centres were first clueless as to what they should do during

this period. The computer staff kept the process of learning going by sending lessons, worksheets through WhatsApp.

It was then that some of the staff decided to put their skills and talents to good use by creating useful articles of daily use which would contribute in a small way towards Sevalaya's self-sufficiency goal.

At the end of these few months 4000 masks, 150 wire bags, 1100 cloth bags and ₹3000 worth fancy items are produced by the staff.

In the present situation there is a large demand for these washable, reusable cotton cloth masks among the staff of Sevalaya itself as also the wire

bags and cloth shopping bags.

Sevalaya's Community College staff have thus proved that "Where there is will there is a way" and instead of idling this lockdown period kept themselves busy and active physically and mentally with some of them learning new skills or brushing up old forgotten skills, doing their best to raise funds for their organization. The venture is far from over and new ideas are being brainstormed to see if more useful things can be made.





# The spirit of Satyagraha

Gandhi said, "A Satyagrahi bids goodbye to fear. Even if the opponent plays him false twenty times, the Satyagrahi is ready to trust him for the twenty first time; for, an implicit trust in human nature is the very essence of his creed."

Suppose, we register voluntarily, but the Government commits a breach of faith, could we not then restart the Satyagraha? If we refuse to show the certificates at the proper time, our registration will count for nothing."

"The responsibility of the Community is largely enhanced by this settlement. We must register voluntarily to show that we do not intend to bring a single Indian into the Transvaal surreptitiously or by fraud."

As soon as Gandhi finished his speech, a Pathan friend stood up and greeted him with a volley of questions; and asked him whether they should have to give ten fingerprints under the settlement. Gandhi replied that all of them had to give digital impression without the least hesitation. But, those who had any conscientious

objection will not be obliged to give these impressions. To a specific question, Gandhi replied that he had decided to give the fingerprints.

The Pathan alleged that Gandhi had betrayed the community and sold it to General Smuts for 15000 pounds. He swore with Allah as his witness that he would kill the man who took the lead in applying for registration.

The Pathan's questions however did not have any impression on the meeting. They agreed with the decision of Gandhi.

On the morning of 10<sup>th</sup> February 1908, Gandhi and a few friends got ready to go out and take out certificates of registration.

The supreme necessity of getting through the registration business with all possible expedition was impressed on the community and it had been agreed that the leaders should be the first ones to take the certificates on the first day.

When Gandhi was on his way to the

registration office, a heavy cudgel descended on him from behind. He at once fainted with the words, "He, Rama!" on his lips. He lay prostrate on the ground and had no notice of what followed. The Pathan Mir Alam and his companions gave him more blows and kicks, some of which were warded off by Yusuff Mian and Thambi Naidoo with the result they also became the targets of attack.

The noise attracted some European passersby. The Police arrived and took the attackers in custody. Doak took charge of the situation. Gandhi, regaining consciousness, inquired about Mir Alam. He was informed that Mir Alam and the rest of the attackers were arrested. Gandhi demanded that they should be released.

Police refused to comply on the ground that the attack took place in a public road, and the authorities could not turn a blind eye.

(To be continued.)

## ShopeSeva offers you what money cannot buy

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