

## Sevalaya reaches 32<sup>nd</sup> year milestone

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Day was celebrated at Kasuva Centre on 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2020. S Madumathi, IAS, Secretary, Dept of Social Welfare, TN Govt was the Chief Guest for the event.

A colourful cultural performance was presented by the students of Sevalaya.

S Madumathi gave a powerful speech on social service and applauded Sevalaya for its BGV, Bharathiyar Gandhi Vivekananda, values. Quoting from *Thirukkural*, she advised the students to put an end to laziness to achieve greatness in their lives.

She also spoke about women empowerment and appreciated Sevalaya for its Initiatives to empower women through education and skill development. She advised the students to take care of their parents when they are old and to never abandon them in old age homes.

Kalyan Kalyanaraman, Technical Editor, Riviera Maritime Media, told the students to make best use of the opportunities provided and to absorb the values taught by Sevalaya.

K M Sundaram, IRS, Senior Surveyor distributed a cash prize of ₹10,000 to toppers in Tamil in the Board exams. The prize money is donated by his friend G Sankar, a long time donor of Sevalaya,



From L to R, A A Kingston, N Annapurna, M Bhuvaneswari, C Rajarajeshwari, Amarchan Jain, K M Sundaram, S Madumathi, Kalyan Kalyanaraman, Lakshmi Narayanan, Sevalaya Murali, presenting the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report

in memory of his mother V Rukmani, who was a Tamil teacher. Sundaram was impressed with the BGV Values that were taught to students.

Prizes were distributed to toppers of Std X and Std XII Board examinations, on the occasion. Books on self development were given as birthday gifts to staff who celebrated birthdays in the months of March 2020 to November 2020. Gold coins were presented to employees who had completed 5, 10 & 15 years of service.

The Chief Guest also distributed new clothes to the students and elders, for Deepavali.

The Best Employee of the year awards were given to employees who helped during COVID-19 relief work.

These employees rose to the occasion despite the risks involved and their family commitments, and were actively involved in carrying out the relief activities, initiated by Sevalaya.

*T Venda, Vivekananda unit, Kasuva Centre*

*M Mathan Kumar, Bharathi unit, Sunguvarchatram Centre*

*M Mariyammal, Vivekananda unit, Thanjavur Centre*



# Joy of giving: *the way of life*

Dear Friends,

We are slowly getting out of COVID 19 and the relief work for corona may not be required any more. The economic activity has picked up and most of the business houses have restarted. People have started going back to jobs, with or without mask and the precautions required. There may be some business which are closed down permanently, from such places people are applying for jobs in Sevalaya and we are accommodating wherever possible.

But the November and December months in Tamil Nadu are known for cyclones and flooding. Just two days ago we had Nivar cyclone crossing very close to Chennai near Marakanam. There is already next cyclone in the queue, which will hit the coast in next two days. As usual, people in low lying areas are affected. They have been moved to government shelters and we have started providing food and groceries to such families.

Nivar was not all that bad, but still there was a need to support government rescue and relief work. We don't know about the severity of the next cyclone. Looks like atleast half a dozen such cyclones are brewing in the Bay of Bengal. Every time such natural calamity happens

we jump into action and start helping the affected people. Every time the same localities get affected. Same type of issues. Rivers swell and all the belongings of the people living in huts next to the river get washed away. In the cities, the same areas are under water – may be 3 or 4 feet – and people are not able to move out.

Some water bodies are full and the floodgates are opened. Some water bodies are half full, many are only 25% full. But when the floodgates are opened, if rivers are flooded and all water goes into the sea.

Few months later, when it is summer, we face the problem of shortage of drinking water. We all know very well that most of the water bodies are connected by canals and river branches and when one water body is full, the water flows to next water body. Such systems were beautifully designed and maximum water was stored for use for the full year.

But all such canals have been occupied by buildings, roads, colleges, even government offices! So excess water has to flow only to the sea.

Instead of all NGOs firefighting at the time of floods, if any alternate programs can be planned to improve

the water storage situation, which will be a preventive step. Yes, we need rains, we need water. But we need to save it properly also. Sevalaya took up such projects in cleaning up old lakes in Kanchipuram district. If more funds are available, we can do in many more areas. This will ensure that water does not enter the houses and huts and is saved for the benefit of the people.

The need of the hour is more such projects. This will slowly reduce our spending on emergency relief. When there is an emergency, we don't wait for sponsorships etc., we just jump into action. Then many donors come forward and support. This is what we have done in Nivar cyclone also.

We will be operating in this mode for the next two months. But let us think of long term solutions - more water body restoration projects, that in few years from now, flood will find its way in to lakes and ponds and not huts/houses.

Thanks and Regards

Sevalaya Murali



You can donate via

Pay 9710907675

## Raising awareness for Mental Health



Highlighting the importance of mental health, slogan writing, essay writing and poster creation competitions were conducted online, on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020, on the occasion of the World Mental Health Day.

The competitions were organised by STEPS Foundations, an organisation

located in Korattur offering professional counselling and psychological services. The event was coordinated by K Vijayaraghavan, MD and Co founder of STEPS Foundations.

53 students from Sevalaya participated in the competitions. T Thembavani, M Madhumita and A Morgana were selected in the preliminary rounds and were among the 5 finalists. Cash prize was awarded to the winners.

T Thembavani won the first prize in slogan writing competition for Juniors and M Madhumitha won the first prize in essay writing competition for juniors. All participants received e-certificate.

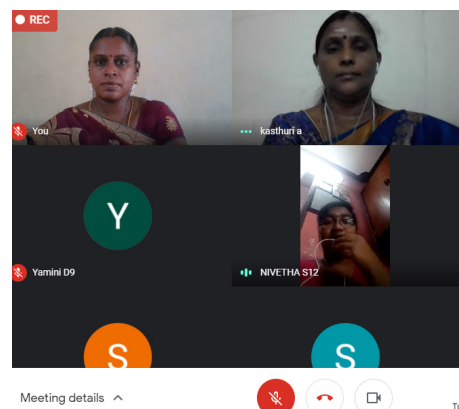
## Gandhian Ideologies

An online oratorical competition was held on the occasion of 151<sup>st</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020, by the Department of Language at Chevalier T Thomas Elizabeth

College for Women.

S Kanchana, Head, Value Education, Sevalaya was the Chief Guest of the event that hosted 100 members. She delivered a lecture about the 11 vows of Mahatma Gandhi.

26 students participated in the speech competition on the topic, "Gandhian Ideologies, the need of hour". 4 students were declared as best speakers.





# Sevalaya wins Platinum award

## The Sole NGO in QCFI



Sevalaya won the Platinum Award in 5S competition conducted by Quality Circle Forum of India, QCFI. Sevalaya was the sole NGO among the 6 teams that participated in the competition.

Sevalaya has planted their footprint firmly in the vast field of 5S under the guidance of their mentor T M Venkatesan, Chairman, FOCUS-5, a Hyderabad based Management training institute.

Initially, the training was conducted by M G Murali who took the effort to create 5S culture in Kasuva Centre. After 2 years of trial & error implementation of

5S, Sevalaya participated in the 5S Best Practices competition organized by QCFI in March 2019.



M G Murali, an expert in 5S, TQM and Project Management. T R Narasimhan, Chairman, QCFI, encouraged the Sevalaya Team to participate in large scale 5S

competitions. The team was mentored

by S Murugan, Secretary, QCFI, from February 2020 who led them to success by winning the prestigious Platinum Award.

The meticulous process involved regular audits and staff training by L N Anupriya, Quality Head. Volunteers K Suresh, V Sundararajan and M Yuvaraj, helped the Kasuva team members in the implementation of 5S.

They worked with the team and provided insights which elevated the 5S standards in the Kasuva Centre.



T M Venkatesan, Chairman, FOCUS-5

## Mother and son, Volunteer Duo



Sudha Subramanian and her son Sidharth Hariharan have been associated with Sevalaya for the past five years. They have been visiting the campus every year from Dubai.

During their visits to Sevalaya, they conduct classes on Chess and Cubing for

the children. Last year, they conducted the first Vishal Memorial Chess tournament in memory of Vishal, the child Chess prodigy at Sevalaya, who passed away due to illness.

This year, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, they connected with Sevalaya online.

Sidharth has been interacting and initiating a series of guest lectures such as conversational English via story telling, Math puzzles, sessions on innovations, showcasing fall colors, apple picking in Michigan, life in Singapore including history, culture and understanding the benefits of classical dance.

Sidharth also has a host of many interesting speakers lined up for the Sevalaya kids in future - from a trip to a ship building unit to a digital trip from China to South Africa.





# Sevalaya Got Talent



An Online Talent show, Sevalaya Got Talent, was organized and sponsored by RT84 NIT Trichy Alumni Group on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

The Talent show was compered by Mahendran Ramanathan who welcomed the spectators connected through Zoom.

He thanked Divya Vankamamidi

Prabhakar for sponsoring the Dussehra Festival dinner in memory of Smt Prakashvati Malhotra, at Sevalaya.

Sevalaya Murali gave a brief speech on the history of Sevalaya and its development for the past 32 years.

The contestants participated in groups showcasing their talents in singing and

dancing from Primary and High Schools. The Judges, K Mahalingam, K Shivaram and D K Sundar are members of RT84 Group. They selected 3 groups from Primary School in singing and 3 groups from High School in both categories.

R Mahendran advised the students to work diligently and to participate further in future talent competitions. He conveyed his wishes to Dr Narmada, an alumna who is the first Doctor from Sevalaya.



## Performing God's work



22 staff from Sevalaya arrived at the Sri Erikaththa Ramar Temple, Thiruninvarur on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020, with necessary tools to clean up the surrounding area to ensure the well-being of its users.

The team was led by S C Suresh from Kasuva who diligently carried his team with responsibility. The designated place was converted into a functional garden after clearing the weeds and bushes.

After the completion of work, P G Sathish, a volunteer invited the staff inside the temple and gave them an engaging session on the history of the temple. It is an ancient temple which is famous for its Deities, Ram, Sita and Lakshmana.

They were also offered Holy Prasadham and a private Dharshan to worship the Deities. The staff were provided with refreshments and thanked for their efficient service.



## Innisai Vizha 2020



An online music festival was conducted by Swara Bharathi on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020. A C Ravi, Coordinator, Swara Bharathi, organized the event in which 29 schools from Thiruvallur district participated.

Neyveli Santhanagopalan, Carnatic Musician was the Chief Guest of the event.

Sevalaya students, S Saratha, A Avantika and S Rithika, participated in the festival and sang the Bharathiyar song "Vande Matharam enbom".

The Chief Guest was very appreciative of the students' performances and the teachers' efforts. The participants received e-certificates.



# Deepavali celebrations across the locations



Deepavali was celebrated at Kasuva Centre on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2020 with hostel children, elders, and staff at the campus.

The children and elders were wearing new dresses and were treated to a scrumptious breakfast. Sevalaya Murali lighted the bronze lamp and began the pooja on the auspicious day.

Everyone enjoyed celebrating Deepavali the festival of lights with the extended family.

Sevalaya Murali thanked the donors who made the celebration possible with their donations and for considering Sevalaya as an extended family.

The children burst crackers and had a tummy full of delicious sweets. The entire family of Sevalaya expressed their Deepavali wishes to everyone.



M Rajendran, Jr Administrative Officer, Madras Medical College, was the Chief Guest at the Deepavali celebrations at Sevalaya Ambattur Centre.



Dr S Sasikumar, Assistant Prof, Gurunanak college was the Chief Guest at the Deepavali celebrations at Sevalaya Zamin Endathur Centre.



A Vijaya Lakshmi, DSWO, Villupuram was the Chief Guest at the Deepavali celebrations at Sevalaya Thirubuvanai, Puducherry Centre.



S Thamaraiselvan, Block Health Supervisor, PHC Manampathi, was the Chief Guest at the Deepavali celebrations at Sevalaya Uthiramerur Centre.



M Kazhaniyappan, Inspector of Police, Thanjavur Taluk, was the Chief Guest at the Deepavali celebrations at Sevalaya Thanjavur Centre.



R Shanmugam, VAO, Mambakkam, was the Chief Guest at the Deepavali celebrations at Sevalaya - Sunguvarchatram Centre.



R Nalini, VAO, Eraharam, was the Chief Guest at the Deepavali celebrations at Sevalaya – Eraharam Tuition Centre.



Ln S Murugesan, Proprietor, KSM Natraja Nada Firm, was the Chief Guest at the Deepavali celebrations at Sevalaya - Ravanasamudram Centre.



## Sevalaya - a turning point in my life

N Saravana Bhavan is a 59-year-old diligent man who has an elder brother and an elder sister. He is unmarried. He is educated up to secondary level and discovered that academics is not in his interest as he preferred a more practical training. He joined Central Training Institute, Guindy to study a Fitter course. On completing his training, he became a turner and gained additional knowledge to become an apprentice at WS Insulator.

He started his career at Standard Motors and worked diligently for a period of 10 years. Due to the sudden stoppage of production, the company decided to shut



down its factory which pushed Saravana back to square one with a question mark over his livelihood. Nevertheless, he picked himself up and joined as a printing roller with a glimmer of hope to kickstart his life.

The experience gained in all his ventured fields as a turner, apprentice at WS Insulator and printing roller to start his own company. Saravana had high expectations but as a sole proprietor, he

suffered huge losses in his business. He joined in a new field at RSS Seva Bharathi with a positive mindset. Due to fate, he met with an accident resulting in brain injury. Life pushed Saravana deep down in the abyss of insecurity under the influence of failure.

As a last resort, he approached a charitable trust which he knew before and asked himself, "what is life?". On his own decisions, he approached Sevalaya to support him mentally as he faced several failures in his life.

He has been a resident of Sevalaya for 1 and a half years and was appointed as a kitchen assistant. Then he was transferred to maintenance team and he now attends to all the electrical maintenance work at Kasuva centre of Sevalaya.

"When I was on the brink of life, Providence guided me to Sevalaya, which provided me shelter and restored my dignity by offering me a job that I enjoy doing. Thanks to Sevalaya for giving me a new lease of life." says Saravana Bhavan.

## Seeing the world through his lens

S C Suresh is the man behind the camera who takes spectacular pictures for Sevalaya during festivals and noteworthy events. He is persistent in capturing a good photo as he believes a photo is worth a thousand words.

His father is a Retd Deputy Collector of Kanchipuram District and he has a sister. At present, he lives with his parents, wife, and his children in a nearby town in Thiruninvarur.

Since his childhood, Suresh showed great interest in photography as the world is seen in a different perspective through a camera lens. He wishes for his photos to strike a chord with the viewers and project an imagination within themselves.

Suresh joined Sevalaya in 2010 as Primary School Teacher after finishing college. The NGO gave Suresh an opportunity to develop his passion in photography. He made good use of the opportunity and learnt numerous techniques in taking



photographs which are a visual treat. Suresh has produced great photos and is on the path to learn video editing.

Suresh is also an environment enthusiast and is leading the Green Campus initiative of Sevalaya. He also teaches his children about the need to protect our environment and the Go green initiatives in practice at Sevalaya like the solar projects, rainwater harvesting, gardening, and green house. His ambition is to convert the entire Kasuva Campus into a sustainable community. He exerts his maximum effort to focus on power reduction and utilize solar power to the maximum extent.

He wishes to implement a waste management system to recycle, proper disposal of toxic waste, segregate

biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste.

"I feel that children should learn about the environment because academic performance keep us happy, but the environment keeps our generation fulfilled" he says reassuringly. He wishes for more children to explore more diverse fields to expand their horizons.

" My wife has been a strong support for me and has helped me reach good position in life. She takes care of my parents who are aged and have many health issues. With her taking care of the household, I am able to work peacefully and effectively." says a smiling Suresh.



*One of Suresh's creations*



# Navaratri - The Festival of Nine Nights



*K Rajasekar received a memento from Sankara Pandiyan*

Navaratri was celebrated at Kasuva Centre on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2020. N Annapurna, Trustee addressed the gathering with a welcome speech. The children of Sevalaya presented a colourful cultural dance.

K Rajasekar, Wholesale Banana Leaf Trader, Poonamalle, was the Chief Guest for the event. He told the students to be grateful to their teachers as education is the only road to bring one to an esteemed position in life. He appreciated his mother for raising him well as he hailed from a poor family.

The Chief Guest wanted to visit Sevalaya again with his friends and ended his speech by thanking God for his blessings.



Sumathi Anand, Entrepreneur, was the Chief Guest at the Navaratri celebrations at Sevalaya - Ambattur Centre.



K Masilamani, DLP Cell of Azhagappa University, was the Chief Guest at the Navaratri celebrations at Sevalaya - Eraharam Tuition Centre.



C B Bhavani Prakash Iyer was the Chief Guest at the Navaratri celebrations at Sevalaya - Mambakkam Centre.



V Vasantha Lakshmi & R Saroja, Music Teachers, Ravanasamudram was the Chief Guest at the Navaratri celebrations at Sevalaya - Ravanasamudram Centre.



V Amutha, Asst Prof, Tamil Dept, Kundavai Nachiyar Women's College, was the Chief Guest at the Navaratri celebrations at Sevalaya - Thanjavur Centre.



B Vaithyanatha Kurukkal, LLB, Sanyasikuppam, was the Chief Guest at the Navaratri celebrations at Sevalaya - Thirubuvanai Centre, Puducherry.



R Jayashri, Hindi Teacher, Meenakshi Ammal Matric Higher Secondary School, was the Chief Guest at the Navaratri celebrations at Sevalaya - Uthiramerur Community College.



D Baskaran, Ex Panchayat President, was the Chief Guest at the Navaratri celebrations at Sevalaya - Zamin Endathur Community College.



# Gokhale visits South Africa

The British found ways to demoralise the Satyagrahis. They were asked to break stones. During severe winter, they were sent out on road camps. They were confined to solitude. Two Satyagrahis deserve special mention. One was Swami Nagappan who was 18 years old. Early in the morning, he was taken in the roads. He contracted Double Pneumonia of which he died after his release on July 9, 1909.

As Nagappan died of ill treatment, the hardships of deportation resulted in the death of Narayanasami on October 16, 1910.

The prisoners went out on a hunger strike to protest against the ill treatment and the insulting behaviour of jailers. The hunger strike yielded fruitful results. As hunger strikers were a rarity in those days, These satyagrahis deserve special credit as pioneers.

Gandhi's efforts at reconciliation by sending a deputation did not bear any fruit.

Now, there was the problem of maintaining the families of jail going Satyagrahis. They were to be located in a place in the Transvaal near Johannesburg. Kallenbach bought a farm of about 1100 acres and gave the use of it to the Satyagrahis free of any charge. In the farm, there were nearly one thousand fruit bearing trees and a small house at the foot of a hill with accommodation for half-a-dozen persons. They built houses upon the farm and the families of the Satyagrahis settled there.

Gandhi has been requesting Gokhale and other leaders in India to go to South Africa and study the condition of the Indian settlers on the spot. Gokhale agreed to visit South Africa and undertake a tour for six weeks. The Satyagrahis decided to take him to the principal cities of South Africa and accord him grand reception at every place. Their enthusiasm impressed the authorities and they extended their cooperation. Gokhale landed at Cape Town on October 22, 1912. In view of Gokhale's health,

arrangements were made to secure him absolute privacy. Gandhi acted as his secretary. Kallenbach was one of the volunteers and Gokhale did not undergo any difficulty or hardship for want of help. From Cape, Gokhale was to go to Johannesburg by a railway journey of two days. At each station in between, Gokhale addressed large gatherings. The Mayors of these places presided over the meetings.

At Johannesburg, a private meeting of leading Europeans was organized so as to give Gokhale a thorough understanding of their standpoint. Besides these, a banquet was held to which were invited 400 persons including 150 Europeans. To this gathering, Gokhale made his longest and the most important speech in South Africa. The clarity, firmness and urbanity of Gokhale's utterances flowed from his indefatigable labour and unswerving devotion to Truth.

(To be continued)

## Shoppeseva offers you what money cannot buy

When you buy from ShoppeSeva you support village artisans and the whole village economy. The proceeds go to fund Free school, Orphanage and Old age home run by Sevalaya, a reputed NGO. So when you buy from ShoppeSeva, you will receive a lot of heartfelt gratitude. And the satisfaction of good deed.

- Village Handicrafts ■ Organic Plants, Vegetables and fruits
- Organic Pulses and grains ■ Bakery Products ■ Traditional snacks
- Dairy Products ■ Personal Medical Products
- Cleaning and Sanitizing products ■ Festive products



### Shoppeseva

# 15/1 (11/1), East Mada Street, Opposite to Theradi, Mylapore, Chennai - 600004.

9344369226 | sales@shoppeseva.com | Shoppeseva.com



Send your comments to:

City Office:

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

Phone: 99414 50444, 94443 33529, 044-24982204

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

[www.sevalaya.org](http://www.sevalaya.org); [www.facebook.com/sevalaya](https://www.facebook.com/sevalaya); [www.youtube.com/sevalayacharity](https://www.youtube.com/sevalayacharity)

**Correspondents:** Anupriya L N, Gowtham Rajasekhar, Kingston A A, Prasanna P, Vijaya R, Anandan M T

**Layout:** Rekha Perumal, Arun G

**Editorial & Design Consultant:**  
Thomas T Abraham