



# LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

MARCH 2021

## House donated for Community College in Urapakkam



Radhamani handing over the property document

Sevalaya will set up a Community College in Urapakkam, near Guduvanchery, thanks to the generosity of Radhamani Thirumurthi, wife of S Thirumurthi an investment consultant.

She has donated her house together with land measuring 1965 Sq.ft, totally worth ₹33 lacs to Sevalaya. Thirumurthi had always wanted to start a Glass Factory

and offer skilled employment to youth. His sudden demise in 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 left Radhamani shattered. Even in the face of her grave personal loss, Radhamani wanted to honour the desire of her late husband.

She heard about Sevalaya and visited the Kasuva centre with her sisters. She was very much impressed by the wide range of services offered by Sevalaya for the underprivileged, in particular the community college. Sevalaya offers free

vocational training in various streams to the rural poor women and youth, and employment is also ensured.

A native of Vellore, Radhamani then decided to donate to Sevalaya, her house where she had lived with her husband. She wants Sevalaya to run a community college in her husband's memory: Sevalaya's Thirumurthi Memorial Community College. The house was transferred and handed over to Sevalaya on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021.



## Akshayaa's pictorial tribute



Sevalaya is doing a great job in terms of inculcating the reading habit even in remote villages through their mobile library.



On 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2021 Jyothi Lakashminarayanan, Director of information technology, DTCC was invited as Chief Guest for New Year celebrations at Kasuva. Her daughter Akshayaa (16) also attended the event.

Deeply impressed by the work done by Sevalaya, she captured one activity that attracted her the most: Mobile library, for "inculcating the reading habit even in remote areas".

# Joy of giving: the way of life

Sultana, the person you will meet first if you visit Sevalaya's city office, completed 10 years of service on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

I still remember the day she walked in with her mother for an interview on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2011, at Sevalaya's office located then at Gandhinagar. A friend of mine had referred her, saying that she was looking for a job.

He had told me that she was physically challenged. Seeing her with crutches, I was not sure how she will be coming to office. The office was in the fourth floor of a very old building, with a creaky lift. Power cuts were frequent and even if there is power, the lift was out of service most of the days.

She was tense and nervous. During the interview, she spoke about her family- the father who had left them, her brother and two sisters who were married and settled. It was she and her mother. When we told her to think about whether she will be able to come to office in the fourth floor, with unreliable lift, she said she needed the job. She wanted to work and support her mother how much ever she can.

Her determination was admirable when on many days, she used to slowly climb the stairs with the crutches, supported by her mother and reach the office. It will take almost half an hour, but



she never gave up.

She started with data entry, learned to communicate with donors over phone, took care of the despatch of letters. A very friendly person, whose mother tongue is Urdu, she speaks Tamil in a child like accent.

Being in a rented premises till recently, Sevalaya office had been shifted four times since Sultana joined. And every time the office is shifted, Sultana will

shift residence to be closer to the office. Now that we have a permanent address in the city, thanks to the magnanimity of Lakshmi Venkataraman, there is no need for Sultana to change houses anymore.

All her colleagues are very supportive and friendly to her. In fact, she said her nervousness during the interview was caused by her doubts on how she will be received by her colleagues, whether she will be able to make friends, whether she will be accepted. Now after 10 years of service she is quite happy. She has become more confident and it speaks volumes about her positive mindset.

Many of her simple desires are fulfilled in Sevalaya. A wheelchair is provided to her which increased her mobility inside the office premises. Whenever team lunch is planned, we make sure Sultana is included. She enjoys eating in the hotel. She has also visited Kasuva Campus many times, for meetings.

And she has also made us realise the value of many simple things in life which we take for granted. That Sevalaya could provide hope to differently-abled people like Sultana is a major motivating factor for us to carry on our services.

Thanks & Regards

Sevalaya Murali

# Girl child protection day



Thiruvallur District Social Welfare Department of the Government of Tamilnadu observed the Girl Child Protection Day on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the Late Chief Minister of Tamilnadu Selvi J Jayalalithaa on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 at the Kasuva centre. Raja Rajeswari, District Social

Welfare Officer (Additional Incharge) was the Chief Guest of the occasion.

K Ramana, Extension Officer, and T Kanchana, Rural Welfare Officer also participated.

Various competitions like drawing, oratorical, essay writing and poetry

competitions were held for the children and prizes were distributed to the winners.

The participants took an oath on the occasion to do their best to eradicate child labour, prevent child abuse/ child marriages and ensure the protection of child rights.

Sevalaya has taken various measures to protect, educate and empower the girl children. 50% of the 2100 poor rural students studying in Sevalaya school are girls. Poor rural women are offered free vocational training in courses like beautician, nursing assistant, lab technician assistant, tailoring, basic computer, tally, and e-publishing.

Sevalaya also helps them in getting employment and thus help them lead a life of self-reliance and dignity.

## BNY Mellon training on cyber security



Community College Students from centers Kasuva, Uthiramerur, Ambattur and Sunguvarchatram participated in a session on Cyber Security for Young Adult conducted by Uma Dhanasekaran,

Technology Risk Control, from BNY Mellon India on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The trainer created awareness about usage of Social Media safely as there are both positives and negatives in it.

## Manava vandanam



Hindu Spiritual & Service Foundation [HSSF] conducted *Manava Vandanam* programme at Kasuva on 23<sup>rd</sup> January and 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

*Manava vandanam-2* was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 in which students

paid respects to their teachers by doing *padha pooja*. During *Bharat Matha Vandanam* students paid tributes to Mother India.

*Paramveer Vandanam* a tribute was paid to T M Vadivel, an ex serviceman who used to train students for parade during Independence day and Republic day. Lt Col Ramesh Kumar, who was the Guest of Honour for the Republic day, paid tributes and honoured the family members of Vadivel.

*Manava Vandanam-3* Foster Women's honor (*Suvaasini vandanam and Kanya vandanam*) was held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021. Grandmothers and young girls were honoured by the boys of the homes.

## Lions club donated sewing machine



A Kaliyamoorthy, IPS, Ex District Collector and Founder of Race Institute Academy, was the Chief Guest at Kadayam.

Bharathi Arima Sangam 324-B4's Zonal

Meeting held at Ambasamudram Taluka Papanasam on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

A Sangili Boothathan, Project coordinator- Sevalaya participated on behalf of Mahakavi Bharathiyar Community College, Ravanasamudram.

In order to promote the services of Sevalaya, a sewing machine for a student studying in Sevalaya and a sewing machine for the use of Sevalaya were donated by the Secretary of Bharti Arima Sangam, Lion P Murugan.

## Book release function



Writer K V Shailaja presenting the book to Sevalaya Murali as the author looks on V Muralidharan Founder & Managing Trustee Sevalaya, was the Chief Guest at the Book release function of "*Budhanai thedi*" written by Kannan P, Senior Regional Manager – Sales (Southern States), Bajaj Finance on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at Chennai.

The book was released by R Kannan, United Nation Administrator and Writer. K V Shailaja was the special guest.

## Medical camp



Sevalaya sponsored lunch for 200 physically disabled persons who attended the Medical camp organised by Thanjavur district differently disabled welfare office at Government Deaf High School, Thanjavur on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

They got free treatment and measurement was taken for the aids they use.



# Excited to come back to school after a long gap

The school has been reopened after 9 months and students of senior classes are back, both relieved and excited. Classes started for students of std X and XII on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and std IX and XI, on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

All safety precautions are in place. Protocols like measuring body temperature regularly and using hand sanitizer are followed. Wearing face masks is compulsory and the students are advised to wash their hands very frequently.

During lockdown I was alone the whole day because my father and mother will go for work in farming land and my elder sister would attend online class.

I was excited after hearing the news about reopening of school, so that I can meet my friends and teachers after a long time.

All the precautions are taken to safeguard us like Wearing mask, using Sanitizer, maintaining social distance.

Wearing mask was the most irritating thing and I felt like some organ was growing above my nose. I wish everything would be normal.

**Inbavel, XI std**



As per govt instructions, seating arrangements are made in each class room not exceeding 25, with proper ventilation. Social distancing is maintained inside and outside the class room even during their break time.

Teachers ensure that there is no exchange of eatables between the students. Zinc and vitamin tablets are given to the students by TN govt. Besides, *Kabasura Kudineer* (immunity building medicine) is provided to students once in a week and meditation classes

are arranged every day.

Awareness about health & safety measure was given by the medical team by making the students watch videos on hygiene. Proper guidance and counseling was given to the students by the experts of Psychological Advisory Committee.

Awareness classes are arranged in order to reduce the fear of COVID-19. Posters about COVID-19 are placed surrounding the school campus in order to guide the children.



# Resuming colleges after COVID-19



Community Colleges at all centres of Sevalaya were reopened after lockdown on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021. All safety protocols are followed. Body temperature monitoring, frequent use of sanitizer. Masks and social distancing have been maintained without any compromise. Posters about precautions have been



pastored in the college, as regular reminders. Brindha, a young mother of a child, who is going to complete her tailoring course

at Thirubuvanai Community College has an interesting story to share.

A B.com graduate, she has worked for nearly 4 years in banking related services. After the birth of her child she was not able to continue her work.

During lockdown her family faced a lot of financial difficulties as her husband, a driver and her father in-law, an auto driver, were jobless. She was determined to do something to improve the situation.

Hearing about Sevalaya's community college she decided to join the tailoring course. She could then be an entrepreneur and at the same time take care of her child. She is going to complete her course this month end. She feels COVID- 19 has made her take a step forward in life.

Lockdown was a sudden and shocking experience. She had never heard about lockdown before. Though her family

struggled financially during lockdown, they had a lot of fun and frolic in the family. They played many traditional games together and had lot of interaction within the family members.

When the lockdown was lifted and the college was reopened, she was apprehensive about COVID-19. But the safety measures and precautions taken at the college like regular checking of body temperature, insistence on the use of hand sanitizers, wearing of face masks and maintaining social distancing, reassured her.

Initially it was a new experience but slowly she was able to cope with it. Seeing and interacting with many friends reminded her of her golden days in school and college.

She sincerely thanks Sevalaya for providing an opportunity to learn a new skill and is looking forward to supplementing her family income in the near future.



B Karthikeyan from Ayathur village was deserted by his mother at a very young age. Growing up in his aunt's house he completed Std XII. He could not pursue higher studies because of poverty. He had to go for a job to support the family but did not possess any skills. It was then he heard about Sevalaya's community college offering free vocational training and joined the AC Mechanic course.

Unfortunately, the college was closed due to lockdown. The master started sending video lessons to the students. There was only one mobile phone in Karthikeyan's house and he could get it only in the night as his father took it away with him when he goes for work.

"Studying from home was very difficult. I had to do household work. Access to mobile phone was also limited. I was also distracted by friends in the neighbourhood who used to come home and call me out to hang out with them.

Actually I was relieved when the college reopened. I could focus on learning without any interruptions. We had sessions on the precautions to be taken during the pandemic times. Wearing of masks is compulsory. Social distancing is maintained. Enough sanitizers are provided I am happy to be back in college and attend classes." says Karthikeyan.

## Fascinated by Sevalaya's work

Aravind Srinivasan has been a donor of Sevalaya since 2015.

The relationship started with the infamous Chennai floods of 2015. Srinivasan felt the strong urge to contribute. He was looking for an NGO with a good reputation for doing honest work at grassroots level. At that time one of his friend recommended Sevalaya. He had belief in Sevalaya and found the instrument to contribute.

After hearing about so activities being carried out at Kasuva campus, he decided to sponsor a child from Sevalaya's home. Subsequently he made contributions



to the relief work during Kerala floods and Covid crisis. Recently he got the opportunity to visit the Kasuva campus and was very impressed by the

commitment of the team and how way the centre is being maintained and run. He says he had privilege to meet and interact with V Muralidaran, Founder Sevalaya, and was very humbled by his sincerity and commitment to helping the under-privileged section of the society. Srinivasan says "My best wishes to the Sevalaya team for continued success in the great work being done by them and I look forward to being associated with them in the years to come".

Aravind is currently the Chief Financial Officer of Varroc Engineering. He completed his B.Com at St.Joseph's College, Trichy, and holds MBA from the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. He is also a Cost Accountant. In a career of over 30 years, he has worked in Unilever and Philips.

His wife is no more. His son Tejas working in Artificial Intelligence in the United States and daughter Dhruvika is studying college in Singapore.

## Sevalaya gave me a new family

G Arun Kumar, Graphic Designer, has been working in Sevalaya for the past 2 years. He completed his Bachelor in Computer Application at Guru Nanak College in 2019.

He joined CITI bank in corporate desk, which promised a good experience and growth in the field. But Arun wanted to use his education towards a good cause. It was then he applied for a job in Sevalaya, after he saw an advertisement.

Appointed in the communication team, he was given training in designing the Newsletter and Annual report. Now he has got trained in many advanced designing software.

He is proud that he is able to come up with innovative designs which improve visibility of Sevalaya. He fully attributes his growth to Bhuvaneshwari Muralidharan, who has been supporting for all the designing work he is doing.



Initially when he joined Sevalaya he struggled to understand his role. At that time, he got a chance to work with Bhargavi G, a volunteer, who helped and guided him, besides giving basic training in InDesign software.

Arun has a supportive family. His father is working in Ennore Foundries as Canteen supervisor; while mother is a house wife. His brother is working in Natco Pharma.

Sometimes few of his friends tell him: "You are very young. Why don't you join a corporate for better career and skills".

But he admires Sevalaya's activities

and loves to be a part of it. He does not mind his daily long travel of 50 KMs to and from the office. He is much committed in his role.

Sevalaya helped him to develop his career by providing a platform to learn many things. Even though Sevalaya is an NGO, it has a corporate structure in all processes. He is happy with the work that he does as it gives him immense satisfaction.

"I am proud to be a part of the organization, Money is not more important than good relationships with the people", he says with a smile.

# A future for every child



AFEC (A Future for Every Child) is an organisation that supports destitute youth over 18 years of age to settle in life, supporting them to learn a trade and get employment.

The founders Gita and Madan Gopal

formed this organisation to support such youth when they realised that destitute children are kept in Child Care institutions only up to the age of 18 and then they are left to fend for themselves.

The condition of such young people, with

no secure environment, is pathetic and the risks of them falling prey to anti-social elements are very high.

AFEC has offered to support 20 such youth who will be provided vocational training in Sevalaya's community college in various trades such as Beautician, Nursing assistant, lab technician assistant, and basic computer skills. AFEC also sponsors their living expenses like food, accommodation, and other expenses.

Sevalaya trains these youth and helps them to get employment and will continue to monitor their progress and help them to overcome the practical difficulties in life for a period up to 2 years with support from AFEC.

The project was started on 8<sup>th</sup> February and at present 10 students are covered under this project.

# Sharing of Knowledge



S Rohetha, a young lady who cleared her NEET exam, chose Sevalaya to donate the books she used for her NEET exam. Rohetha is the daughter of Saravanan M

P, Director - HR & CSR, KONE. Saravanan has seen Sevalaya in close quarters, thanks to KONE's CSR projects in Sevalaya and has been quite impressed.

That prompted Saravanan's daughter Rohetha to do her bit. She donated all the 72 books that helped her in preparing for NEET exam. She would like rural children to succeed in the NEET exam. Currently 3 students are preparing for NEET exam. Those books couldn't have arrived at a better time for them.

I aspire to be a doctor and I am preparing well for the NEET exam. The books given by Rohetha will be very useful to me and two of my friends, who are also preparing for NEET.

**A Jayashree, XII Std**

# Endathur Achievers



SIT - 2020 (Supervisors Improvement Team) contest organised by Quality Circle Forum of India (QCFI) was held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The theme of this year's competition was SIT-Empowers Employees to Achieve Excellence. It was conducted for supervisors and workmen. S Radhika, S Babu, and M Ramamurthy from Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiyar Community College, Zamin Endathur

participated in the competition. They made a presentation using QC tools on the tailoring unit at Zamin Endathur and how it functioned efficiently and effectively even during the pandemic time. The team named "Endathur Achievers" won the gold award among 35 teams who participated in the competition.

# Kasturba protests

Gandhi decided to take a step which he had reserved till the last and which in the event fully answered the Indians' expectations. It was proposed that the sixteen settlers in the Phoenix should cross over in to the Transvaal and as they crossed over, get arrested for entering the country without permits when they entered, the Transvaal Police would ask them their names and addresses, it was part of the programme not to supply this information. Refusal to give name and address to an officer was also held to be a separate offence. While the Phoenix group entered the Transvaal, the sisters who had courted arrest in the Transvaal in vain were to enter Natal. Entering Natal from the Transvaal without a permit was also an offence. If the sisters were arrested upon entering Natal, it was well and good. But, if they were not arrested, they would proceed and post themselves at New Castle, the great coal mining centre in Natal and advise the indentured Indian labourers there to go on strike. If the labourers struck work in response

to the sisters' appeal, Government was bound to arrest them along with the labourers, who would thereby be fired with still grater enthusiasm.

Gandhi went to Phoenix and talked to the settlers. Particularly he had consultations with the sisters living there. The contemplated exercise involved grave risks. The sisters might join the batch because of Gandhi's influence, and if they flinched later at the time of actual trial, or could not stand the jail, they might be led to apologize; it would cause serious damage to the cause. Gandhi was explaining all this and suggested that each should take his or her decision independently of all others. Again and again in various ways he pressed this condition that none should fall away whether the struggle was short or long, whether the Phoenix settlement flourished or faded, and whether he or she kept good health or fell ill in jail. All were ready to the stipulations.

The only person whom Gandhi did not

talk to was his wife Kastur Ba. He had felt if he had asked, she might be inclined to go to jail just for complying with his request. And then, if she trembled in the law court or was terrified by hardships in jail, he could not find fault with her, and he could not look the world in the face.

Kastur Ba protested against this, and said, "I am sorry you are not telling me about this. What defect there is in me which disqualifies me from jail? I also wish to take the path to which you are inviting the others." She further roared, "You may have nothing to do with me if being unable to stand the jail, I secure my release by an apology. If you can endure hardships, and so can my boys, why cannot I? I am bound to join the struggle."

Gandhi had no answer, and Kastur was the first in the list of 16 chosen warriors.

(To be continued.)



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Send your comments to:

Head Office:

Sevalaya, F2 Pushkarani Apartments, #12, Ananda Road, Alwarpet, Chennai - 600 018., Tamil Nadu, India.  
 m: 99414 50444, 94443 33529 e: [sevalayabhuvana@sevalaya.org](mailto:sevalayabhuvana@sevalaya.org); [vpoperations@sevalaya.org](mailto:vpoperations@sevalaya.org).

**Correspondents:** Anandan M T, Anupriya L N, Kanchana S, Kingston A A, Prasanna P, Vidhya Roobini K, Vijaya R

**Layout:** Rekha Perumal, Arun G

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

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