



LOVE ALL, SERVE ALL

“Everyone should experience the joy of giving” - Sivasankari

She is a popular Tamil writer known as an activist and a prolific writer in almost all genres- novels, short novels, short stories, travelogues, collections of articles, literary research anthologies, and biographies. Her greatest contribution to literature is perhaps her mega-project 'Knit India through Literature' involving intense sourcing, research, and translations of literature from 18 Indian languages, with a mission to introduce Indians to other Indians through culture and literature.

The lesser-known side of Sivasankari is the philanthropist, that she is- her contributions to various charitable causes, through institutions, and to individuals.

"Nobody in this world can claim to be independent", she says. "Right from our morning coffee, to all our requirements to live – be it big or small- there are thousands and thousands of unknown people on whom we depend. We owe so much to society merely for our existence that it is mandatory for everyone to give back to society", she asserts.

Born in a traditional yet progressive family, the values of respecting all, helping the needy and being kind and considerate came naturally to her. "There have been inter-religious marriages in our family and everyone was accepted and embraced with love", she says. "But it was my husband who gave me a new insight into life", she recollects.

"We didn't have children. It was the time I had travelled extensively in the US and wrote about the adoption of children. One day, I asked my husband, "Why can't we adopt a child?" He made me sit near him, held my hands, and told me



very lovingly, "Yes we can. Why one? We can adopt even two or more kids. But think of it: If we adopt a child then our world will be that child alone. Instead, why can't we adopt the whole world? Every one? Embrace everyone as our own". It was a defining moment for me. I had goosebumps. My whole outlook changed".

Her kindness has benefitted many, through various causes – providing artificial limbs for 100 differently-abled persons, conducting marriage for 100 poor girls, financial assistance to her driver, and her housemaid, and donations to various organizations.

"Looking at the smile on the face of a physically challenged person, when he takes a step with the artificial limb – nothing in the world can give me a greater joy than that.

"One need not be rich or do great things to serve society. It's the small things that one can do in everyday life – share a meal with the less fortunate, buy books, notebooks, etc for the housemaid's children, a comforting word for the sick, and the suffering... It is not money that matters – It is the heart, the compassion – the willingness to help in whatever way one can – that is important."

Sivasankari has put into practice her beliefs. She has even encouraged her house helper to contribute whatever is within her means, every month, to a

neighbourhood home for the destitutes

Sevalaya has been a beneficiary of her generosity. She has contributed to children's education and has always readily extended a helping hand to Sevalaya for all its new endeavours.

"Sevalaya's services are amazing. The range of services and the spread of geographical location is mind-boggling", she observes with admiration.

"We should sensitize our younger generation to appreciate and be grateful for the things they enjoy and to empathize with the less privileged and actively do something to help people in need", concludes the writer.

Inside

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Thank You!
Sevalaya family
wishes you a very
Happy New Year
2023

Page Pierre inaugurates staff quarters

Page Pierre, a philanthropist from Switzerland and the founder of the Page Pierre Foundation, inaugurated the Chellamma Bharathi Staff quarters at the Sevalaya campus in Kasuva, India.



Page Pierre inaugurates the staff quarters in kasuva village. From L to R: Sevalaya Murali, Daniel Oyon's son, Page Pierre, and Daniel Oyon

The staff quarters to house four families, which were built at a cost of ₹65 lacs, is an important facility for the staff of Sevalaya, operating in a rural area.

A significant supporter of Sevalaya since 2009, Page Pierre praised the efforts of Sevalaya and its staff in providing vital services to the communities they serve.

“Sevalaya is doing important work to improve the lives of those who need it most,” he said. “I am proud to support this organization and its efforts to create a brighter future for all”.
Prof. Daniel Oyon, Academician and



Inauguration of staff quarters by Oyon Yolande. From L to R: Oyon Gaeton, Prof Daniel Oyon, Page Pierre and Sevalaya Murali. Towards the extreme right P Prasanna

Consultant, Page Pierre Foundation, daughters S Hemalatha (Late) and S Shanthi (Late).
participated in this event. The land was donated by N Selvaraj (Late) and his

Page Pierre, a supporter since 2009

Page Pierre Foundation, Switzerland, has been assisting Sevalaya since 2009. Most recently, in 2021, Page Pierre Foundation financed the construction of four primary school classrooms and assisted in COVID-19 Pandemic relief operations. Some of the foundation’s highlighted fundings include the sponsorship of a school bus, the construction of a science centre, a biogas plant, a solar plant, computers, a community college meeting hall shed, a paver block pathway for a primary school, a cycle shed, a library reading room, and the development of GD software.



2 PPG Asian Paints CSR projects implemented

Two major CSR projects of PPG Asian Paints were completed by Sevalaya this December. PPG Asian paints, a leading global paints and coatings company, has been partnering with Sevalaya for the past 11 years to implement its CSR projects.

Lab modernisation in Govt. College



PPG Asian Paints India private limited handed over the Chemistry lab equipment to Arignar Anna Government college. From L to R: Leo Christopher, Dr G Boopathy, Dr R Sivakumar, Sevalaya Murali and other staff

One of the beneficiaries is Arignar Anna Government Arts College in Villupuram. A funding of ₹7 lacs has helped the modernisation of the Chemistry Lab.

As implementation partner, Sevalaya co-ordinated the process, including procurement. On 16th December 2022, Leo Christopher, Plant Head, PPG Asian



From L to R: Leo Christopher, Dr R Sivakumar, Principal, Dr G Boopathy HOD, Chemistry Department

Paints India handed over the equipment to Dr R Sivakumar, Principal, in presence of Dr G Boopathy HOD, Chemistry Department.

Dr Sivakumar said that he was proud that his college was known for its strong research programme and the high-quality work that his college students and faculty produce. The refurbished Lab will help them do even better.

Ensuring access to water in 40 villages



Leo Christopher, handing over water facility materials to V Ejileradjane, Commissioner, Mannadipet Commune Panchayat. Also in the picture: Sevalaya Murali

The beneficiaries of the second project are the 2,000 families of 40 villages in Mannadipet Commune Panchayat, Thirubuvanai, Puducherry.

The donation covers the cost of 2 numbers of 20 HP pump, valves and related materials. They will stand in for any of the pumps that needs repairs, which is not infrequent, mainly due to power fluctuations. The pumps will ensure that the 11,000- strong population

gets water, which is sourced from 90 odd bore wells.

On 16th December 2022, Leo Christopher, Plant Head, PPG Asian Paints India private limited, handed over the pumps and materials to V Ejileradjane, Commissioner, Mannadipet Commune Panchayat. Leo Christopher mentioned that two of the focus areas of his company in the CSR projects are women's education and access to water.

V Ejileradjane, Commissioner, Mannadipet Commune Panchayat, thanked PPG Asian Paints for coming forward to create the infrastructure that will ensure availability of water, a basic need of the people. He requested help from more corporates to meet such basic needs.

Court decrees volunteering in Sevalaya

Students from a college in Chennai were sent to do service in Sevalaya's home as a punishment for their quarrel in the public transport. The sentence was given by the Honourable Judge of Madras High court, Chennai to make them realize their mistake as well as do a service in homes of poor, orphans and underprivileged. The boys visited Sevalaya's Kasuva centre and served in the kitchen, old age home and gaushala for 2 hours daily for 1 month.

The boys initially felt uncomfortable but later there was a good change in their approach.

Sevalaya celebrates Ramanujan Day



The birth anniversary of great mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujan was celebrated as Ramanujan day at Sevalaya's Kasuva centre on 21st December 2022.

Prithvi Raj, Senior Specialist in

Sustainability and CSR (TN & AP), Apollo tyres, was the Chief Guest of the event.

In his address, he gave students examples of successful sports personalities such as Ronaldo, Messi, Sachin, and Dhoni who achieved success by their hard work

and passion. He advised the students to prioritize discipline and values in their lives, and emphasized the importance of self-discipline for a successful life.

Earlier Sevalaya conducted State wise Srinivasa Ramanujan Maths Talent Test 2022. 1700+ students from across schools in Tamil Nadu and 50 students in Andhra Pradesh participated in this talent test.

The toppers received prizes at the hands of the Chief Guest. Participation certificates for all the participants were emailed to them.

Apollo tyres is sponsoring Digital literacy programme in 6 Govt. schools at Oragadam. Sevalaya is the implementation partner.

PwC sponsors computers for PS High School



N Madhan inaugurating the computer lab at P S High School. From L to R: M Harisudhan, T G Suresh and Sevalaya Murali

N Madhan, the Regional Managing Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) on 17th December 2022 inaugurated the computer lab at P S High School, Mylapore. They have sponsored 10 computer for the lab.

This is the part of the digital literacy programme under the CSR activity. Sevalaya is the Implementation partner.



The students from Std III to IX will be trained in computer courses such as the basics of computers, excel, and microsoft word.

M Harisudhan - IDT Partner and Chennai Oversight Partner CSR, PwC, and Hemavathy - EA IDT team and CSR coordinator also participated.



5 Sevalaya children on their maiden flight



Raindrops charity foundation organized a flight trip to Coimbatore for 26 children from various orphanages on 17th December 2022. 5 children from Sevalaya home joined this trip. It was a

dream come true for them, as it was their first trip on the flight.

Students were received by G S Sameeran District Collector in Coimbatore.

"I really enjoyed the moment, because I felt like I was touching the clouds. I really enjoyed the whole experience. This is the first time I flew on a plane. It was such a rush, like I was going at top speed. It was an amazing feeling and I would love to do it again".

S Sashwin, III Std



Bharathiyar day celebrations across locations

Chellamma Bharathiyar Learning Centre, Kadayam



140th Birth Anniversary of Mahakhavi Bharathiyar was celebrated at Chellamma Bharathi Learning Centre in Kadayam, Tenkasi district on 14th December 2022. Isaikkavi Ramanan, Tamil Poet, writer and Orator was the Chief Guest. The Chief Guest garlanded the statue of Chellamma- Bharathi and all the visitors paid floral tributes. The Chief Guest Isaikkavi Ramanan in his address spoke about Bharathi's connections with Kadayam. The wedding of Bharathi and Chellamma took place at Kadayam village on 27th June 1897 and Bharathiyar's association with Kadayam started from then. Isaikkavi also mentioned that the first poem composed by Bharathi at Kadayam, was during his wedding with Chellamma.

Earlier, on 13th December 2022 various competitions for students of schools in and around Kadayam were held. 700 students from more than 20 schools participated. Competitions like Essay, Poem recitation, Oratorical and Quiz on Bharathi's life were conducted. Prizes were distributed to the winners of the competition by the Chief Guest.

Eraharam

K Saranya, Director and Trainer, English Express Academy was the Chief Guest at the Bharathiyar Day celebration on 15th December 2022 at Eraharam Community College.

Pattinapakkam

Dr A R Chandrasekaran MBBS, DPH, FRSH (UK) was the Chief Guest at the Bharathiyar Day celebration on 12th December 2022 at Pattinapakkam Community College. Chandrasekaran spoke about the importance of Bharathiyar and his contributions to Indian literature and society.

Thanjavur

Sivakumar, Former Secretary of Bharathiyar Sangam Chennai was the Chief Guest at the Bharathiyar Day celebration on 13th December 2022 at Thanjavur old age home.

Thirubuvanai, Puducherry



Vishalakshi, Professor, Department of Tamil, Perunthalaivar Kamarajar College, Kalitheerthalkuppam, Madagadipet, Puducherry was the Chief Guest of the Bharathiyar Day celebration at Thirubuvanai Community College on 12th December 2022.

Gudalur



Mohammed Kudarathula, Revenue Divisional Officer was the Chief Guest at the Bharathiyar Day celebration on 10th December 2022 at Gudalur Community College.

Ambattur

S Vijay Kumar, Director and Trainer, English Express Academy was the Chief Guest at the Bharathiyar Day celebration on 7th December 2022 at Ambattur Community College. He shared his experiences and insights on the importance of education in today's world.

Uthiramerur

Thakolam N Jalanathan, HeadMaster, Tamil Sangam Literary, Coordinator Uthiramerur was the Chief Guest of the Bharathiyar Day celebration at Uthiramerur, Community College on 13th December 2022.

Sunguvarchatram

Lion K Elumalai, Clerk, Co-Operative Bank, Sunguvarchatram was the Chief Guest at Bharathiyar Day celebration on 14th December 2022 at Sunguvarchatram Community college.

Zamin Endathur

B Prabu, Assistant professor, Tamil Department, Sri Malolan College of Arts and Science, Maduranthagam was the Chief Guest at Bharathiyar Day celebration on 13th December 2022 at Zamin Endathur centre.

BNY Mellon conducts career guidance programme



On 7th December 2022, 144 students from Std XII at Sevalaya participated in a career guidance programme conducted by the staff of BNY Mellon at Sevalaya's Kasuva centre. Priya Murthy Ananthan, Director of Employment Legal at BNY Mellon, gave a presentation highlighting the achievements of famous personalities who pursued careers in law and the opportunities available to those interested in pursuing a Bachelor

of Law (LLB) degree. She encouraged the students to aim for good marks in their public examinations and consider a career in law as a way to protect their nation.

Overall, the programme was a valuable resource for the students as they explore their options for the future.

Anusiya finds happiness in books

Happiness is not what life gives but what one makes out of what life gives. 72-year old Anusiya exemplifies that.

Anusiya was born in 1950 in Chennai to Padmanabhan and Lalitha. Padmanabhan was a cook. She studied till Std XI. Her younger sister Geetha didn't study - she was mentally retarded.

With a family of four to support, Anusiya did not marry. She worked in a clinic as a helper and with the salary, took care of her family. In few years both her parents and her sister expired. She stayed in her relative's house, doing house work. Then the relatives drove her from their house, claiming that the work she rendered

"Sevalaya is a large family"

Prayers are always answered and group prayers are very powerful. I have seen this when we pray for donors, staff, residents of our homes," says P Lakshmi, Asst HM Std XI to XIII and PGT Economics, who has been with Sevalaya since 2010. Lakshmi has been unfazed by her struggles and obstacles and constantly on the lookout to improve herself and serve better. The PG Economics she completed is indicative of that.

Lakshmi and her 2 brothers grew up in a small village, Kathiyavadi, in Ranipet district. Their parents were farmers but when her father met with an accident that affected his ability to walk, the onus of taking care of the family fell on her mother. Lakshmi's two elder brothers discontinued studies after 10th and started working. Her elder brother started working as an electrician, helped Lakshmi complete her higher secondary and then she graduated from a college in Walajapet.

Lakshmi's uncle and cousins were in the

earned her upkeep. With the little savings she had, she went to so many places including Kanyakumari. With all her money spent, she returned to Thirupathi.

Then she came to Thiruvallur and stayed and worked in the shop of Lalitha Jewellery. The shop owner took pity and took her to their house. She was in a lot of depression during that period and she attempted committing suicide.

At that time one kind hearted person Premkumar and his wife Hemalatha referred her to the old age home in Kasuva. She stayed in Kasuva old age home for 3 years. She was identified with diabetes there and she got regular treatment. From there she was transferred to Sevalaya's Gandhi Ashram Krishnan Memorial Old Age Home, Thanjavur.

Anusiya says that she has a happy life there. She does gardening, vegetable cutting. She is friendly with other inmates. She visits the Vinayagar temple regularly and is happy that there is a library in the old age home since she likes

reading books, especially spiritual books.

Looking back, she remembers the heap of problems she faced during her childhood due to her family situation and with her mentally sick sister. With all those troubles she grew up, then survived the worst facet of her life. All that is behind her. Now her life is comfortable and she is happy with what her life now offers her.



teaching field and so Lakshmi too desired to be a teacher. Her Economics teacher's caring nature and good teaching skills inspired her further. Her small village did not offer many opportunities and when her uncle offered her a chance to come to Chennai, Lakshmi grabbed the opportunity. She did her master's through correspondence and later B.Ed with her uncle's support. After 6 months in a private school, Lakshmi joined Sevalaya in 2010.

Lakshmi recalls how she slowly learnt the nuances of teaching and coaching children for board exams through the

various training and mentoring sessions at Sevalaya. She had been timid and shy and would be scared when she had to speak in the assembly or do a book review. But the opportunities provided at Sevalaya and the supportive atmosphere helped her overcome her stage fear and made her bold. Computers were new to her, but the training here has taught her how to use this technology efficiently and confidently. She has also learnt to multi-task, managing the various duties as AHM along with her classes.

She got married in 2013 and had a son only in 2019. She underwent several treatments and all the while her friends, seniors stood by her, helping her in all possible ways and praying for her individually and in groups. A grateful Lakshmi says that her son was conceived only after a visit to Garbhakshambiga temple at Thirkarugavur near Kumbakonam, that Sevalaya management arranges periodically.

"Sevalaya is truly a large family where the needs of the staff are taken care off. The salary I get here has helped me meet all family obligations especially during the COVID years when it was the only income we got". As for the future, "I still have a long way to go, learn a lot and want to be associated with Sevalaya for many years helping children here reach their full potential".

Christmas celebrations at various locations

Kasuva



Sevalaya, celebrated Christmas at Kasuva centre. Dr Miriam Samuel, Head of the Social Work Department, Madras Christian College was the Chief Guest for the event.

The celebration was filled with joy and festive spirit as Santa Claus visited and played with the children, and elders who were delighted to meet him. The stage was beautifully decorated with a Christmas tree and a manger scene. Santa Claus came dancing to the tune of Jingle bells, increasing the festive spirit.

The Chief Guest along with Santa Claus cut the Christmas cake prepared at Sevalaya's Bakery Unit, which was distributed by Santa Claus to all.

The Chief Guest Miriam Samuel in her address, spoke about the message of fearlessness given by Jesus Christ, His humble birth which made him accessible to all and the love he showed towards all.

Other professors of the department, Prince Annadurai, Prof. Johan, Prof. Sudarson spoke about the Christmas spirit of giving, sharing, serving and showing love towards all.

EXL Service volunteers join in Christmas celebrations



30 volunteers from EXL Service celebrated Christmas with the elders and students of Sevalaya at its Kasuva centre on 17th December 2022 .

The stage was well decorated with the manger and a Christmas tree.

LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Gudalur



Jogy Oommen Philip, Correspondent, St. Thomas School, Gudalur was the Chief Guest at the Christmas day celebration at Sevalaya's Samaritan Gramodharan Samity, Gudalur.

Sunguvarchatram

E Sekar, Siganpal Church, Catechist, Kunnam was the Chief Guest for the Christmas day celebration at Community College, Sunguvarchatram.

Thanjavur

A Victor Dass, Parish Priest, St Anne's Youth Forum, was the Chief Guest for the Christmas day celebration at Old Age Home, Thanjavur.

Pattinapakkam

A Julie, Principal, Fatima Nursery and Primary School was the Chief Guest for the Christmas day celebration at Community College, Pattinapakkam.

Zamin Endathur

A Benjamin, Pastor, Heavenly Gateway Church, was the Chief Guest for the Christmas celebration at Community College and Old age Home, Zamin Endathur.

Ambattur



S Robin Jayaraj, Assistant Professor, DRBCCC Hindu College, Pattabiram, was the Chief Guest for the Christmas day celebration at Community College Ambattur.

Uthiramerur

A Vimalraj, Parish Priest, St. Theresa of Child Church, was the Chief Guest for the Christmas day celebration at Uthiramerur Community college on 21st December 2022.

Thirubuvanai, Puducherry

A Paul Timothy, President, Passion for Nation Ministry and State President and Akila Inthiya Christhavargal Munetra Sangam, Puducherry was the Chief Guest at the Christmas day celebration at Thirubuvanai Community College on 22nd December 2022.

The students performed a cultural programme. Volunteers from EXL Service sang Christmas Carols. Santa Claus visited the celebrations and gave chocolates to all the children.

EXL Service also donated 24 bags of stationery items to the children.

The Christmas cake baked at Sevalaya's bakery in the community college was cut and distributed to all children, elders, and participants.

Mary, Senior Manager training, EXL Service co-ordinated the event. In her speech to the students she said "If

someone asks you how is your life ? You should say that you are happy. Always be happy. You are blessed children". She concluded saying that the EXL Service team would visit the campus often.



Thillaiyadi Valliamma - (6)

(Source: "Agony of Valliamma" by Aziz Hassim)

Thambi Naidoo was surprised that Valliamma knew so many people. Particularly he was amazed at her acquaintance with the person whom she introduced just then as the one who saved her from the cop. The person was Tshabalala, the underworld don. Nothing could move in the area without his permission. The police top people were in his pocket. He was also a political activist.

Then, Thambi Naidoo was counselling Valliamma on the tactics she should adopt. "Do what you have to do. Just keep your distance and stay away from them. There is a time to face up these animals and a time to draw back. Knowing the difference is the way to engage with your opponents."

Even as they were talking, they noticed a ring of policemen armed with rifles and revolvers. The women in the rally were scattering and the contingent had surrounded the remaining supporters, and were barking instructions to disband and move on.

Ignoring Thambi's cautionary cry, Valliamma sprinted across the square and was exhorting the women to

go back to the rally and not allow themselves to be intimidated. Meantime, Ally and Thambi Naidoo came striding through the crowd of demonstrators, and confronted the arrogant official. The official, threatened the duo with serious consequences, and issued instructions to his troops, to physically assault them. The crowd, refused to be intimidated by the Police and did not disburse. The official, sensing that Ally, Thambi Naidoo and Valliamma were the instigators, asked the policemen to tie up Thambi Naidoo to a horse and pull him all the way to the station. Before the order would be implemented, the sky roared with thunder and the rain was about to pour down heavily. Valliamma, holding Ally on one hand, pulled Thambi Naidoo away from the furious guards, dashed towards the milling crowd and merged with the swarming throng of disarray.

Ally acknowledged that she saved them from certain disaster. She had displayed great courage in the face of grave disaster. In fact, they were indebted to her.

Ally and Thambi Naidoo were debating with her the rules governing the protest.

Valliamma said softly, but firmly, "You do it your way. I will follow my own conscience. We all want our people to be free. For that, I will do all I can. That will be a greater victory than sacrificing my life."

News reached Gandhi, Thambi Naidoo, P K Naidoo and Ally who were in a conference that Valliamma was mobilizing women to prepare to march from Tolstoy Farm to Natal border. It was certain that this would land them in jail, for the illegal march and for not having a permit to leave Transvaal. They were, however agreed that she was her own person, motivated by her own beliefs. But they wanted to persuade her to give up the move.

With this intention, Gandhi met her at her residence.

To be continued.



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