

Sewa Central Jersey for 'Save Soil' Awareness Campaign!

Sewa Central Jersey Chapter has always been conscious about dedicating their service towards efforts in environmental sustainability initiatives in the form of reforestation efforts of parks, trails and waterbody cleanups, highway and street cleanups, community gardening projects, organic farming and composting, composting education workshops and also partnering with township green teams, schools, libraries and neighborhoods in plastic recycling drives.

Taking a step further in their sustained effort to affirm their commitment to the health and future of our planet, Sewa Central Jersey Chapter has joined hands with Isha Foundation in 'Save Soil' a global movement launched by Sadhguru to address the soil crisis by bringing together people from around the world to stand up for Soil Health, and supporting leaders of all nations to institute national policies and actions toward increasing the organic content in cultivable Soil.

"Soil is our life, our very body. And if we forsake soil, in many ways, we forsake the planet."

- Sadhguru

Soil is the foundation of almost all life on this planet. It is a complex symbiotic system of organic matter, minerals, gases, liquids and living organisms that together support life. Without organic content in the form of humus and living organisms and microbes, soil is reduced to inert sand.

The Save Soil movement is about bringing humanity together to initiate a conscious approach to soil and planet. It seeks to show governments of all nations that their citizens want a policy to revitalize soil and the ecology.



"Creating a Conscious Planet is possible only by raising human consciousness."

- Sadhguru

Sewa Central Jersey has taken the pledge to dedicate their service to the 'Save Soil' movement to address the soil crisis, educate and bring together people to stand up for soil health, and to bring awareness across the nation that the need of the hour is for a national policy to revitalize soil and the ecology.

Let us make it happen! ♥

Chapter Highlights

- ❖ Sewa 'Save Soil' Campaign
- ❖ 'Earth Day' across townships
- ❖ Plastic Recycling Drive
- ❖ 'Keep My Street Green' Program
- ❖ Parks, Trails, Streams and Beach Cleanups
- ❖ Community Organic Gardening
- ❖ Reforestation Efforts
- ❖ Green Fun Fair and fundraiser
- ❖ Eyeglass Recycling for NJ
- ❖ Book Collection Drive for Underprivileged Kids
- ❖ AttachAvi Autism Foundation Program
- ❖ Community Food Bank
- ❖ Volunteering
- ❖ Sewa Meals for the homeless
- ❖ Sewa at Temples

Center Highlights

- ❖ 'Bag Up NJ' Campaign
- ❖ Sewa Carnival Fundraiser
- ❖ Township Community Cleanups

Volunteer Spotlight



Venkata Subba Karnati has been an active volunteer for the Cherry Hill Center since 2020. He has participated in numerous events hosted by Sewa such as the Cherry Hill trail cleanups, Neshaminy Park reforestations, Treats for Troops Drive, and other farming events. As a child he was taught to put others' needs before his own and through the events organized by Sewa, he practices this belief. Raised in a village in Andhra Pradesh, he now lives in Marlton, New Jersey and works for Wipro while actively engaging with the local community alongside his two kids, Dinesh and Samanvi, and his wife, Hyma. Aside from work, Subba enjoys watching the latest movies, spending time with friends and family and surrounding himself with nature.

To support this important cause and also a way to demonstrate their support for environmental protection in the annual event of 'Earth Day' on April 22, 2022, where this year's theme is 'Invest In Our Planet', the LEAD volunteers of Central Jersey Chapter have designed and created banners and posters to raise awareness on this movement for a 'Conscious Planet to Save Soil'.



Through their participation in this movement, our LEADs have been learning about various ways one can contribute to preventing soil degradation. They have understood the benefits of supporting nature friendly organic farming which gives us produce whilst still protecting the soil. The LEADs have also not just found a way about bringing about this much needed change but also about making a change to their way of life by consuming organic food, drinks, using organic clothes, accessories and thus championing organic in all aspects of their lives.



It is a journey for each and every one from Green Heads to Green Hands to Green Hearts ...to Save the Soil!

Let us make it happen! ❤️

Plastic Bag Drive, 'Bag Up NJ' and 'Keep My Street Green' Sewa Efforts for 'Earth Day' and Environmental Protection continues this month of April!

Sewa Central Jersey, in being prepared for the New Jersey ban on single-use plastic bags which will go into effect in May, started the Plastic Bags and Film Packaging Recycling Drive in the month of March 2022 and has continued with their efforts into this month of April. This month the LEADs also initiated the efforts with 'Bag Up NJ' awareness campaign.

Sewa's Plastic Bags and Film Packaging Recycling Drive!

Throughout the month of April, Central Jersey LEADs have been focused on an awareness campaign about the damage plastic bags cause to our planet. As April is also the month of 'Earth Day' where this year's theme is 'Invest in Our Planet', LEADs have also been bringing about an awareness to maintaining a sustainable lifestyle.

LEADs have gone through their communities and brought awareness to their neighbors about the detrimental effects of plastic bags. They have collected plastic bags, wrappers, and packaging from their own households and others' households. The Central Jersey Chapter has taken on the responsibility of recycling the collected plastic bags in the right manner to protect the planet. We hope that this initiative can be implemented year-round across townships and communities!



Sewa for 'Bag Up NJ' Campaign!



Monroe Center LEADs further helped in enabling the move towards a protected environment by volunteering to help 'Bag Up NJ' distribute reusable bags. The "Bag Up NJ" campaign is the New Jersey Clean Communities Council's new single use plastic and paper bag ban outreach campaign, which has a simple message: "Bring your own reusable bag(s) when you shop!". The single use plastic and paper bag will be in effect in May, banning all stores from providing customers with single-use plastic bags. Additionally, grocery stores that have an area greater than 2,500 square feet under the law will be banned from providing customers with single-use paper bags.

The LEADs distributed reusable bags at a supermarket, where customers walking in could use the bags for their shopping and get to take home the bags for reuse when shopping in the month of May and months to come.

Sewa for 'Keep My Street Green' – Save the Oceans!

'Keep My Street Green', was another project initiated in the month of March 2022 by the Central Jersey Chapter. The Chapter partnered in this innovative community project with the Green Team of Parsippany, NJ, as part of the Sustainable Jersey goals commitment.

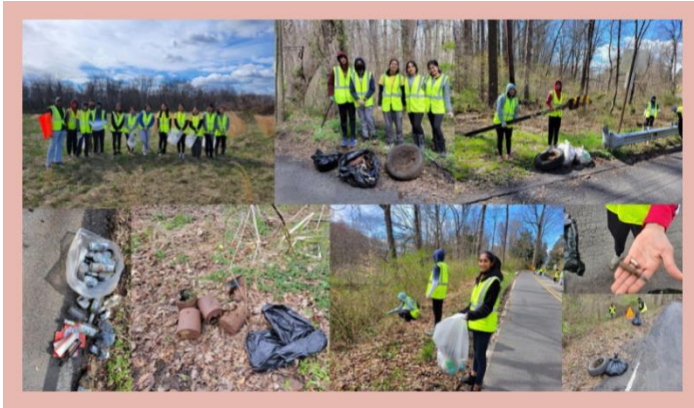
Sewa LEADs demonstrated their support for environmental protection of 'Earth Day' by cleaning up recyclable items and trash in their neighborhoods in the streets they 'adopted' through the month. As we move towards summer and more people spend their time outdoors, as seen in the pictures, litter has been more prevalent than before in communities, parks, roads, and other public places. These best efforts by the LEADs in their towns and communities are their way of doing their bit towards the bigger goal of decreasing the amount of litter that goes into oceans. These efforts made at home are the first step towards a more Sustainable Jersey!



Parks, Trails, Streams Cleanups, Community Gardening and Reforestation Efforts!

Central Jersey Chapter volunteering efforts continue this month of April in parks, trails, streams, farms and community gardens across townships in New Jersey!

Chesterfield Community Cleanup



Chesterfield Center Sewa LEADs helped to clean about a mile stretch of White Pine Road. It consisted of lots of litter which filled up about 19 trash bags. There were liquor bottles, paint tins, shotgun pellets, tires, exhaust pipes, and a whole lot of other trash.

The public have been littering this road with utter disregard to the damage caused to the environment, but Sewa LEADs and adult volunteers made an appreciable effort to help the community and keep the town clean!

Colonia and Papaiani Park Cleanup

Edison Center LEADs traveled to Charlie Shaughnessy Park in Colonia to participate in the Colonia Park Cleanup. In the park, the LEADs raked leaves, fished out trash like plastic bottles and cans, and teamed up with local volunteers to help clear the litter from the sidewalk and playground. They worked hard in helping to restore the park to its natural, clean state. The LEADs also cleaned up Papaiani Park in Edison in a similar manner for the community.

Their efforts were even recognized by Daniel Harris, a board member of Woodbridge Township, who thanked the Sewa volunteers for their service. The cleanup was a great opportunity for the LEADs to bring about a sense of service and responsibility in their community, as well as contribute to creating a more welcoming park atmosphere.



Mile Run Brook Cleanup



Somerset Center LEADs participated in the Mile Run Clean Up this month. This run focused on picking up garbage and recyclables on the trail. For this project the Sewa Center partnered with LWRP, an organization that handled the cleaning of trails and restoring its natural beauty.

With this project the LEADs hoped to bring to awareness the importance of taking care of the environment.

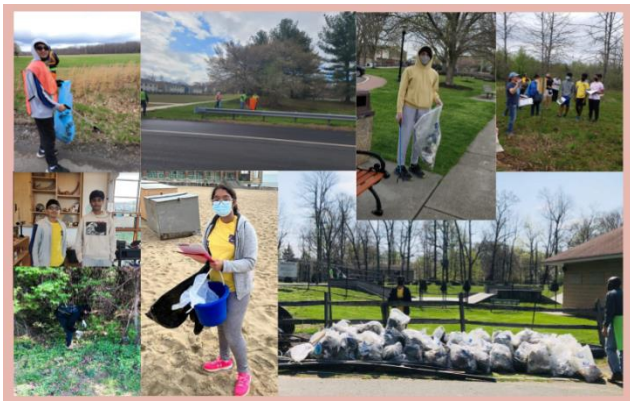
Mount Laurel Township Cleanup

As part of the Earth Day, a Community Cleanup was organized in Mount Laurel Township where Cherry Hill LEADs thoroughly cleaned Mount Laurel Memorial Park, removing cigarettes, plastic bags, cans, and other trash.

Over 20 volunteers signed up to this event to help keep the community clean. In total, over 10 bags of trash were collected and properly disposed of. By doing this, the LEADs provided the community a safe and clean park where they could have a fun time with family and friends in the coming months!



Watershed Institute Cleanup and other activities



Monroe Center LEADs participated in road cleaning at the Watershed Institute in Pennington, NJ. The LEADs collected about 8 pounds of trash which included broken bottles.

LEADs further volunteered at stream cleanups, Monroe Community Garden cleanup, cleanup of Village Park in Cranbury, Hilltop Park in Princeton and Memorial Park in Hightstown. Overall, a total of around 50 plus pounds of trash was collected!

LEADs also helped out at a flashlight egg hunt at the Watershed Institute. The LEADs took on the additional responsibility of engaging and supervising the 120 young children as they had fun egg hunting.

LEADs went bird watching at the Watershed Institute and learned about different birds and how to identify them and care for them! Overall a very enriching experience for our LEADs!

Lower Raritan Watershed Beach Cleanup

Edison Center LEADs helped the community by cleaning up a beach in South Amboy. This event was done through the Lower Raritan Watershed project.

Despite it being a rainy day the LEADs did a great job cleaning up trash that was scattered on the sand at the beach and along the water. In addition, LEADs recorded all of the trash they collected to help in a water pollution study that was being performed!



Ramblin' Sol Farms Spring Cleanup and Organic Farming

"Rolling along with sunshine on our backs, calluses on our hands, and Jersey soil at our feet!"



This month, Cherry Hill and Chesterfield Center LEADs continued their volunteering efforts at Ramblin Sol Farm(CSA), an organic farm in Cream Ridge, NJ. After working on organizing, cleaning, and painting the farm, the LEADs worked on seeding, transplanting and harvesting the organic produce. A variety of crops were planted such as snow peas, kale and onions bulbs. This produce is healthy, safe, and directly benefits the community.

The LEADs got to learn more about organic farming and how it is better for the community's well-being. The LEADs had the experience of fluffing soil, digging, planting, harvesting, and preparing the green house for sowing seeds!

Sewa at KKWC Garden

This month the Edison Center LEADs also helped to clean the Kiddie Keep Well Summer Camp (KKWC) in Edison, NJ. The camp boasts a garden with delicious fruits and vegetables and the LEADs worked hard to clean up the garden, fill soil, and make beds ready for the further plants. Together, they cleaned and sowed all the plants in the garden. The garden restoration was a much awaited activity for the season, and the LEADs did a wonderful job!



Sewa at Freehold Community Garden



This month Monroe Center Sewa LEADs cleaned up the Freehold Community Garden, making it more manageable for the people who rent the beds for their plants. LEADs shoveled excess wood chips found at the garden and transferred them into a wheelbarrow; they then spread them into the walkway to suppress weeds. This task was done quickly and efficiently, and LEADs were able to experience a small part of a gardener's work.

Sewa at Marlboro Community Garden

Monroe LEADs continued helping out with gardening at Marlboro Community Garden. Here, LEADs helped remove weeds, move wood, plant trees, and more to benefit the garden. Sifting compost is a common task that LEADs do on a weekly basis. This helps the removal of unwanted materials such as rocks, plastic, etc.

Additionally, each week LEADs receive a lesson on gardening from the master gardener, and this month LEADs learnt about rhubarb plant's history, life cycle and its habitat!



Sewa Reforestation Effort at Neshaminy State Park



Through this season of Spring, the Central Jersey Chapter LEADs continued with their volunteering effort of reforestation at Neshaminy State Park, Pennsylvania.

The LEADs continued with clearing invasive plants and went onto to plant more trees. The LEADs efforts of reforestation will provide a natural habitat for wildlife and migrating birds and towards maintaining the ecosystem.

'Green' Fun Fairs and Fundraising Carnivals!

Monroe Carnival – A Sewa Fundraiser!

Sewa Monroe LEADs organized a carnival for the people in the neighborhood of Orchards community to raise funds for the Sewa SHE-CAF and SHE programs!

The LEADs created a carnival atmosphere for the Orchards neighborhood where they had different types of creative fun games and also had fun activities like face painting!

Prizes were given to those who excelled at each game and food was also provided at the carnival with separate tickets for the food to raise funds for the cause.

Kids in the neighborhood participated and enjoyed the variety of fun games and events!

Overall, the LEADs created an amazing 'fun day' of family fun time for everyone and also did a great service by raising funds for the beneficiaries of the SHE and SHE-CAF programs!



Funds from the SHE-CAF program go towards the COVID-19 affected families and funds for the SHE program go towards the rehabilitation of the women by providing certified livelihood skill training courses, counseling sessions and job placements.

Chesterfield 'Green' Fun Fair!

The Central Jersey Chapter partnered with The Chesterfield Township Green Team on April 24th this month and organized a Green Fun Fair. The Sewa LEAD and adult volunteers were part of the organizing team and were involved from conception stage to the planning and execution of the event!



LEADs from Chesterfield, Cherry Hill and Somerset Centers participated in this 'Green' Fun Fair where they were involved right from start to finish with Setting up of tents/stalls, conducting craft workshops, doing the art of 'henna' tattoos and organizing many games.

In going with the theme of 'Green Fun Fair' the LEADs did their best to impart knowledge on protecting the environment, importance of recycling and brought awareness on keeping the streets clean and ultimately saving the oceans. The LEADs also sold plant seedlings to encourage the visitors from Chesterfield and neighboring towns to plant more trees!

The LEADs used this opportunity to sell their hand crafted cards, bracelets and jewelry to raise funds for the Sewa SHE-CAF and SHE programs too!

The LEADs gave the township not only a fun filled day but also made a positive difference to the township by sending the community back home with the knowledge on how they can do their bit to protect the environment!

Sewa for the Underprivileged, for the Visually Impaired and for Autism!

Sewa for Eyeglass Recycling!



Sewa Central Jersey Chapter supported Lions Club NJ for their Eyeglass Recycling Challenge, an event by the Lions Club NJ is to create awareness of their core cause of eradicating preventable blindness. The Challenge is an attempt to chain 100,000 eyeglasses and break the Guinness World Record of "Longest Chain of Spectacles" on May 1st, 2022 at the Liberty State Park – which was achieved with a record of 43,000 feet of eyeglasses on 2,000 pieces of cardboard!

Sewa LEADs across the Centers of Central Jersey collected 22 boxes containing 500 glasses each. They formed small groups to chain the glasses together as per the design and layout given by Lions Club and laid out the rows of glasses across dividers and then boxed these and dropped off completed projects to the collection centers.

All together Central Jersey LEADs chained 11,000 eyeglasses for this event!

Once the record was certified, the glasses would head to the New Jersey Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center in Trenton where they would get cleaned and then disseminated to people all over the world who need reading glasses and cannot afford or access them. The LEADs had a wonderful opportunity to contribute towards the cause of improving the quality of life for people who are blind and visually impaired.

Sewa Book Drive for the Underprivileged!

The Hidden Gems Book Drive was a book drive organized by Sewa Central Jersey where the LEADs ran a collection drive for books to donate to Hidden Gems Literary Emporium, who collects books to give out to poor children.

With the LEADs combined efforts across the Centers of Central Jersey, 500 plus books were raised so they could be donated. By partnering with Hidden Gems, Sewa contributed to educating impoverished students.



Sewa AttachAvi Autism Foundation Program

Our AttachAvi Program is a collaborative effort by Sewa Central Jersey Chapter with The AttachAvi Autism Foundation.

Edison LEADs hold weekly classes with children with disabilities or special needs and teach them to socialize and communicate. The LEADs planned many activities like singing which help the children build on their communication skills. It enables the children to acclimatize and get comfortable with all aspects of a classroom.

Sewa Meals for Homeless and Volunteering at Food Banks!

Sewa Meals for the Homeless

Central Jersey Chapter LEADs once again prepared meals for the homeless and volunteered at food donation banks for those in need!

Twice this month of April, the Somerset Sewa LEADs prepared Sewa meals for the homeless. The first meal included cold sandwiches, chickpea salad, pasta, muffins, and snacks for kids. Kudos to all the LEADs and parents who made this meal possible!

For the second meal, the Somerset LEADs prepared a meal that included Mexican rice, beans & veggie salad, zucchini sauté, nachos, and PBJ sandwiches.

This first meal was sponsored to celebrate the 50th birthday of Mahesh Chandra and the Sweet-16 birthday of Pragathi Mahesh! The second meal was sponsored by LEAD Abhinav's family!

Huge thank you to both the families for sponsoring the meals!

Thanks to all the LEADs and their parents, the Somerset Center was able to continue providing hot and cold meals to the United Methodist Church in New Brunswick for those in need!



Chesterfield LEADs made 157 meals this month & delivered them to the meal distribution hub at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Trenton, with whom Sewa International, USA has partnered with to feed those in need.

This month's meal included a Vegetable burrito bowl (Mexican rice, beans, lettuce, sautéed onions, and peppers) and chips for the main course and sweet brownies for dessert! The meals were all delivered neatly and we thank all of the LEADs for their efforts in preparing these delicious meals and healthy meals to help the community!

The meals were kindly sponsored by:
Anjali and Anuj Gupta
Divya and Bhaskar Andavarapu
Monika and Shashi Khurana
Shilpa and Mukul Rathi (State Farm)



This month Monroe LEADs prepared meals consisting of Cumin rice, Chana masala, Punjabi salad, Pita bread and pound cake as dessert and kids' meals consisting of grilled cheese sandwiches, apples, carrots, cookies and juice. Once again the LEADs executed and delivered the meals flawlessly with all sanitary precautions being followed, as all LEADs wore gloves, masks, and hairnets.

The prepared meals were then delivered to the United Methodist Church in New Brunswick to be distributed to the homeless.

We are thankful to this month's meal sponsor - LEAD Sowmya's family!



Edison LEADs gave back to the community by serving meals thrice this month to The Ozanam Family Shelter. The meals they prepared consisted of salad, bean soup, cheese sandwiches, cupcakes, pasta and brownies. They then dropped these off at the shelter for it to be distributed to those who are in need. These LEADs took care to take all sanitary precautions when preparing this food.

Kudos to all of the LEADs that helped the people at this shelter!



Community Food Bank Volunteering

Sewa Central Jersey Chapter LEADs volunteered at one of the largest food banks, Community Food Bank NJ (CFBNJ) to help provide food for the less fortunate. They helped in assembling food boxes, packing pasta, and prepping food. This food is then distributed to other agencies that serve directly to those in need across various communities.

With Sewa projects like these, the LEADs learn to be considerate towards others and grateful for what they have.



Sewa at Temples

Sri Radha Gopinath Temple Sewa



On the day of Ram Navami, Edison LEADs came to volunteer at Radha Gopinath Temple, to help the celebrations go smoothly. The dedicated LEADs worked in the kitchen by serving food and helping with the dishes.

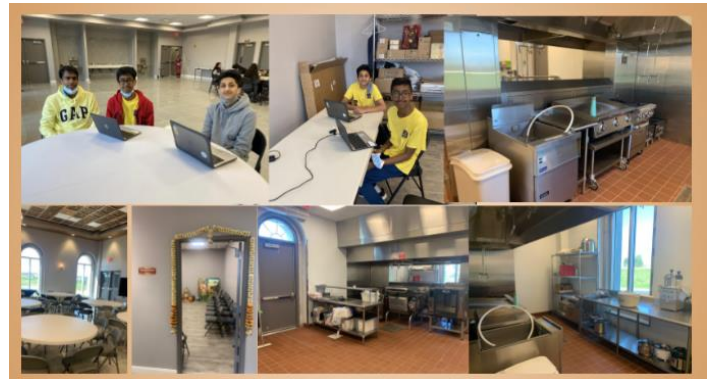
The LEADs were blessed to help at the Temple on an auspicious day of the Hindu festival of the birth of Lord Rama who is the seventh avatar of the deity Vishnu, a principal deity of Hinduism!

Om Sri Sai Balaji Temple Projects

The Om Sri Sai Balaji Temple, also known as Balaji Temple, is a Hindu temple currently being built in Monroe Township, New Jersey. Sewa Central Jersey Chapter LEADs have been involved in several projects for the Temple. For the month of April, the LEADs have been working on the Digital Storage Project, the Operating Instructions Manual Project and the 3D Model Project.

The Balaji Temple Digital Storage Project's aim is to better organize various online files for Balaji Temple, allowing them to be more easily accessible and manageable.

The Operating Instructions project is to prepare a user guide for the opening and closing of all temple premises comprising the prayer hall, culture center rooms, office rooms, conference room, kitchen and dining rooms.



In the 3D Model project, the LEADs continued with the project where they worked on finishing the prayer hall building with balsa wood where they used special tools to give clean cuts and polished curves and also used pre-cut wood beadings and wood shapes for the walls.

The Balaji Temple projects have given the LEADs an experience of working on varied projects, learning wood craft, use of different tools and gadgets and how to create user guides and operating instruction manuals. It has also given them an understanding into the functioning of a Temple and also an insight into various aspects of a Hindu Temple!

Newsletter Team



Preeti Airen
Grade: 9
Interests: Bake, Roller skate , Softball
Favorite Sewa Project: Radha Gopinath Temple, Hands of Hope



Safa Biradar
Grade: 10
Interests: Writing poetry, Tennis, Reading
Favorite Sewa Project: Kiddie Keepwell Camp (KKWC)



Anya Chhabra
Grade: 10
Interests: Tennis
Favorite Sewa Project: Summer Camp



Aiswarya Chilukuri
Grade: 9
Interests: Flute Music
Favorite Sewa Project: Backyard Composting Workshop



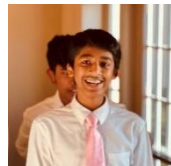
Anushka Dasari
Grade: 10
Interests: Dancing, Badminton
Favorite Sewa Project: AttachAvi Autism Foundation



Megan Garg
Grade: 8
Interests: Volleyball
Favorite Sewa Project: Garden Cleanup



Shreyoshi Ghosh
Grade: 10
Interests: Singing, Dancing, Volleyball, Roller skating
Favorite Sewa Project: Kiddie Keepwell Camp (KKWC)



Akhil Kalepalli
Grade: 10
Interests: Running Track, Friends
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meals



Aditi Manjunath
Grade: 10
Interests: Netflix, Shopping
Favorite Sewa Project: KKWC Summer Camp, Hands Of Hope



Raghavi Navneet
Grade: 9
Interests: Dance, Piano
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meal



Richa Nayak
Grade: 9
Interests: Karate
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meal



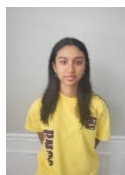
Praveen Prabhakaran
Grade: 10
Interests: Rubik's Cube
Favorite Sewa Project: Python Coding Camp



Arshia Raghuvanshi
Grade: 9
Interests: Art
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meal



Vaman Rajagopal
Grade: 10
Interests: Piano
Favorite Sewa Project: Township Cleanup



Ridhini Thiru
Grade: 9
Interests: Reading, Dancing, Teaching Kids, Rollerblading, Art
Favorite Sewa Project: A to Z Tutoring

Upcoming Events

- ❖ Sewa at Franklin Twp Youth Center
- ❖ Sewa at Franklin Memorial Day
- ❖ Sewa at Temples and Temple Events
- ❖ OM 5K Run for Cancer
- ❖ Sewa Fundraisers
- ❖ 'Bag Up NJ' Campaign
- ❖ Plastic Bag Drive
- ❖ 'Keep My Street Green' Project
- ❖ Park Reforestation
- ❖ Organic Backyard Gardening
- ❖ Volunteering at Community Gardens and Farms
- ❖ Community and Beach Cleanups
- ❖ Sewa Meals
- ❖ AttachAvi Autism Foundation Program
- ❖ Manavi - Support for Domestic Violence Survivors

Communication Channels

Please visit our Chapter website and Follow us on Twitter, Facebook & Instagram

Web: <https://Sewausa.org/centraljersey-Chapter>

Twitter: @JerseySewa

FB: @JerseySewa or Sewa Central Jersey

Instagram: sewainternationalcentraljersey

Email: CentralJersey.Sewa@gmail.com

Helpline: 702. 900.SEWA