

75th Anniversary Celebrations of Indian Independence

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' was an initiative to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of India's Independence and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements. It was celebrated all over the world as a tribute to the freedom fighters who fought for the independence of the nation.



It helps bring alive stories of unsung heroes whose sacrifices have made freedom a reality for us and also revisits the milestones, freedom movements etc. in the historical journey to 15 August, 1947.

The official journey of the Mahotsav commenced on 12th March 2021, and started as a 75-week countdown to the 75th Anniversary of Independence which culminated on 15th August 2023.

*"Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav means elixir of energy of independence;
elixir of inspirations of the warriors of freedom struggle;
elixir of new ideas and pledges;
and elixir of Aatmanirbharta (Self-Reliance). ...
a festival of awakening of the nation;
festival of fulfilling the dream of good governance;
and the festival of global peace and development."
- Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India*

Like the history of the freedom movement, the journey of 75 years after independence is a reflection of the hard work, innovation, and enterprise of ordinary Indians. Whether within India or around the world, people of Indian origin have proven themselves with their hard work, innovation, richness of knowledge and science, and democratic way of living.



On August 14th, more than 50 volunteers from the Sewa International Central NJ Chapter participated in the 18th Annual India Day Parade at Oak Tree Road, Edison, NJ. Together with other participating organizations, they helped carry a 75 feet long Indian flag.



It was an event that brought together a huge number of spirited spectators to see dozens of floats, bands, dance troupes, and exhibitions and to commemorate the anniversary of India's Independence. A variety of cultural shows featuring dozens of artists performed at the event.

Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. also participated in this 'Mahotsav' which was also dedicated to health care professionals and front line workers.

Chapter Highlights

- ❖ 75th India Independence Day Celebration
- ❖ Arun Kankani Ji Visit
- ❖ Artwork by 'SAC' beneficiaries
- ❖ Summer Camps and Tutoring
- ❖ Recognition for plastics recycling efforts
- ❖ Donations to Sewa
- ❖ Manavi - Support for Domestic Violence Survivors
- ❖ Kiddie Keep Well Summer Camp
- ❖ Backyard Produce, Community Gardening
- ❖ Townships Community Support
- ❖ Sewa Meals for the Homeless
- ❖ Sewa at Temples

Center Highlights

- ❖ Food Pantry Volunteering
- ❖ National Night Out and Events

Volunteer Spotlight



Shubha Shivamallaiha has been a part of the Central Jersey Chapter since 2021. Over the past year, she has been involved in numerous volunteering activities alongside her daughter. After an unprecedented pandemic, she knew she wanted to take action and uplift her community. As a parent volunteer, she enjoys working with her fellow Edison Center coordinators and supporting the LEADs. From collecting donations, to assisting at temples, helping in Sewa Meal programs and environment-related projects and helping to manage the LEADs' volunteer hours and coordinate activities. Outside of Sewa, she enjoys singing, spending time with her friends, and going on walks. She is from Bengaluru, Karnataka and currently resides in Edison, New Jersey with her daughter and husband. Shubha hopes to stay an active member of Sewa and give back to her family, friends, and community.

Arun Kankani Ji's Visit to Central Jersey Chapter



This month, National President Arun Kankani Ji visited New Jersey and met with the Central Jersey Chapter volunteers.

He had an inspiring and motivational interactive session with Central Jersey LEADs and discussed the importance of learning The Bhagwad Gita shlokas and how every LEAD would find at least one shloka that would resonate with them.

Central Jersey core adult volunteers also had the opportunity to have a lunch meeting with Arun Ji where he got to meet the team and learnt about the various Sewa projects each member of the team was involved in.



Artwork by the Beneficiaries of the Central Jersey 'Sponsor a Child' program

'Sponsor a Child' – SAC is a flagship program by Sewa International USA that was launched in 2013. It seeks to provide education, cultural training, and opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of underprivileged children in India and Nepal. The beneficiaries of the program have increased over the years across the 2 countries.



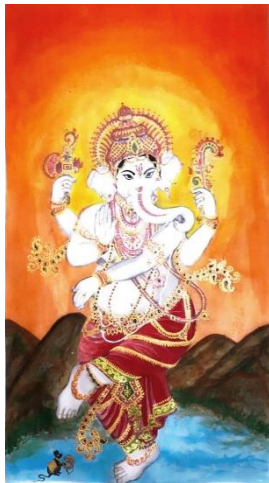
One such beneficiary of the Central Jersey Chapter is the Sri Guruji Anbu Illam girls hostel located at Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu, India.

There are about 17 girls residing in this hostel ranging from 2nd grade to 12th grade, who have been supported and funded by the Chapter for the past 3 years.

Over the years the girls from this hostel have been sending their artwork to the Central Jersey Chapter Joint Coordinator Anitha Krishnamurthi who is also the SAC Program Lead of the Chapter.

Program Lead Anitha Krishnamurthi with the girls from the hostel in one of her visits to India.

Here are some of the beautiful, creative art and craft work by the girls of the hostel who have gone on to win competitions and acclaim. In their art one can see not only their skills but also their insight into life.





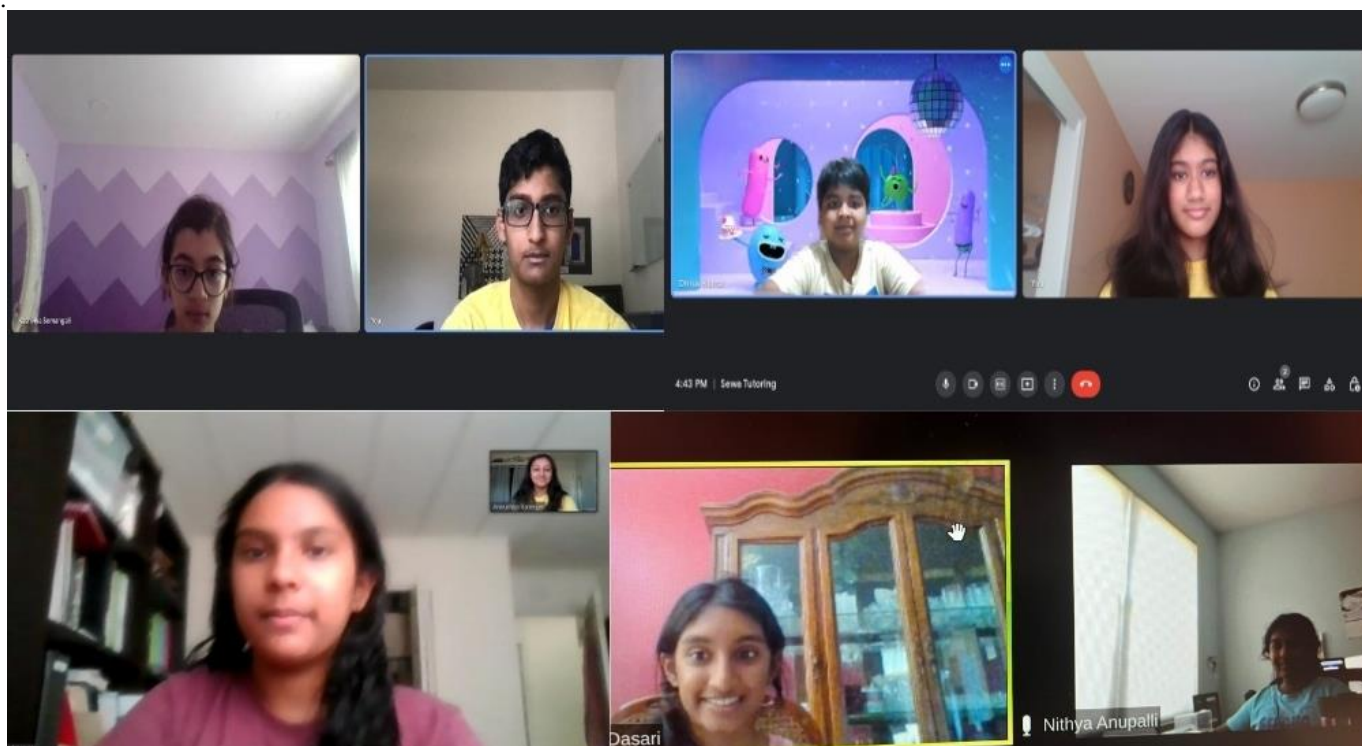
Central Jersey Chapter appreciates the fundraising efforts of the LEADS who have contributed to this cause.



Summer Camps and Tutoring by Central Jersey LEADs – a fundraising effort!

In the summer months of July and August of 2022, Central Jersey Chapter organized summer camps and a tutoring program as a fundraiser for the flagship Sponsor-A-Child (SAC - <https://sac.sewausea.org/>) & Sanitation, Hygiene & Empowerment (SHE - <https://she.sewausea.org/>) programs of Sewa International, USA.

Starting the week of July 11th, 2022, the Central Jersey Chapter began a six-week summer tutoring program in Language Arts and Math for 1st-10th grade students to prepare them for the upcoming academic year. It was a one-on-one session providing customized & focused tutoring by the LEADs of the Chapter. **97** students signed up for this tutoring program and **95** LEADs took the initiative to plan the curriculum, classes, class and practice material and also ensured a good communication with the students to coordinate each session. They maintained student logs, ensured being on time, and staying committed throughout the program. The **26** adult volunteers of the Chapter acted as a bridge between the guardians of the students and LEAD tutors. They stayed in touch with students' guardians, addressed their questions, and constantly guided the tutors.



In the month of August 2022, Cherry Hill LEAD's of the Central Jersey Chapter undertook many online initiatives ranging from Arts to Computer Science. The LEAD's conducted a variety of eCamp's in which they taught their **60** students about concepts related to the relevant subject matter.

The Algebra Camp, led by Dinesh Karnati and Raghav Akula, went over the many fundamental concepts of Algebra such as one-variable expressions, two-variable expressions, the slope intercept, etc to 6-8th graders so they are better prepared for high school.

The Crafts Camp taught students how to unleash their artistic potential by showing students how they can make art of origami.

The STEM Camp, led by Rijul Verma and Pranav Palle made sure the students were better prepared for high school for the upcoming academic year.

Finally, a popular camp was the Python Coding Camp in which the LEAD's Vaman Rajogopal, Krithik Alluri, and Praveen Prabakaran set up a basic and advanced camp. The advanced camp was for the students who had attended the basic camp in the summer of 2021 and the basic camp was for new students of 2022. By doing this, the camp was able to garner a new audience and also allow older students to progress further in their Python coding skills!

Overall, the LEAD's of Cherry Hill have done an excellent job this month of conducting their respective camps while also managing the administrative side of their respective camp.

The Central Jersey Chapter sincerely thanks the students' guardians who entrusted the Chapter for the tutoring sessions and the summer camps for their children.

The Chapter would also like to thank all students, LEAD tutors, adult volunteers and Center Coordinators for coming together to raise **\$8500** funds for the education of underprivileged children in India and for the cause of empowerment of the girl child from the vulnerable section of Indian society

Continuous learning helps, if kids can get mentor over a period or once a week interaction it would help a lot.

Continue tutoring option throughout the entire school year (including summer).

Tutoring program should be offered throughout the year (parents would be happy to pay for it).

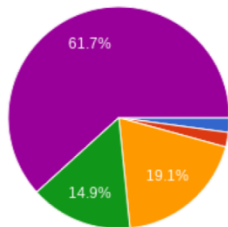
We were extremely happy with the tutor; he did a great job.

These Science classes are very good, great material, nicely organized and sequenced. Classes are taught with optimum pace with good communication and a lot of patience. ... a lot of fun and keeping kids engaged. Thanks for all your teams' effort.

Request for year along, more sessions.

Overall, how would you rate this tutor?

47 responses

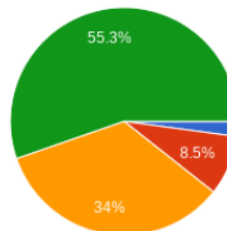


- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good
- Excellent

Some of the appreciative feedback received from the parents of the students in the program.

How would you rate your experience with Sewa tutoring program?

47 responses



- Unsatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Highly Satisfied

Recognition of plastics recycling efforts of Sewa Central Jersey Chapter at Chesterfield Township



Central Jersey Chapter, in preparation for the New Jersey ban on single-use plastic bags which went into effect in May 2022, started the Plastic Bags and Film Packaging Recycling Drive in the month of March 2022. More than **600** pounds of plastic bags & films were collected from this recycling effort. Chesterfield Center partnered with Chesterfield Green Team to initiate the project. All Centers of Central Jersey participated in this drive. LEADs worked with their local communities, schools, libraries & townships to arrange the drop-off bins to collect the plastics.

In recognition of the efforts by the Central Jersey Chapter at Chesterfield, the company Trex donated a bench to the township. The bench was installed at Fenton Lane Park near the dog park. The bench will have a plaque with Sewa International Central Jersey Chapter & Environment Commissions' name on it.

This effort by the Central Jersey Chapter has been featured in this month's Chesterfield Spotlight. <https://chesterfieldspotlight.com/sewa-bench>.

Thanks to LEADs & adult volunteers from all the Centers for their efforts in educating & encouraging the residents to recycle plastics and reduce plastic usage.

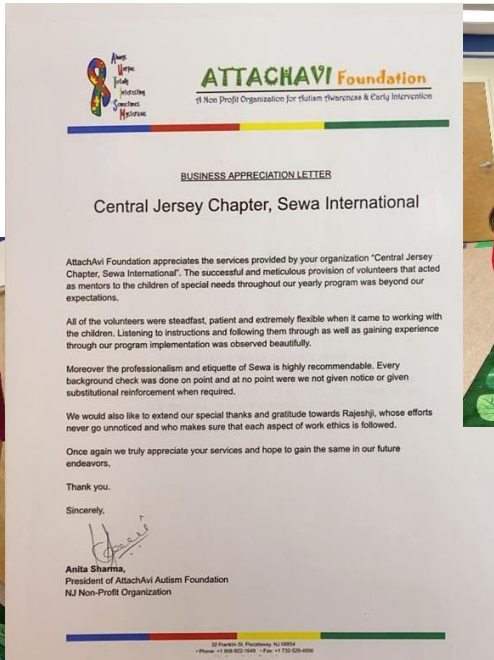
Manavi –Support for Domestic Violence Survivors

This month of August, the Central Jersey Chapter funded school backpacks and back to school supplies for the children residing at the safe homes of Manavi – an organization that supports survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Appreciation and Donation – AttachAvi Autism Foundation

Anitha Sharma Ji, The President of AttachAvi Autism Foundation presented a business appreciation letter to the Central Jersey Chapter of Sewa International, USA for the services rendered by the volunteers of the Chapter.

In gratitude she also donated \$1000 for the various causes the Chapter supports.



Sewa at Kiddie Keep Well Camp for the Underprivileged



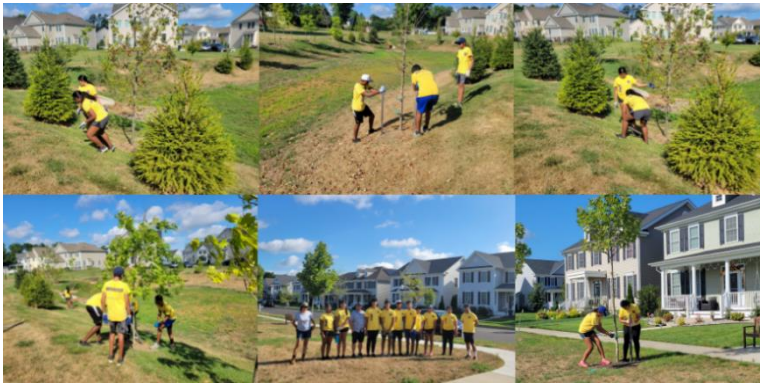
Central Jersey LEADs continued this month of August in volunteering at KKWC Camp for under-resourced Middlesex County children where they helped the KKWC staff in setting up the dining hall for 50+ children and staff combined.

The LEADs worked 3 shifts Monday to Friday through the month to help with breakfast, lunch and dinner. They helped with laying out the tables with plates, bowls, glasses, cutlery and helped with serving water, juice and milk at each table. Post the meals the LEADs helped with clearing the tables of cutlery and cleaning them and neatly arranging the dining room chairs and tables.

Backyard Garden Produce and Community Gardening

The backyard produce project has been going on for almost two months since July. It started when all the LEADs were called to the Ramblin' Sol Farm to collect different types of plants mainly kale, tomatoes, beans, and cucumbers. This activity was designed primarily to give the LEADs an opportunity to learn to grow vegetables as well as to raise awareness on the importance of organic farming. Some of the produce grown was used in Sewa Meals for the homeless. The LEADs were also encouraged to donate the organic and fresh produce that they had grown.

Recipients of vegetables produce donation:
BAPS Temple
Camden Kitchen
JFCS of Greater Mercer County
Kiddie Keep Well Camp
Monroe Senior Center
Rise Pantry at Hightstown
Save My Meals at Princeton



Chesterfield Center LEADs volunteered with removing the support from approximately 75 fully grown trees near Brookdale Way & Chapman Lane. The work involved removing the stakes & tree straps from the trees. As these trees are fully grown and standing firm, they did no longer need the support. Also, trees grow better and get bigger when they sway in the wind, and they grow more roots which provide water and nutrients for growth. The Chesterfield Mayor Lido Panfili stopped by to thank the LEADs for their work throughout the year.

Chesterfield Center LEADs volunteered at Crosswicks Library where they prepared the lawn for the new mulch by removing the old mulch plastic layer. As you see in the picture it was indeed a lot of effort as the plastic layer was buried deep inside with weeds & grass. It took them hours of back-breaking effort to accomplish the task. Kudos to all the LEADs for working hard & getting the work done in spite of super-hot weather.



Monroe Center LEADs continued to volunteer at the Marlboro Community Garden on alternating Saturdays in the month of August. They were engaged in activities like spreading the wood chips/mulching; mixing, sifting the compost, weeding and watering the plants. LEADs were introduced to "Garden Rhubarb" a herbaceous perennial, and they enjoyed taking home some of these tangy stalks that can be used to make sweet and sour chutney or be used to substitute sour ingredients in Indian cooking. Master gardeners discussed fall vegetables spinach and bok choy, all about when to plant and how to care for them with LEADs.



Monroe Center LEADs have been volunteering at the West Windsor Arts Center's garden on alternate Sundays. They cleaned up the garden which is in front of the Arts Center, by weeding the area to make it look more appealing to visitors. The soil was very tough and the LEADs had to put in a lot of effort to weed the invasive plants from the soil. Eventually when they finished, they picked up all of the weeds and put them away in the designated area. LEADs enjoyed this activity and the entrance looks very neat now!

Sewa Meals for the homeless and food shelters and volunteering at food pantries

In August 2022, Central Jersey Chapter LEADs continued with providing home cooked meals for the homeless, food shelters and food pantries.

LEADs and adults volunteered at Hands of Hope food pantry, a nonprofit organization that distributes food to alleviate hunger in the community.

They helped organize the food in the pantry and bagged food to deliver to people in need.



As part of monthly meal preparations, LEADs from Monroe Center cooked a total of 160 meals for adults & 20 kids' meals and delivered them to the United Methodist Church at New Brunswick, NJ.

LEADs used produce from their backyard gardens, yet another Sewa project that encouraged them to start grow vegetables in their own backyard.

The menu included Caesar salad, Pita bread, Pulav, Jeera rice, Channa Masala, Rajma curry, Coconut laddus, Brownies and grilled cheese sandwiches along with fruit and cookies for kids' meals.

This month LEADs opted to use eco-friendly and healthy alternatives for wrapping the kids' meals. These wrappers are compostable, recyclable and a much safer option for heated meals opposed to plastics.

Thank you LEAD Anwita, Aniketh & Shubhan's families for sponsoring this month's meals.

This month, Somerset LEADs worked especially hard to prepare and donate close to 100 meals on two different Sundays to the United Methodist Church in New Brunswick to help serve a growing number of adults and children.

On August 7th, the meals consisted of vegetarian pulao, chickpea salad, and pita bread. On August 21st, LEADs prepared vegetarian pulao, channa masala, pita bread, and muffins.

We truly commend the LEADs for making and delivering these meals to help out other members of our community and we aim to continue our efforts in the upcoming months!



Sewa at Chesterfield Historical Society



This month, the Chesterfield Historical Society received more than 20 display furniture pieces as a donation.

Chesterfield Center LEADs and adult volunteers helped to move all of the furniture outside of the storage. The furniture was extremely heavy and it took quite some time to remove all of them from the storage.

The LEADs also cleaned and sanded the furniture in order to prep them to be painted the next day.

On the second day, the LEADs helped in painting the furniture, which took a long time due to the limited paint rollers and trays and the large number of furniture. The LEADs did an amazing job and really helped the Historical Society.

Sewa at Rise Pantry

Central Jersey LEADs have been volunteering at Rise Pantry, in various activities like sorting and packing food items into boxes, loading, unloading the food boxes, organizing them at specific stations, etc.

They also helped out in setting up carts for fresh fruits, vegetables and distributing them to those in need.

LEADs even donated their own produce that they have been growing as part of the Backyard Garden project to the Rise pantry.



Sewa at Woodbridge Public Library



On Wednesday, August 17th, Edison Center LEADs volunteered at the Woodbridge Public Library in shifts to pack and label boxes at the library with books allowing the library's maintenance staff to move the boxes in a quick manner.

The LEADs enabled the librarian to finish library work that would have taken her a lot longer without their help.

Sewa at Radha Gopinath Temple

Edison Center LEADs volunteered at The Radha Gopinath Temple in two shifts where they helped in cooking lunch for the temple devotees.

LEADs helped set up extra shoe racks outside. Helped making the rice in big pots. And with other activities in the kitchen. The second shift had to put all the food into boxes for people to take home. Then they had to clean up the area and help clean the dishes after.



Sewa at Om Sri Sai Balaji Temple



On the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi, Monroe Center LEADs volunteered at the Om Sri Sai Balaji Temple.

They helped the temple team decorate the backdrop, set up chairs for the devotees, helped in preparing for the Pooja, helped in folding vastrams and packed food.

At the end of the Pooja they also cleaned the temple and got it ready for the next day.

Sewa at National Night Out, Art Council and Watershed Butterfly Festival

The Watershed Butterfly Festival was a community event focused on growing the public's interest in the world of animals and how they live and interact with us on a daily basis. The festival was held at the Watershed Institute and with a turnout of over 1,000 people.

Monroe Center LEADs volunteered with directing visitors, helping out at the popcorn and lemonade stand, setting up games and volunteering at the insect house.

It was an excellent opportunity to learn about nature and show the community the wonders that it has to offer.



LEADs volunteered at the West Windsor Art Center's Art Gallery. At first, they were assigned the task of arranging papers by their respective year so that they could be put in binders and archived. Once they finished, one of the coordinators at the WWAC took the LEADs through a tour of the Art Gallery, and provided a brief history of the paintings and artists. After the tour finished, the LEADs went to a studio to make a small painting that they could take home!

At the West Windsor Night Out, a community event focused on growing connections between the residents of West Windsor. There were a huge number of stalls at the night out that promoted an enormous variety of local stores, organizations, and community groups.

The Monroe Center LEADs helped the West Windsor Arts Council at their stall. In the beginning, they set up the stall for the event. The LEADs then spent time teaching the children at the event about how to create landscape scenes using nothing but 7 colors and some elementary blending. They also helped them with creating art out of everyday fruits and vegetables in collaboration with the West Windsor Farmers Market. In the end, the LEADs cleaned up the area and then headed home with great memories and experiences.



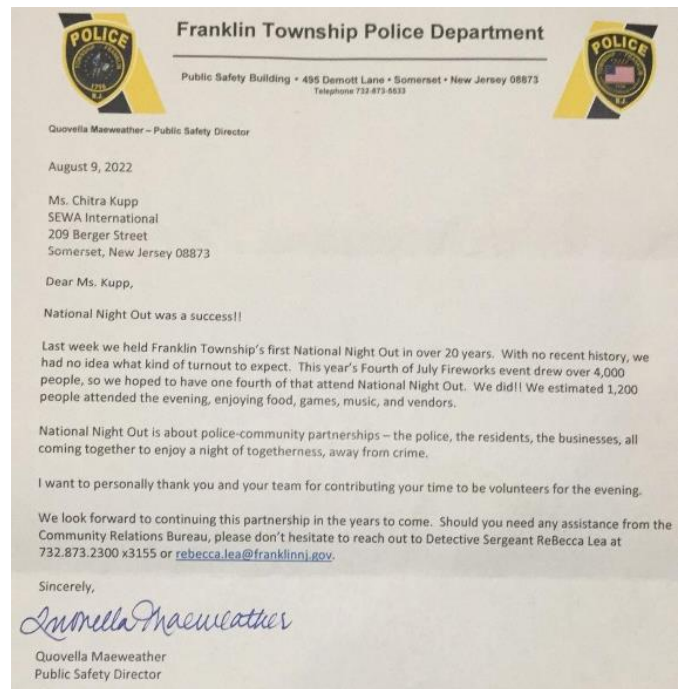


Somerset Center LEADs volunteered at the Franklin Night out event, an event of the coming together of the police and the community.

The LEADs helped setup booths and games, helped distribute bingo cards to visit all booths, gave directions and guided community folks to various stations.

The LEADs also did fundraising by selling books and handmade bracelets and necklaces. They used the opportunity to raise awareness about the various service projects by Central Jersey Sewa Chapter.

Franklin Township Police Department sent out an appreciation letter acknowledging the good volunteering work by all the LEADs who participated in this event!



*'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' – The World Is One Family
Together We Serve Better*

Newsletter Team



Aniketh Byram
Grade: 12
Interests: Cooking, Music, Volleyball
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meals



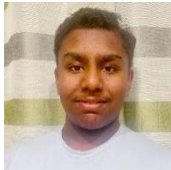
Anirudh Prodduturu
Grade: 10
Interests: Reading, Outdoors, Biking
Favorite Sewa Project: Treats for Troops



Diya Patel
Grade: 12
Interests: Tennis, Music, Baking
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meals



Hardik Agrawal
Grade: 10
Interests: Trumpet, Tech
Favorite Sewa Project: Backyard Produce



Hrishik Epuru
Grade: 10
Interests: Fencing, Volleyball, Chess
Favorite Sewa Project: Park Cleanup



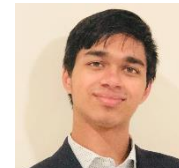
Kaivalya Atigre
Grade: 11
Interests: Soccer, Music, Video Games
Favorite Sewa Project: KKWC Summer Camp



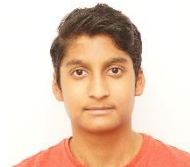
Manas Gupta
Grade: 12
Interests: Formula 1, Coding, Volleyball
Favorite Sewa Project: KKWC Summer Camp



Rijul Verma
Grade: 11
Interests: Swimming, Gym
Favorite Sewa Project: Science Camp



Rohan Sharma
Grade: 12
Interests: Magic, Reading, Music, Boy Scouts
Favorite Sewa Project: Watershed Butterfly Festival



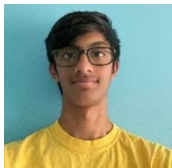
Saikalyan Jogannagari
Grade: 12
Interests: Debate, Science Olympiad, Guitar, Coding, Volunteering
Favorite Sewa Project: : KKWC Summer Camp



Sutirth Potluri
Grade: 9
Interests: Math, Track, Video Games
Favorite Sewa Project: Flags for Heroes



Varun Magadam
Grade: 12
Interests: Football, Music, Basketball
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meals



Vikhyat Ginjupally
Grade: 10
Interests: Robotics, Coding, Basketball, Volleyball
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meals

Upcoming Events

- ❖ Sewa Diwali Food Drive Kickoff
- ❖ 5K Run for Cancer Survivors
- ❖ Chesterfield Harvest Festival
- ❖ Franklin Fun Day
- ❖ BookSmiles Volunteering
- ❖ Fall Cleanups
- ❖ Backyard Produce and Community Gardening
- ❖ AttachAvi Autism Foundation
- ❖ Manavi - Support for Domestic Violence Survivors
- ❖ Sewa Meals
- ❖ Sewa at Temples
- ❖ Centers' Annual Picnic

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