

## NJ State Program for Clean Communities Adopt-A-Highway for Environment Preservation

The 'Adopt-A-Highway' program, which is facilitated by most state departments of transportation and the State Clean Communities Council, promotes volunteers to maintain and clean state roadways. Its goals are to reduce litter, improve the landscape, protect public health, and promote economic growth.

In 2019, Sewa International Central Jersey committed to a clean NJ by working with the State Clean Communities Council to adopt a 2-mile section of Route 27 in Metuchen, New Jersey. Under this arrangement, the Central Jersey volunteers clean the highway 4-6 times each year while complying to safety rules, garbage pickup processes, and submitting cleanup reports. Volunteers attend Highway Safety Training sessions and often contribute to the upkeep effort.

The major purpose of these cleanups is to reduce litter accumulation along roadsides. Sewa volunteers not only improve aesthetics, but also keep toxins out of the environment, especially water supplies and wildlife. Volunteers aid in surface water drainage by keeping trash from clogging drainage systems, lowering flood hazards in townships.

Sewa volunteers promote community pride and responsibility by working collaboratively with local township and police departments. This shared commitment to environmental stewardship has promoted community relationships and has fostered cooperation at the local and state level.

Beyond environmental benefits, these Sewa cleanups have a favorable impact on property values, tourism, and overall community well-being. Clean, well-kept environments attract visitors, which can only benefit the local economy. These highway cleanups also improve the visual appeal of the terrain, raising inhabitants' quality of life and establishing a favorable regional image.

Sewa volunteers also get an opportunity to learn about litter's environmental repercussions and the need for waste reduction, which provides several educational opportunities for participants and the larger community.

Another important aspect of this program is that it reduces the strain on government entities by leveraging volunteer contributions, freeing up resources for other purposes.

Most notable is this program dramatically minimizes the safety risks provided by litter and debris on roads, which benefits cars, pedestrians, and wildlife alike. This is evident from the recognition from residents and commuters that highlights the essential service given by Sewa volunteers.

The Adopt-a-Highway program's continued success is dependent on long-term volunteer and community participation, with an emphasis on frequent cleanups, safe waste disposal, and ongoing education.

The NJ Department of Transportation has recognized the commitment, as seen by Sewa International signage put along highways.



### Chapter Highlights

- ❖ NJ Clean Communities Adopt-A-Highway Environment
- ❖ Sewa Addressing Food Insecurity
- ❖ Sewa Environment Education & Preservation
- ❖ Sewa Through the Year:
  - Sewa for Environment Conservation
  - Sewa for Sustainable Gardening & Climate Change Mitigation
  - Sewa for Biodiversity Conservation
  - SewaMeal Feeding Program Addressing Food Insecurity
  - Sewa Food Distribution Service for the Food Insecure
  - Sewa for Healthcare Services
  - Serving Places of Worship





Commit to a Clean New Jersey  
Since 2019

**Central Jersey Chapter of Sewa International**  
with  
New Jersey Department of Transportation  
New Jersey Clean Communities Council  
Metuchen Environmental Commission

**Adopt-A-Highway**  
Quarterly clean up of 2 miles stretch of Route 27 at Metuchen

To participate call (732) 900-7390 or email centraljersey.sewa@gmail.com

Date: March 24th, 2024  
Time: 11:30 AM to 1 PM  
Meeting Point: Metuchen Senior Center  
18 Center Street, Metuchen

Age: 16+  
Prerequisite: AAH Safety Video/Training  
www.njclean.org - Our Programs  
Email Certificate of Completion to centraljersey.sewa@gmail.com

Enhance the appearance of New Jersey's landscape  
Protect the health and welfare of New Jersey residents  
Provide a loamier community for New Jersey



Sewa International is a 501 (c) (3) humanitarian, nonprofit, service organization  
www.sewausa.org    centraljersey.sewa@gmail.com    (732) 900-7390  
@sewausa    https://www.facebook.com/centraljersey    centraljerseysewa

## Central Jersey Sewa Addressing Food Insecurity

Central Jersey volunteers were part of a food massive packing program to address food insecurity at Middlesex County College where volunteers from Sewa along with other community members, united to assemble Mac and Cheese food packages for those in need. These collaborative efforts not only provided essential support to the community but also fostered a sense of unity and empathy among individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Participants formed assembly lines with each person contributing to the packaging process and it was a powerful way to illustrate how teamwork can make a significant difference in addressing social issues and supporting vulnerable populations. By working together towards a common goal, volunteers not only efficiently packaged **40,000** meals but also created a positive and uplifting atmosphere that undoubtedly made a difference in the lives of those they were helping.



Events like these serve as constant reminder of the compassion and generosity that exist within communities. It is a demonstration that by pooling resources and efforts, individuals can achieve remarkable results and spread joy and care to those in need. Kudos to all from the Central Jersey Chapter involved in organizing and participating in such a meaningful event!

## Sewa Environment Education & Preservation



This event was a great example of how Sewa encompasses more than humanitarian causes, and embraces the history of the community to guide others along the way. Central Jersey Sewa volunteers gathered for a nature walk in the month of March at Southern Barnes Preserve to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Durham woods gas pipeline blast - an explosion that occurred three decades ago due to a pipe burst, causing injuries and damage to the surrounding area.

Sewa volunteers actively participated in this adventure and engaged in informative discussions about how the flora and fauna in the vicinity were impacted by the incident. The group also cleaned the trail along their path and observed how the trees still showed visible signs of burns from the blast. It was a day of reminder of what Sewa as a foundation stands for, a sense of community and belonging.

This event offered Sewa volunteers an enlightening educational journey, equipping them with valuable insights into the habitat—a crucial knowledge base that will bolster their future endeavors in environmental preservation at the Barnes Preserve.



## Sewa Through the Year – Recurring Service Activities by the Central Jersey Chapter

The Central Jersey Chapter has a commitment to Sewa and the dedication to making a positive impact on the local community throughout the year. The volunteers engage in service activities throughout the year to contribute to the well-being of the community to not only help address immediate needs but also strengthen the bonds within the community and promote a spirit of unity and cooperation.

### Sewa for Environment Conservation



Central Jersey Sewa volunteers took on a wonderful initiative to restore the beauty of **Millbrook valley in Edison**, and address environmental concerns caused by accumulated trash and junk. The hard work in gathering thousands of pieces of litter, such as dangerous items like tires, plastic, and glass bottles, demonstrates a big leap towards reducing environmental pollution and safeguarding our local ecosystems.

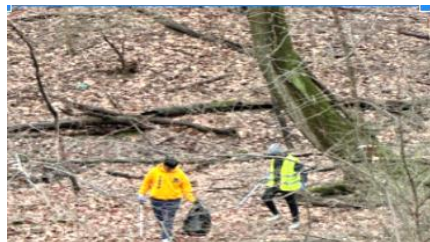
Getting rid of all that junk doesn't just make Millbrook Valley look better, it also stops the soil and water from getting polluted, which keeps our wildlife and us safe. Plus, this successful cleanup isn't just good for the area right here; it's also helping us all move towards a healthier environment for everyone, now and in the future.

Everyone who pitched in felt proud and happy, and that feeling says a lot about what we can achieve together as a community.

Sewa volunteers also took part in the **rain garden at South River High school**. Planting shrubs and unique plants like the Arctic fire can contribute significantly to the ecosystem's diversity and health. The dedication to this service is commendable and these kinds of community initiatives not only benefit the local environment but also foster a sense of connection and responsibility among young volunteers.



This month, the Central Jersey Sewa volunteers armed with gloves and trash bags, embarked on a mission to revive the natural beauty of the **Raritan River bank**. They unearthed a multitude of discarded items – plastic bottles, wrappers, and tons of glass, as they hiked down the slope. Each piece collected felt like a small step towards reclaiming the purity of the environment.



Working alongside fellow volunteers, they forged bonds and made memories that would last. By the end of the day, the once litter-strewn slope was transformed. It was a reminder of the power of collective action and stewardship for our community. These efforts had not only beautified the riverbank, but also helped protect the wildlife and ecosystem within.



A challenging yet rewarding experience for Sewa LEADs and adult volunteers involved was on a wet Sunday morning, where they gathered for an Eco-Tour with high energy. The Edison **Eco-Tour**, organized by Edison Township, at Tingley Lane Park aimed to educate families about the environment in Edison. Despite facing challenges such as marshy soil and makeshift bridges, volunteers were filled with energy and fascination for the diverse species encountered. The journey ended with a sense of accomplishment, reinforcing the importance of preserving environmentally rich areas in Edison.

This month, volunteers from Central Jersey Sewa participated in the **South River Flood Clean Up** near Old Bridge. They helped collect and dispose of garbage, using safety gloves provided by the township. This experience highlighted the importance of cleanliness, even in adverse weather conditions. Their involvement not only contributes to the restoration of the affected area but also promotes a sense of community and responsibility among participants. The LEADs found the activity enjoyable and rewarding.



**Sewa Beneficiaries:**  
Edison Township  
Old Bridge Township  
South River Township

### Sewa for Sustainable Gardening & Climate Change Mitigation

This March, in their commitment to sustainable gardening, Central Jersey Sewa LEADs once again helped to prepare the **Freehold Community Garden** for spring!

LEADs spread wood chips in the garden area and between the beds which is essential for weed prevention and maintaining the overall health of the garden. They used wheelbarrows to carry mulch and spread it around the plants demonstrating a commitment to nurturing the garden and ensuring its success throughout the growing season. LEADs also moved garden equipment to dedicated spots to keep the space organized and functional for gardeners. Their dedication, hard work and their active participation in community initiatives and completing tasks on time were truly appreciated.

The efforts of Central Jersey Sewa LEADs are making a positive impact on the Freehold Community Garden, ensuring that it remains a vibrant and productive space for all to enjoy.



Sewa volunteers from Central Jersey were also part of a **reforestation** effort of over 20 acres of Bucks County land. Volunteers helped in removing invasive plant species by cutting them from the roots and separating creepers from the main tree branches. They also arranged the tree logs for the trail. They learned how to use the tools to cut the vines and also learned about invasive species that affected the ecosystem.

Sewa LEADs and dedicated parent volunteers came together to transform garden beds at the **Kiddie Keep Well Community Garden** in Edison. KKWC is a camp for the underserved community in the Middlesex community.

LEADs swapped out old worn-out raised beds for fresh, handmade ones. These garden beds are ready to be used for planting a variety of flowers, herbs, and vegetables in the upcoming seasons. Everyone loved getting their hands dirty and working as a team. It just goes to show, when we unite for a common goal, the results are truly amazing. Let's continue to beautify and nurture our community spaces together!

**Sewa Beneficiaries:**

Freehold Township  
Middlesex County, NJ  
Bucks County, PA



**Sewa for Biodiversity Conservation**



Sewa LEADs returned to the **Lower Raritan Watershed** in Edison for another session of boat-building activities, continuing their commitment to this meaningful project. LEADs once again took on tasks such as cutting wood pieces, utilizing precise measuring tools, and assembling them onto the boat according to specified plans. Working together with mentors, they made progress, and they aim to finish the boat by early July, which is a big step forward for the project. The LEADs are helping to build boats to promote community rowing and environmental conservation along the river, supporting a healthy ecosystem crucial for local well-being.



Central Jersey Chapter LEADs once again had a wonderful time volunteering at the **Winter Fairy Festival at the Watershed!** They helped in setting up and organizing activities, running an obstacle course, guiding children through crafts and games, and assisting with cleanup afterward, all essential contributions that ensure the success of the event.

All this is done in a fun approach to educating the visitors on the importance of the Watershed activities. Interacting with the kids and witnessing their enjoyment, as well as their funny antics, brought a lot of joy to our LEADs. The dedication and enthusiasm of the LEADs in helping are truly appreciated by both the organizers and the Watershed visitors. Volunteering at Watershed not only provides valuable assistance but also creates memorable experiences and fosters a sense of community involvement and connection and all for an important cause of freshwater.

**Sewa Beneficiaries:**

Lower Raritan Watershed, Edison  
Watershed, Pennington

## SewaMeal Program to Address Food Insecurity

As part of the SewaMeal program to provide food for those in need Sewa volunteers prepared ~350 fresh homemade meals this March.

### **Meal Items:**

Gallo pinto rice, Burrito bowl, Peas Pulav, Channa Masala, Pita bread, Vegetable Pasta, Mexican rice, Garbanzo beans-cucumber salad, Potato Cheese tacos, Fruit cream for dessert, Oranges, juice boxes, and Chips.

**Meals' Sponsor:** Selvaraj Ji  
Monroe LEAD Families



**Meals' Recipients:**  
Ozanam Family Shelter, Edison,  
United Methodist Church, New Brunswick



## Food Distribution Service for the Food Insecure



Central Jersey Sewa LEADs demonstrated an admirable dedication to serving the community and supporting those in need.

Sewa volunteers assisted at **NJ Rise Food Pantry** with tasks such as packing items, arranging food supplies, and loading grocery carts, and thus making a tangible difference in the lives of individuals and families who rely on such assistance. LEADs kept the area clean and organized by disposing of cardboard boxes with attention to detail and a desire to create a welcoming environment for all. Their efforts contributed to supporting community members facing challenges.



Central Jersey Sewa LEADs once again volunteered at the **Franklin Township Food Bank** this month. They sorted eggs into cartons, handled produce, stocked shelves with dairy, bread, canned goods, beverages, and assisted in packing chips. They also distributed paperwork to customers. This humble experience underscored the importance of acts of kindness and showcased the significant impact that one person can have on the lives of others.



LEADs also volunteered at the **East Brunswick Marketplace**, engaging in various tasks such as helping shoppers with groceries, restocking shelves, and distributing food to those in need. They maintained a positive atmosphere at the food pantry by interacting with visitors and cleaning the facility. They also assisted shoppers with carts and organized donations of food and hygiene products. Knowing they were making a difference in their community brought them a lot of joy and satisfaction.



Sewa LEADs further demonstrated their dedication to community service by volunteering at the **Hands of Hope Food Pantry** in Edison. They spent their time organizing food bags and aiding in the donation process, ensuring that individuals and families in need received vital nourishment.

Their actions embody the spirit of compassion and unity, positively impacting the lives of those experiencing food insecurity.

**Sewa Beneficiaries:**

- Rise Food Pantry, Hightstown
- Hands Of Hope Food Pantry, Edison
- Franklin Township Food Bank
- Marketplace, East Brunswick

**Sewa for Healthcare Services**

Sewa volunteered at the **Blood Drive at Vaddal Dham Temple** this March. Volunteers greeted patients, assisted with check-ins, helped set up equipment, and directed them to the right stations. Some LEADs had the responsibility of caring for donors after they donated blood, monitoring for side effects like dizziness and weakness. LEADs also assisted doctors and nurses as needed. Assisting New York Blood Center with this drive was highly rewarding and satisfying for our LEADs. Their service contributed to the noble cause of saving many lives.

**Sewa Beneficiaries:**  
New York Blood Center



**Serving at Places of Worship**



With unwavering dedication, Sewa LEADs came together to offer their services in the Holi festivities at **Radha Gopinath temple**, Edison. During the colorful celebrations, Sewa LEADs lent their hands in serving food to the temple visitors and cleaning up after. LEADs added an extra layer of warmth and hospitality to the joyous occasion. Their selfless efforts exemplified the essence of Holi embodying the true spirit of community and devotion.

**Sewa Beneficiary:**  
Radha Gopinath Temple, Edison

## Newsletter LEADs

- ◊ Aadharsh Sakkaravarthy
- ◊ Aditi Pithani
- ◊ Adwait Jhunjhunwala
- ◊ Anvita Malepati
- ◊ Dhairya Sarvaiya
- ◊ Hardik Laddha
- ◊ Navya Kolati Ramesh
- ◊ Renee Banerjee
- ◊ Shely Dash
- ◊ Shridhar Garg
- ◊ Thulasi Nambiar

## Upcoming Events

- ❖ 9/11 Sewa Day of Service Environmental Justice Initiatives
- ❖ Sewa for Sustainable Transportation
- ❖ Sewa for Climate Change Mitigation
- ❖ Earth Day Cleanups & Beach Sweeps
- ❖ Sewa for Biodiversity Conservation – Watershed Events & Boat Building
- ❖ SewaMeal Feeding Program for Hunger Relief
- ❖ Food Packing and Food Distribution Service for the Food Insecure
- ❖ Serving Places of Worship
- ❖ Sewa at Community Holi Celebrations

### REGISTRATION

- Central Jersey SewaMeal Sponsorship  
Donation towards SewaMeal Sponsorship
- Central NJ Chapter General Donation  
General Donation to Central NJ Chapter of Sewa International

Register

Please use below QR Code or link and proceed to click '**Register**' to donate



Click → <https://sewausa.org/event-5084580> and fill the information

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

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**FB:** @JerseySewa or Sewa Central Jersey

**Instagram:**  
[sewainternationalcentraljersey](https://www.instagram.com/sewainternationalcentraljersey)

**Email:** [centraljersey@sewausa.org](mailto:centraljersey@sewausa.org)

**Helpline:** 702. 900.SEWA

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Together We Serve Better*