

NEWSLETTER

Chapter: Central Jersey

December 2022

Sewa Milan 2022!

On December 4, 2022 the Central Jersey Chapter of Sewa International, USA conducted the **fourth** annual volunteer appreciation & awards ceremony - **Sewa Milan 2022.**

The event was to give recognition to the year-long efforts by the Chapter's volunteers from the LEAD program, Family Services, Helpline, Disaster Relief teams, and honorees of the President's Volunteer Service Award for 2022.

The high school volunteer participants of the LEAD (Leadership, Education, And Development) program and the Chapter volunteers collectively put in ~40,000 hours of community service this past year.

Honoring Sewa International at the event was **Chief Guest Dr. Inderpal Bhandari Ji**, Global Chief Data Officer of IBM Corporation, **Guest of Honor Congressman-elect Thomas Kean Jr.** representing New Jersey's 7th Congressional District and **Special Guest Shri Syam Kosigi Ji**, Vice President - Organization of Sewa International, USA.



Chief Guest Dr. Inderpal Bhandari Ji Global Chief Data Officer IBM Corporation Guest Of Honor Congressman-elect Thomas Kean Jr. 7th Congressional District New Jersey Special Guest Shri Syam Kosigi Ji Vice President Organization of Sewa International, USA.

It was an evening where the Chapter's young LEADs took on the role of master of ceremonies as well as performing for the event. And, it was an evening graced with the presence of **~500** attendees which included dignitaries, leaders of partner organizations, donors, and LEAD parents.

The event had an auspicious start with the singing of the US and the India National Anthems followed by *Deep Prajwalan* - the lighting of the lamp ceremony by the Chief Guest Bhandari Ji to signify that all of the service activities and the event be governed by the light of knowledge - especially *Dharma*.

This was followed by the singing of the Sewa Geet 'Manasaa Satatam Smarniyam' which translates to 'Let Us Always Remember'. The song reminds us of our duty to always do good to humanity, a song that captures the spirit and values of Sewa International.

The evening included a *Bharatnatyam* dance performance, an art form that originated in the Hindu temples from the southern part of India, Its form traces back to '*Natya Shastra*' - an ancient treatise on performing arts, a form of illustrative anecdotes of Hindu religious themes and spiritual ideas conveyed by the dancers through graceful gestures and footwork.

Chapter Highlights

- Sewa Milan 2022
- SHE Donor Report Rajasthan
- Winter Coat Drive
- Support for Domestic Violence Survivors
- Sewa for Flags for Heroes
- Blood Donation Drive
- Sewa in Christmas Season
- Sewa at Temple Festival
- Boat Building and Pumpkin Composting
- Sewa at Food Banks, Pantries & Jewish Relief Agency
- Sewa Meals for those in need
- Congratulations and Thank you to 2022 LEADs!

Volunteer Spotlight



Selvaraj Mudaliar Ji a volunteer with the Central Jersey Chapter embodies the spirit and values of Sewa through his selfless service in Family Services where he plays a big part in handling the hotline and is the first one to respond to SOS calls or any need that arises within the Chapter. Selvaraj Ji has seen hardships up close and from a tender age of 6 learnt to work hard, educate himself, and support his family. This has only made him very compassionate & generous to support those in need. He is very influenced by his late father who was himself very socially active and was a huge support to the community around

Selvaraj Ji works at PSE&G as a HR Manager and resides in Edison with his wife Saathiya and two sons. He is a President of his residential community and in this capacity he has made it his mission to improve the surroundings for the wellbeing the community and has been instrumental in building facilities like toddler park, volleyball court, bike lane, and more.











The Chapter Coordinator Rajesh Sharma Ji. was a keynote speaker on the Chapter service activities and shared the roadmap of the Central Jersey Chapter and how the Chapter's strength has grown in size as well as achievements since 2018 the year the Chapter was founded.

An audio visual of the Chapter Brief for 2022 was presented and it was followed by great testimonials from the service partners and beneficiaries of the Chapter's community and humanitarian services.

The Chapter Joint Coordinator and LEAD Program Coordinator Sandesh Kamath Ji came on to speak about the LEAD program and the varied service activities by the LEADs from humanitarian to environmental sustainability. He described how the Chapter looks for opportunities to take service and partnership to the next level. For example, he mentioned how LEADs volunteered at a farm, then went on to grow produce in their own backyards, donated the produce to food pantries, and finally, used the produce in meals cooked for the homeless. In addition, the LEADs also harvested produce at farms, and then took the surplus produce and donated to food banks. The Coordinator went on to give a partner appreciation on the many organizations that the Chapter has partnered with across townships in New Jersey and neighboring states.

The event continued with Anitha Krishnamurthi Ji - the Joint coordinator of the Chapter, as well as the Coordinator for the SAC and SHE programs for the Chapter who gave an overview of the SAC - Sponsor a Child & SHE - Sanitation, Hygiene and Empowerment Project for the Girl Child programs. The Coordinator went on to speak about the beneficiaries of the Chapter's funding of the SAC and SHE program accompanied by an audio visual from the beneficiaries of the SAC.

Highlights 2021-2022



Eveglasses

Flags for Heroes

The event then proceeded with Chief Guest Dr. Bhandari Ji, who in his inspiring speech offered the LEADs, the Chapter's high-school volunteers a mantra of success "follow the path less travelled & challenge yourself" as they embark on their college journey.

The Guest of Honor Congressman-elect Kean Jr. next in his speech appreciated and further motivated the volunteers in serving the local communities.

Then finally, Special Guest Shri Kosigi Ji in his speech spoke about the vision of Sewa International to the Chapter volunteers.

The evening culminated with the award ceremony for the Chapter's LEADs in appreciation and recognition for their service for the year 2022. The LEADs were from various towns across Central Jersey - Bordentown, Cherry Hill, Chesterfield, East Windsor, Edison, Florence, Kendall Park, Marlboro, Monroe, Mount Laurel, Princeton, Somerset, South Brunswick, and West Windsor.

The event concluded with the 'Shanti Mantra' - a prayer, a chant for Peace, often recited before and after Hindu religious rituals and ceremonies.



The Central Jersey Chapter wishes to congratulate all the LEADs and thank them for their service.

The Chapter would also like to take this opportunity to thank and appreciate all the donors, partners, volunteers and parents for supporting the various causes that Sewa International is championing and is looking forward to strengthening the associations and partnerships in the coming years!

"I was honored to be the chief guest and part of the Annual Volunteer Appreciation day for @sewainternational. Handing out The President's Volunteer Service Award to 120 high school students was incredibly inspiring. These high school volunteers have dedicated their time to perform some tremendous work in the community. This included helping over 28 hospitals with PPE distribution, conducting a drive-through PPE distribution for first responders for 32 townships, serving 500 hot meals to the homeless every month, and operating a helpline for seniors during the pandemic to help them get groceries and other supplies."

- Message from Chief Guest Dr. Inderpal Bhandari Ji

"Since our Chapter started, our focus has been on promoting volunteerism amongst young high-schoolers to inculcate the habit of serving selflessly. We have grown four fold and now are involved in a lot more projects helping underprivileged, underserved, seniors and differently-abled and continue to be environment and sustainability conscious.

As we begin 2023, our helpline that served during COVID is now giving help in the area of foreign students involved in accidents with no family support, mental health issues and families in distress due to financial, death of bread earners or work-related stress. This is going to be our focus area in 2023 to develop more expertise to help manage these cases. I must say we handled a few very complex cases successfully and hope no one has to face it but our volunteers will continue to provide help wherever families need us. Our partnership with organizations that help survivors of domestic violence continue to grow.

Central Jersey Chapter would like to wish everyone a Happy, Healthy, and Blessed 2023 ...".

- Message from Central Jersey Chapter Coordinator Rajesh Sharma Ji

'Yes I Can Go to School' – SHE Donor Report - Rajasthan

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, or Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), or Clean India Mission is a country-wide campaign initiated by the Government of India in **2014** with a focus on sanitation and accessibility to solid and liquid waste management facilities and with an aim to provide for ecologically safe and sustainable sanitation.

The mission launched by Prime Minister Modi, aimed for construction of toilets throughout the country and since 2015 an estimated 89.9 million toilets were built through this campaign.

Can you imagine not having a Toilet?



Not having the right to education due to the lack of toilet facility in schools was the serious issue that Sewa International chose to address in **2015** with the flagship project 'Yes I Can Go To School' - a program under the purview of Sewa International's SHE - Sanitation, Hygiene and Empowerment Project for the Girl Child.

The first pilot project that was implemented was by installing toilets at **four** government schools in Bengaluru District in South India which increased the attendance of the Girls' school by **87%.** Since then the project has expanded to more than **43,989 schools** across India.

Other important issues taken up under the banner of the **SHE** program were addressing *Menstrual Health and Awareness* through construction of 'menstrual rooms' for school staff and students, and providing water for *Sanitation and Hygiene*.



Our Journey

In 2015, Sewa International started the "#Yes!Icangotoschoo!" program and implemented the first pilot project by installing toilets at four government schools in Jigani, Bengaluru District, in South India. Girl's school attendance increased by 87%.

Since then, Sewa International has expanded the project to different locations across India. In the past five years, this project has benefited more than 9,927 families and 43,989+ school children from various sections of Indian communities.



14 Indian States 27+ Districts





Our Reach

698 Toilets Benefitting

3,989+ School children 9,927+ Families

Key Focus Areas

Our Key Focus Area: 1. Building new toilets/repairing existing toilets in schools with a higher percentage of girl students.

- Construction of menstrual rooms for adolescent girls and female school staff.
- 3. Providing water for sanitation.



SEWA INTERNATIONAL'S SHE PROJECT

Donor Report

SHE - Sanitation, Hygiene and Empowering the Girl Child

DEC 14, 2022

ESTEEMED DONOR -SEWA CENTRAL NEW JERSEY CHAPTER The Central Jersey Chapter of Sewa International, USA funded the SHE program in **2022** for the construction of **12** toilets across **2** rural schools in Viratnagar, in the state of Rajasthan, India.

In parallel, *Menstrual Health and Awareness Camps* were conducted for all the adolescent girls in these 2 schools and reusable sanitary napkin kits were distributed to all of the student beneficiaries.

Most of these funds were raised through fundraising efforts by the Chapter's **2022 LEADs**.

Here is the Donor report on the Chapter's contribution to Sewa International's SHE - Sanitation, Hygiene and Empowerment Project for the Girl Child.

NEED ANALYSIS - RAJASTHAN



Key requirements:

- . 12 new toilets in rural schools across Rajasthan
- Soak pit; Overhead tank
- Water provision for sanitation; Wash basin installation
- Menstrual awareness for adolescent girls

State: Rajasthan District: Viratnagar Block: Jaipur



- Requirements post need analysis:

 6 new toilets/urinals in each school
- Overhead tank for providing water for sanitation and providing water connections to the toilet units
- · Wash basin outside the toilet block

All the identified schools are in very remote rural areas with limited facilitates for water and sanitation; children travel 2-3 villages to come to school for studying.

Sewa has received request letter from district education department, govt of Rajasthan requesting Sewa to help with sanitation facilities in these identified underprivileged schools.

With generous funds from Cebtral New Jersey chapter, Sewa is providing sanitation facilities, menstrual health and hygiene awareness camps in the above identified schools.



The Chapter along with the **LEADs of 2023** is looking forward to doing much more in the year ahead.





Sewa Winter Coat & Toy Drive

Central Jersey Chapter LEADs conducted a Winter Coat Drive in the month of December 2022, where they collected gently used winter clothing items. LEADs reached out to family and friends for their generous donations for the noble cause. They collected coats, jackets, scarves, blankets, sweatshirts, sweaters, hats, gloves, mittens, hoodies, and new socks of all sizes. The clothes were washed and donated. ~3,100 pounds of items were donated by the Chapter. The project was a huge success with generous donations from the community. This is a great way of recycling to help those in need stay warm during the cold holiday season.

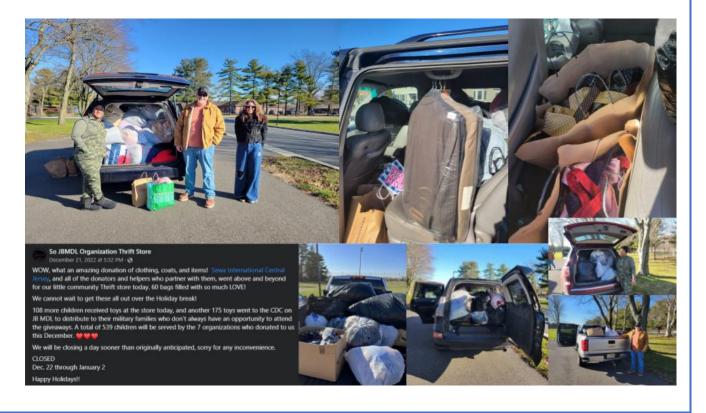
Some of the Chapter LEADs also conducted an annual Toy drive, along with the Winter Coat drive. LEADs collected toys from their neighbors, schools, and friends. They partnered with their local high school club and were able to collect winter clothing and **108** toys. The LEADs collected various items to donate which included toy trucks, remote controlled drones, Hot Wheels Cars, and Barbie Dolls. The LEADs made an immense impact in their community this holiday season, spreading holiday joy to those in need.



Recipients:

Jersey Shore Rescue Mission in Asbury Park, NJ Spouses of JBMDL Organization, Joint Base MDL The Children's Home Society of New Jersey The Extended Hand Ministry Homeless Shelter in Mt Holly, NJ

United Methodist Church in New Brunswick, NJ Zarephath Community Center in Somerset, NJ



Sewa for Domestic Violence Survivors

Selvaraj Ji the Central Jersey Chapter's volunteer and this month's volunteer in spotlight once again stepped up in his continuous support for Manavi, an organization that addresses the needs of South Asian women who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Selvaraj Ji has taken ownership in many ways to support the survivors whether in the form of delivering groceries and other essential items to the survivors every month through the year, assembling furniture for the safe homes of the survivors, or any need that arises and help requested by Manavi.

This month of December too Selvaraj Ji once again shopped and delivered groceries to the survivors.

The Central Jersey Chapter would like to thank Selvaraj Ji for stepping up in 'Sewa' for the many service activities of the Chapter.



Sewa for Flags for Heroes



Central Jersey LEADs volunteered for "Flags for Heroes", a celebration of the people who have shaped and inspired. Each flag honors a person who has made a difference in someone's life. Flags were flown in honor of the special people, the heroes, who were nominated.

The LEADs folded the flags after the completion of the annual event. The LEADs were taught how to properly fold the American flag. Each flag was folded 13 times into a triangular shape and then packaged into a bag. In total, **200** flags were folded.

Sewa Blood Donation Drive

Central Jersey LEADs again volunteered at YMCA Metuchen for a blood donation drive where the LEADs helped with sending reminder emails and making calls to pre-register donors. On the day of the drive they handled the sign-in desk for signing in the donors, and assisting at the blood donation floor.

The LEADs also handled the canteen to provide donors with water, juice, and sugary snacks after the blood donation. This helps the blood donors from getting dizzy or having other problems due to low glucose levels. Staying hydrated is also vital because water is one of the most important components of blood.

The LEADs enabled the YMCA to collect **58** units of blood! And that translates into potentially up to three times as many lives saved—**174 lives**!



Sewa in the Christmas Season



In December, Chapter LEADs and adult volunteers helped host the AttachAvi Holiday Party at Piscataway High School, NJ. The AttachAvi Autism Foundation, led by Anita Sharma Ji, specializes in helping children on the autism spectrum and spreading awareness about their conditions.

LEADs have been regularly volunteering at AttachAvi, and most recently, they helped with setting up activities, serving food, and distributing gifts for kids at the annual AttachAvi holiday party. The event was a huge success as LEADs gave back to the community, while partaking in some festive cheer and even getting to meet Santa!

The Chapter was happy to collaborate with Anitha Ji in her mission to improve the lives of those on the autism spectrum, while simultaneously enriching LEADs' volunteering experiences.

Chapter LEADs also volunteered for "The Christmas Spectacular" event hosted by Indian Business Association (IBA). LEADs managed the event from the Welcome table, to food distribution, to managing the crowd by the stage, and directing them to the food and gift booths.

LEADs had a great experience and learned how to manage large events, handle huge crowds and to be able to have fun and interact with the visitors.



Sewa at the Temple



For the Gita Jayanthi festival on December 4, Chapter LEADs volunteered at the Radha Gopinath Temple. Gita Jayanthi is the festive event to celebrate the day Bhagwan Shri Krishna imparted the gyan/wisdom of the Srimad Bhagvad Gita to Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, the epic battle of Mahabharata.

The LEADs worked jointly with the temple volunteers to manage the festive event. The LEADs organized the tables and set up the dining room for the temple devotees and helped in serving the food. The LEADs also served 'prasadam' to the temple visitors and at the end of the event, assisted with the cleanup.

Together the LEADs and the temple volunteers made it an incredible event and the LEADs were blessed to be a part of this event on this auspicious day.

Sewa at Boat Building

Chapter LEADs had the unique opportunity to build boats at Lower Raritan Watershed in Edison where with the help of skilled professionals, the LEADs learnt to work with cutting and shaping wood, and helping with building boats









Sewa for Pumpkin Composting



Post fall festivities, LEADs collected pumpkins that were used to decorate houses in their communities to enable composting of the pumpkins instead of the community disposing them off in trash. LEADs did the composting of the pumpkins in their own backyard for organic gardening.

LEADs are looking forward to spring where they can start their backyard gardening of produce in soil rich in nutrients. They are happy to know they have done their bit to contribute to the environment!

Sewa at Food Banks, Food Pantries, and Jewish Relief Agency

In the month of December, the Central Jersey Chapter LEADs drove to Philadelphia to help pack food at the Jewish Relief Agency.

The LEADs packed potatoes in paper bags to be shipped out to those in need. Together, they were able to pack over **1500** pounds of potatoes in less than an hour. With the extra time, everyone gathered together to make grocery packages. LEADs formed an assembly line and evenly distributed a variety of items including pasta, chocolate, cookies, and toilet paper. Not only did the LEADs help pack food for needy families, but they were given the opportunity to deliver food in person.

LEADs packed the items in boxes and delivered to **29** senior homes. This gave them a great opportunity to see the direct impact they made to the lives of the senior citizens.





The Chapter LEADs also volunteered at the Hands of Hope Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen in Edison, a service to end hunger in the community, step by step.

LEADs have thoroughly enjoyed being part of this community service where they helped with setting up tables, sorting and tagging donations, and readying food for transportation. In addition, they aided in managing tents, registering new beneficiaries, and loading cars with the food items.

LEADs also volunteered at the Franklin Food Bank in December where they helped pack produce, organize and restock shelves and freezers, and sort through food items and helped the people in the community do their food shopping. It was a great experience for the LEADs.



Sewa Meals for those in Need

About forty million people in America struggle every day from the lack of access to simple resources such as food. In addition, multiple families live under the poverty line in areas where healthy, organic foods are unavailable or expensive to obtain. The Central Jersey Chapter hosts an event every month, where the youth volunteers cook homemade meals for the homeless, food shelters, and food pantries.

In the month of December, Chapter LEADs continued with their monthly service of providing home cooked meals. They prepared salads, bread rolls, soup, veggie pasta, garlic pita bread, hummus, pasta with marinara sauce, and roasted vegetables. Kids meals provided were mac & cheese, cheese sandwiches, chips, and candies. Dessert baked was cupcakes, brownies and chocolate chip muffins.

The young LEADs with little expertise with culinary work, through this volunteering opportunity have picked up cooking skills and have learnt to work as a team in preparing the meals, packing them, delivering them to the recipient churches and shelters. They further help in packaging individual meals and in distributing the meals to the food deprived.

LEADs have also found ways to be environmentally conscious in the process. They make sure to wrap the meals in aluminum foil and avoid the use of plastic.







December Meals' Recipients: Ozanam Food Shelter United Methodist Church in New Brunswick Westminster Presbyterian Church in Trenton

The Chapter extends thanks to the meal sponsors and the LEADs to help feed the food insecure. The recipients were extremely grateful for all the fresh home cooked meals!













Together They Served Better - The 2022 LEADs of the Central Jersey Chapter



Advait Nair
Adwita Jagannathan
Aiden Matt
Aiswarya Chilukuri
Akhil Kalepalli
Akhilesh Pulavarti
Amirthavarshini Subburaman
Amit Guiadeen
Ananya Bongoni
Ananya Madireddy

Anika Kundu Aniketh Byram Aniketh Chadive Anirudh Prodduturu Anisha Sai R Pavani Anjali Menon Anjali Pyeddu Ankhita Prakaas Anoushka Banerjee Anshu Andhavarapu

> Anusha Gupta Anushka Dasari Anushree Singh Anvita Malepati Anya Chhabra Archisha Sharma Arshia Raghuvanshi Ashira Agarwal Astha Rajpal Atharva Kadam

Avaneesh Subramanyan Avijith Karthikeyan Bhavita Tirumala Chahel Kumar Chirag Mugwe Daksh Goel <u>Dayanetha</u> Raja Devanshi Voleti Dhanvee Palakodeti Dhanvita Raja













Dharika Verma Dharmika Pendyam Dheeraj Nail Dhriti Cagathi Dhruv Kumar Dhruv Patel Dinesh Karnati Disha Garg Diya Patel Elekia Muralidharan

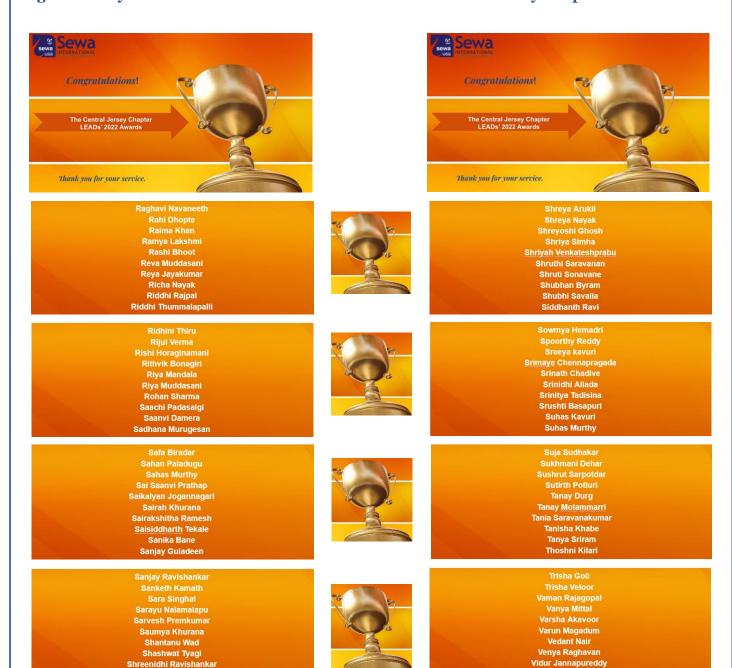
> Hanshal Chandrashekara redd Hardik Agrawal Harikrishnaa Ganeshpandi Heet Chauhan Hrishik Epuru Hrishikesh Menon Ishaan Brahma Jaabiii Kuruvella Jayant Venkatesan Jiya Suthar

Joshika Aravelli Kaivalya Atigre Kaushik Annamraju Keisha Maniar Krisha Soneji Krishiv Khera Krithik Alluri Kushaal Latupalli Mahathi Chitti Manas Gupta

> Manavi Gupta Manu Dontabhaktuni Medha Inapuri Medha Singireddy Meera Batra Megan Garg Muskan Seksaria Nandin Miryala Navya Goel Neil Kapil

Nithik Kambhampati Nitin Balajikannan Niyathi Sunku Pihu Batra Pranav Reddy Palle Praveen Prabaharan Preeti Airen Raghav Acharya Raghav Akula Raghava Kalidindi

Together They Served Better - The 2022 LEADs of the Central Jersey Chapter



The Central Jersey Chapter would like to thank the 2022 LEADs for their service to the communities across Central Jersey and beyond!

Shresta Damera

Vikhyat Ginjupally

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

Newsletter Team



Akash Nagireddy Grade: 9 Interests: Reading and Sports Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meals



Amaani Rao Grade: 8 Interests: Playing Instruments, Math, Art, Singing Favorite Sewa Project: CTAA Basketball Table



Anishka Chava Grade: 10 Interests: Rowing, Cooking Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meals



- Sewa for Jewish Relief Agency
- Sewa at Food Bank & Food Pantries
- Sewa Meals for those in Need
- ❖ Sewa in Boat Building
- Sewa for Habitat for Humanity
- Sewa at Temple



Anvita Malepati Grade: 9 Interests: Swimming Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meals



Bhavini Prabhu Grade: 9 Interests: Dance, Singing, Art Favorite Sewa Project: Boat building



Inika Kumar Grade: 8 Interests: Sew, Biking, Singing, Tennis Favorite Sewa Project: CTAA Basketball Table



Krithik Alluri Grade: 9 Interests: Programming, Basketball Favorite Sewa Project: JRA Food Packing



Radha Pant Grade: 8 Interests: Soccer, Science, Biking, Running, Art Favorite Sewa Project: Jewish Relief Agency Food Packing



Riddhi Rayala Grade: 9 Interests: Dance and Piano Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meals



Sanjay Ravishankar Grade: 10 Interests: Art, Piano, Coding Favorite Sewa Project: Balaji Temple 3D Model



Sarayu Nalamalapu Grade: 11 Interests: Baking and Running Favorite Sewa Project: Toy Drive



Shely Dash Grade: 10 Interests: Baking, Music, Foodie Favorite Sewa Project: Boat building

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@sewausa.org

Helpline: 702. 900.SEWA



Shresta Damera Grade: 10 Interests: Reading, Art, Flute Favorite Sewa Project: Marlboro Garden