

Monroe Center 2020-2021 LEADs Awards Ceremony

On February 3rd, 2022, Monroe Township Mayor Mr. Stephen Dalina distributed the Presidential Volunteer Service Awards to Sewa Monroe Center LEADs. Monroe Center LEADs together have put over 3600 hours of selfless service to various organizations through the Sewa LEAD program 2020-2021.

Mayor Dalian addressed all the leads and was extremely appreciative of Sewa Central Jersey Chapters' service to the community and acknowledged the time, effort, and dedication of the LEADs.

"...I'm just so impressed certainly impressed with all what you have done but I am impressed with all of the parents as well that you've raised such wonderful young men and women and you all deserve a round of applause ..."

Mayor Dalina's kind words of recognition, personally handing of the certificates and pictures with each of the lead, was indeed a cherished experience for all.

Later in the week, during the township council meeting, Mayor Dalian gave a shout out to Sewa Central Jersey Chapter and the award ceremony pictures were published on the township Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/100064430272232/posts/306066384884368/?app=fbl>



Chapter Highlights

- ❖ Neshaminy Park Reforestation
- ❖ Ramblin' Sol Organic Farming
- ❖ AttachAvi Program
- ❖ Manavi Support for domestic violence survivors
- ❖ Birthday Cards and Bracelets donation
- ❖ Sewa Meals and Food donation
- ❖ Balaji Temple Sewa Projects

Center Highlights

- ❖ Monroe Center Awards Ceremony
- ❖ Balaji Temple Outreach Support
- ❖ RISE food pantry produce donation
- ❖ Sai Pariwar Temple volunteering

Volunteer Spotlight



Rashmi Sharma, a dedicated parent volunteer, is the Edison center newsletter coordinator and has been associated with Sewa for over two years. As part of her role, she assists LEADs write about their volunteering experiences and Sewa events. Not only does this highlight the achievements of the student volunteers, but it also develops their essay writing skills. Professionally, Rashmi Ji works as a Project Manager, and in her free time she loves to sing, dance, and make arts and crafts. Rashmi Ji's altruistic nature can also be seen through her work at Hindi USA, where she educates children on the culture of India and the beautiful language of Hindi. Rashmi Ji is a dedicated worker, mother, and volunteer. She plans on continuing to help the people in her community through Sewa International USA.

Neshaminy Park Reforestation Effort

This month of February 2022, Sewa International Central Jersey Chapter LEAD volunteers kick started their annual volunteering effort of reforestation at Neshaminy State Park, Pennsylvania. Since 2021, our LEAD and adult volunteers have been involved in this reforestation effort every spring, summer and fall season through the year. The two acres of area in the park is usually covered by invasive plants such as Japanese Stilt Grass and Mile a Minute. The reforestation effort entails removing these invasive plants and planting of trees to establish a riparian buffer to help with storm water management in a priority flood area along the Delaware river. This reforestation effort of planting native trees and flowering shrubs is also a way to provide a native natural habitat for wildlife and migrating birds and thus maintaining the ecosystem. This month the volunteers started with removing the invasive plants and clearing the area for planting trees in the coming months!



Ramblin' Sol Farm Organic Farming

In February, Sewa LEADs from Chesterfield and Cherry Hill met up at Ramblin' Sol Farms, an all organic farm, to help the local farmers with organizing and cleaning up various aspects of the farm. Our LEADs were tasked with hanging up birdhouses to attract the rare Blue Bird species, transferring fencing material and cleaning of the barn to get ready for the Spring Season. The LEADs, through active participation and enthusiasm, were able to get an insight into farm life and were able to assist these local farms for a good cause. The LEADs hope to be of more assistance to the farm and support their goals for a sustainable and natural growing of crops.



Produce and Diaper Donation

Sewa Central Jersey Chapter received 8 cases of produce, 3 cases of noodle boxes & 10 boxes of adult diapers from our Sewa volunteer and local business owner Ram Malladi. The donation of produce & noodles was delivered to Rise Food Pantry, Hightstown, NJ for distribution to families in need and the donation of diapers were given to the Edison center for distribution to senior centers. We appreciate the kind donation from Malladi Ji!

Manavi Domestic Violence Survivors' Support

In 2021, our Central Jersey Chapter Family Services group got into a partnership with Manavi, an organization in New Brunswick, NJ that addresses the needs of South Asian women who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Our Chapter has continued with this partnership into 2022. Our volunteers grocery shop and deliver these groceries and any other essential necessities to these survivors. This is an ongoing service being done by our adult volunteers throughout the year. We would like to especially thank Selvaraj Ji for his service for the whole of last quarter and continuing this month too!



AttachAvi Autism Foundation Program

In 2021, in collaboration with AttachAvi Autism Foundation, Sewa Central Jersey Chapter started a two-year all-inclusive program on social and emotional learning for special needs young adults. Our LEADs volunteered for this daily life enhancement program and helped integrate the young adults on the autism spectrum into the mainstream population of their community and to lead a purposeful life. This month our LEADs were blessed to work with the special needs children in verbal and physical and musical activities.

Handmade Birthday Cards and Bracelets Donation

In 2021 during the peak of the pandemic, Sewa Central Jersey LEAD volunteers handmade birthday cards and bracelets and donated them to children in foster homes, senior citizen centers, cancer centers, frontline workers, medical professionals, first responders and various local charities and did their little bit to spread positivity and express gratitude in the times of the pandemic.

The LEADs started this year too with this commendable service to spread joy and cheer. Being at their creative best they made 543 birthday cards and 714 bracelets using colorful cardstock, stickers, lace, tapes, stamps, ink, stencils, ribbons, buttons, paper embossing, markers, cutting dies, diamonds, cords, gems, beads and sequins to name a few!

The LEADs immensely enjoyed expressing their artistic abilities and knowing well that someone somewhere would be happy when receiving their gift!



Sewa Meals and Food Donation Drives

This month of February, our Central Jersey Chapter LEADs continued with their initiative where they prepared meals for the homeless and conducted food donation drives to be donated to those in need.

Chesterfield LEAD volunteers made 151 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. The meals included vegetable pasta, bread rolls, salad, red velvet cake, and a bags of candy. Thanks to all the LEADs for cooking, baking, and packing the meals & thanks to all the parents for their support!

This month's meal was sponsored by:
Malini & Muralidharan Krishnan
Shital & Manoj Khabe
Shilpa & Mukul Rathi (State Farm)



Monroe LEADs continued with their initiative that they started in 2021 to feed the homeless at The United Methodist Church, New Brunswick. The LEADs prepare and deliver meals regularly on two Sundays every month. The adult meal consisted of chickpeas salad, green peas potato curry, toasted pita bread, cumin rice, freshly baked pound cake, Mexican corn salad, Mexican rice, cheese quesadilla and freshly baked brownies. In the kids' meal our LEADs packed sandwiches, chocolate chip cookies, baby carrots, grapes, apple and fruit juice. Our LEADs, as always, made sure to prepare and deliver the tasty meal on time! This month's meal sponsors were LEAD Ridhini and LEAD Niyathi's families. Thank you for your kind donation.



Somerset center LEADs who initiated the Sewa Meals in 2021, continued with their service in 2022 and prepared and delivered 60 adult meals to the United Methodist Church in New Brunswick. This meal consisted of Cumin and Peas Pulav/Rice, Peas Potato Masala/Curry, and Naans/Breads. The meal was served along with Sheera and muffins as dessert. The meals were delivered promptly, and LEADs also helped to pack the food at the church. A huge thank you to LEADs Anvitas family, LEAD Nishita's family and the late Dr. Pradeep Chakrabarti's family.



Edison LEAD volunteers donated food for the women and children in distress and residing at The Ozanam Family Shelter. The food items which included salad, bean soup, macaroni and cheese, quesadillas and brownies were cooked by the young LEADs and subsequently delivered to the shelter. The generosity of all LEADs' families is highly appreciated!

Edison LEADs also participated in food organization and donation at the Hands of Hope food pantry and soup kitchen in Edison, New Jersey. The LEADs organized frozen food packages; made individual food packages; transported the food packages and helped in organizing the donated food at the food pantry. This volunteering effort by Edison LEADs helped alleviate hunger for countless families in the community.

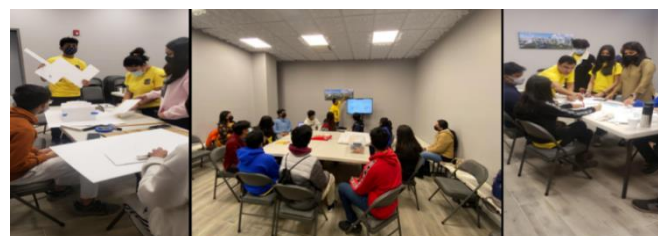


Balaji Temple Sewa Projects

In 2021, Monroe Center had taken on a new engagement with Om Sri Sai Balaji Temple in Monroe, NJ. Our Monroe center LEADs volunteered over the weekend both in-person and virtually. The LEADS supported the temple administration in the educational zoom meetings and also with cleaning the temple lobby, prayer hall and classrooms in the temple premises.

In 2022, our Central Jersey Chapter broadened the scope of responsibilities with the temple where the volunteers including LEADS across the Chapter have taken on multiple projects with the temple. The first project is the creation of a 3D model of the temple to be displayed at the temple. Our Sewa volunteers have started planning for this project and having workshops on model design and development. In February the team was working at building a prototype of the model of the temple. This project will result on LEADs using new tools and techniques as well as applying their engineering skills and it will also give them an opportunity to be at their creative best! We would like to thank Ravindra Basapuri Ji from Monroe center for helping this project!

Additional projects being undertaken are planning the digital conversion of temple documents, fliers and temple donation records, creating manual for temple operating instructions, designing various email templates, compiling list of kitchen equipment and creating operational videos, designing temple decorations for events, setting up drone video and photography of special events, setting up live stream of temple events and setting up a weekend radio station for the temple.



Sai Parivar Temple Sewa

In 2022, Somerset Center of our Central Jersey Chapter also started a new engagement with Sai Parivar Temple in North Brunswick, NJ. The first Sewa project they took on with the temple was to help prepare the temple for Vasantha Panchami celebrations by cleaning up the premises, setting up the stage, and preparing the prasad. Following this, on the day of the pooja, they helped set up, distribute prasad, and sort through and organize the prayer folders. On the last day, they helped clean up and wrap up after the pooja was finished. Subsequent to this the LEADs moved on to support the temple to have them ready next for Mahashivratri. Every week the LEADs have been helping with cleaning, organizing and getting the temple ready for the Mahashivratri pooja and celebrations.

Our Somerset center has taken on further service at the temple where twice every month the LEADs will volunteer help that is needed at the temple.

Balaji Temple Outreach Support

Our Edison Sewa LEADs volunteered for Om Sri Balaji Temple of Monroe, NJ at Indus TV 'Shaam E Gaana' anniversary event that celebrates music and arts across the US. The LEADs distributed fliers and cards of the temple to spread the word on the temple that is being built to cultivate a divine atmosphere to learn from the timeless knowledge present in our sacred Hindu literature.



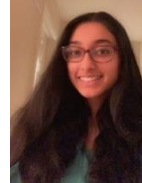
Newsletter Team



Raghav Acharya
Grade: 10
Interests: Reading, Gaming, Running
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Diwali



Nitin Balajikannan
Grade: 10
Interests: Reading, Playing Sports
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meals



Dhruvi Cagathi
Grade: 11
Interests: Reading, Dancing, Playing Flute, and Running
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meals



Trisha Goli
Grade: 10
Interests: Volleyball, Science Fiction, Dance, Biking
Favorite Sewa Project: Forest Reforestation & Sewa Meals



Dinesh Karnati
Grade: 11
Interests: Watching Anime, Chess & Badminton
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Summer Camps



Sreeya Kavuri
Grade: 10
Interests: Art, Reading, Dance
Favorite Sewa Project: AttachAvi Autism Foundation Holiday Party



Tanisha Khabe
Grade: 11
Interests: Singing, Playing Piano, Reading
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meals



Anika Kundu
Grade: 10
Interests: Field Hockey, Programming, Reading
Favorite Sewa Project: Hands of Hope



Riddhi Rayala
Grade: 8
Interests: Piano, Reading
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meals



Shruti Sonavane
Grade: 10
Interests: Running, Reading, Painting
Favorite Sewa Project: Treats for Troops

Upcoming Events

- ❖ AttachAvi program
- ❖ Balaji Temple projects
- ❖ Backyard Composting workshops setup and cleanup
- ❖ Community Food Bank volunteering
- ❖ Freehold Garden spring cleanup
- ❖ 'Keep My Street Green' project
- ❖ Manavi Support for domestic violence survivors
- ❖ Marlboro Garden spring cleanup
- ❖ Neshaminy Park reforestation
- ❖ Plastic recycling
- ❖ Ramblin' Sol Farm spring cleanup and seeding
- ❖ Sai Pariwar Temple volunteering
- ❖ Sewa Meals for homeless

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