

Central Jersey Sewa - NJ State Governor's Volunteerism Award 2023 Honoree!

The Central Jersey Chapter of Sewa International has been bestowed as an Honoree of the NJ State Governor's Volunteerism Award 2023 in the category of 'Health Care Service'. This is a significant achievement by the Chapter and a testament to the exemplary service to the communities it serves.



'Honoree of the New Jersey State Governor's Volunteerism Award achieve measurable community impact and represent outstanding acts of public service, without the expectation of recognition or compensations.'

Recipients demonstrate unique vision, dedication, and tenacity of heroic proportion and serve as inspiration for others.'

- **NJ State Governor's Volunteerism Award**

Chapter Highlights

- ❖ NJ State Governor's Volunteerism Award 2023 Honoree!
- ❖ Sewa Jagannath Family Camp
- ❖ Sewa for Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan
- ❖ Sewa International National Youth Conference
- ❖ Sewa Through the Year: Youth Engagement and Support Programs
Special Needs Support Services
Educational and Fundraising Initiatives
Feeding Programs for Hunger Relief
Community Outreach Programs
Sustainable Agriculture, Biodiversity Conservation, and Environmental Protection
Serving Places of Worship

Volunteer Spotlight



Uttam Ji Bidesi, from Hyderabad, is one of the parent Sewa volunteers with the Edison Center of the Central Jersey Chapter. With the influence of his parents and their teachings, he often loved to help the people around him, whether kids or underprivileged families. He believes Sewa is a platform that helped him continue his passion for serving the community. His favorite activities within Sewa are volunteering in Radha Gopinath Mandir and the family camps. In the last couple of summers, he has helped with planning and executing many Sewa family camps. Uttam ji and his family are proud and glad that they joined Sewa to create new experiences, new friendships, and give back to the community. He currently lives in Edison, New Jersey with his wife and two kids. He looks forward to continuing being involved with Sewa in the upcoming future.

The NJ State Governor's Volunteerism Awards was established to recognize and honor individuals, groups, and organizations for their outstanding contributions and achievements in public and community service.

Receiving this recognition reflects the hard work, compassion, and selflessness of the entire chapter. It highlights the exceptional contributions made by the volunteers and their commitment to improving the well-being of those in need.

The Chapter was also honored to serve as a powerful example and motivation to others to contribute their time and skills to making a positive impact in their communities. Another important aspect is, this recognition and accomplishment of the Chapter's volunteers will also help raise awareness about the issues and causes the Chapter is working towards. It sparks conversations, generates media coverage, and encourages dialogue among community members. This increased visibility can attract more volunteers, donors, and supporters to the causes fostering a culture of engagement and philanthropy.

'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' - The World Is One Family

What the Central Jersey Chapter of Sewa International, USA has achieved is in line with its philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', a Sanskrit phrase that translates to 'The World is One Family'. It is a concept rooted in ancient Indian philosophy, particularly in the texts of Hinduism. The phrase expresses the idea that all of humanity, regardless of nationality, race, religion, or any other differences, is interconnected and should live together in harmony and peace. It encourages individuals to extend their sense of belonging beyond their immediate families and communities to embrace the entire world as a larger family. It serves as a reminder of our common humanity and the need to work together to create a better world for everyone.

Sewa at Jagannath Dham Family Camp

Keeping up with the annual tradition, this year too, the Central Jersey Sewa families got a chance to participate in an overnight stay at Jagannath Dham a 75-acre serene Campsite/Retreat Center in Belfast, New York, a retreat where one can visit and get the opportunity to experience Yoga, Meditation, 'Samskritam' and an eco-friendly environment. This was the Central Jersey Chapter's 4th family camp and the Chapter would like to give a sincere thanks to the HSS for their kindness in providing this retreat to Sewa International for conducting these camps.

The retreat was a well-organized one with good accommodation and hygienic facilities available for the Central Jersey Sewa families who visited the camp on the weekend of July 15th & 16th 2023.

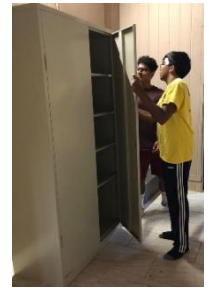
Every moment of the camp was a wonderful experience for the Sewa families.

The day at the camp started early with morning walk, yoga, meditation and *aarathi* and *darshan* of Lord Jagannath with Linda Ji. This was followed by a breakfast buffet which was scrumptious as was the rest of the meals through the weekend made by the wonderful Annapurna team!

Through the day and despite it being hot weather the superbly charged Sewa volunteers and families took part and worked hard and contributed in various aspects of the camp.



They created a new flower bed, an area of 25 feet by 4 feet on the South side next to the temple where they mulched the area and planted 13 perennial plants, mostly roses, put up a decorative fence and watered the newly planted flower bed. LEADS were happy to know that the flowers that will bloom in this flower bed will be used in the temple hereon.



They also disassembled some of the bunk beds in Keshav Sadan, and assembled them in the other rooms where they were needed. They then went on to assemble a steel cabinet next to the stairs in the temple for storing valuables. They also did a deep cleaning of Madhav Sadan and the bathrooms.



About 20 volunteers worked very hard for more than 2 hours to move a truck load of sawdust into the Goshala/barn where they were spread 8-10-inch-thick in the barn – a tough job indeed in the hot weather. They also trimmed trees and shrubs around the Goshala.

The young and adult volunteers got an opportunity to work with Linda Ji at the Goshala. The volunteers were taught the importance of hard work and dedication needed in taking care of the animals in the Goshala. The young LEADS and younger children of the Sewa families enjoyed the wonder-filled opportunity of petting the cows and cats at the camp and seeing a newborn calf of 3 weeks!



Evenings the families took part in bhajans and other forms of entertainment where kids also performed. The evening also included fireworks and fun making s' mores around the campfire.

The volunteers were happy to leave the camp knowing they were able to complete a month's work in one weekend as claimed by Linda Ji and knowing they did their duties as dedicated *karyakartas*. They left the camp in a pristine condition to be enjoyed by other visitors who would be coming subsequently for a retreat. The camp was a unique experience for the Sewa families where the volunteers got an opportunity to meet with other volunteer families and connect with them and with nature.

Sewa Boat Building for Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan

Central Jersey Sewa LEADs have over this year been part of an incredible initiative with the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership (LRWP) to promote community-based rowing and environmental conservation on the Raritan River. Their "Rowing on the Raritan Boat Building Project" was a fantastic way for the LEADs to be engaged in hands-on activities related to boat building, and has fostered a sense of ownership and pride in their contribution towards the rowing program.



The vision of a healthy Raritan River is crucial for the well-being of the local ecosystem and the communities that depend on it. The boats being built will be used to collect relevant data and knowledge about the watershed's health and the sharing of this data can lead to informed decision-making and collaborative efforts to address environmental challenges effectively.

This collaboration between Central Jersey Sewa and the LRWP exemplifies how community involvement and environmental consciousness can go hand in hand, fostering positive change and appreciation for natural resources.

Sewa International National Youth Conference

The 3rd National Youth Convention (NYC) of Sewa International took place on Saturday, July 29, 2023. It was a virtual event of 4 hours open to all LEADs from the Leadership Development through Community Engagement program from the 40+ chapters of Sewa International in the USA.

INVITATION TO VISITORS, PARENTS, SEWA VOLUNTEERS & GUESTS

3rd NATIONAL YOUTH CONVENTION
Saturday, July 29th, 2023 11 A.M. EDT - 3 PM EDT

It takes all of us to help reduce and prevent substance abuse.

REGISTER

- Presentations & Inspirational speeches
- Panel Discussions on topics relevant to youth
- Musical Entertainment

<https://sewausa.org/NYC2023-Visitor>

www.sewausa.org
lead@sewausa.org

The convention aimed to bring together approximately **800** high school and college students who are part of the youth cohort from various Chapters across the United States. The overarching theme for this year's convention was 'Creating Drug-Free Communities'.

The primary objectives of the convention were to provide a platform for LEADs to showcase their accomplishments throughout the year, facilitate interaction among participants, inspire and motivate attendees through insightful speeches, engage in live panel discussions on topics relevant to the youth, and collectively pass a resolution related to the convention's theme of creating drug-free communities. The event served as a celebration of the Sewa journey undertaken by LEADs and aimed to provide further motivation for all participants.

Topics:

- Importance and career opportunities in Humanities and Social Sciences
- Should mental and physical health be addressed in the same manner
- Need for ethical boundaries with Artificial Intelligence
- The role of religion and faith in modern day
- Developing an abundance mindset, any dangers in it?
- Celebrating the Diversity
- Need for schools and homes to be drug free
- Does being rooted in one's culture help build a better life and society
- How to face adversities and curveballs life throws at you

The Convention was a valuable opportunity for the Sewa LEADs to connect, exchange ideas, learn, contribute, and get inspired. It played a crucial role in fostering collaboration, innovation, and personal growth among youth leaders, ultimately contributing to the organization's mission to serve humanity.

YOU ARE INVITED!
Boat House Open House /
Inaugural Boat Launch & Paddle
Saturday July 8 : Noon - 4pm



12pm – A toast to the boats and their makers at the LRWP Boat House, 101 Raritan Avenue

To celebrate the completion of the project in July, LRWP had their Boat House Open House as a toast to the boats and their makers at the LRWP Boat House.



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

Sewa, "selfless service" in Sanskrit, a concept rooted in Hinduism refers to the act of giving or providing voluntary service without any expectation of reward or personal gain. Service being provided throughout the year is a wonderful way to contribute to local communities, help those in need, and foster a sense of fulfillment in all volunteers.

The Central Jersey Chapter has played a significant role in recurring service activities in community engagement, social impact, and personal growth through the year and this month too, the service continues.

Educational & Fundraising Initiatives

LEADs hosted a Python camp as part of an initiative for fundraising this month where they used different projects and exercises to teach different Python coding skills. At the end of the camp, the students were assigned a final project where they created their own game using the knowledge they gained throughout the camp.



PYTHON CODING SUMMER CAMP!
JULY 3 - JULY 14
MON - FRI 11 AM - 1 PM EST

This camp is run by Sewa volunteers. LEADs from Sewa will provide student how to program in the coding language known as Python. Python is a very simple & easy language to understand and use. Students will be able to solve various projects to showcase their skills in python.

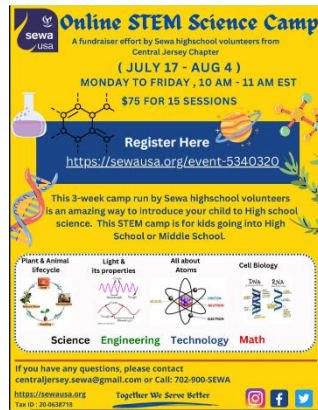
Sewa International
FOR STUDENTS FROM 6TH GRADE TO 11TH

Details

- Cost of program - \$50
- Complete virtual will be taught through zoom with all primers on google classroom.
- All proceeds go towards providing meals for homeless & people in need, distribution of Ozamam Shelter (Metuchen), United Methodist (New Brunswick), and Westminster Presbyterian Church (Trenton). Currently, we provide over 1000 meals each month.

Register Here
<https://sewausa.org/event-5327194>

If you have any questions, please contact centraljersey.sewa@gmail.com or Call: 702-900-SEWA
<https://sewausa.org> Tax ID #: 20-0638718



Online STEM Science Camp
A fundraiser effort by Sewa highschool volunteers from Central Jersey Chapter
(JULY 17 - AUG 4)
MONDAY TO FRIDAY, 10 AM - 11 AM EST
\$75 FOR 15 SESSIONS

Register Here
<https://sewausa.org/event-5340320>

This 3-week camp run by Sewa highschool volunteers is an amazing way to introduce your child to High school science. This STEM camp is for kids going into High School or Middle School.

Plant & Animal Science, Light & its properties, All about Atoms, Cell Biology, Think, Eat, Drink, Grow!

Science Engineering Technology Math

If you have any questions, please contact centraljersey.sewa@gmail.com or Call: 702-900-SEWA
<https://sewausa.org> Tax ID #: 20-0638718

Another fundraising effort by the LEADs was an amazing STEM Camp to introduce science to upcoming high school kids.



Plant Sale
A fundraiser effort by Sewa Highschool volunteers from Central Jersey Chapter
All proceeds go to provide meals to local needy communities.
JULY 15 - AUG 13

Banana Plant \$5, Curry Leaf Plant \$2, Tulsi Plant \$2, Mint Plant \$2

Vegetable Plants and many more

3 Easy Steps to Order

- Place your plant order by clicking the link provided.
- We will promptly notify you when your plants are ready for pickup.
- Simply pay for and collect your plants at your convenience.

Residents of Chesterfield can enjoy complimentary delivery on orders of \$15 or more.

Order your plants here
<https://forms.gle/ok4T2ZSBLpYdYW36>

If you have any questions, please contact sewa.chesterfield@gmail.com or Call: 848-667-4021
<https://sewausa.org> Tax ID #: 20-0638718

As part of another fundraising event, LEADs organized a plant sale where they sold banana, Tulsi, curry leaf, eggplants, and mint plants among many others.



Malhaar Musical Concert
A FUNDRAISER FOR SEWA INTERNATIONAL
In partnership with Sewa Central Jersey Chapter

with Resonance Band BOLLYWOOD HITS, POP, GHAZALS & MORE

22ND JULY 2023
TIME: 5:30PM-9:30PM
AT FRANKLIN SENIOR CENTER
505 DEMOTT LN, SOMERSET, NJ 08873

TICKETS ON SALE NOW:
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/MALHAARMUSIC](https://tinyurl.com/malhaarmusic)

130 ADULT 150 CHILD
DONOR INCLUDES
BELOW 5 YRS FREE

Sewa Beneficiary:

SAC and SHE Program, Sewa International

The Chapter, its volunteers, families and friends also came together to plan, organize, promote, and support a Chapter LEAD's family's efforts to conduct a Music Concert fundraiser to raise funds for the Child and Women Empowerment program of Sewa International. It was an enchanting musical experience while supporting a meaningful cause.

Central Jersey Chapter would like to thank the LEADs for their efforts and the initiative they have taken in coming up with these wonderful fundraising ideas and also thank the families for coming forward in support for these efforts.

Youth Engagement and Support Programs

In July, LEADs volunteered at the KKWC Camp which is a no cost summer camp for under-resourced Middlesex County children with the aim to develop and nurture physical health and other life skills. LEADs helped with the breakfast and lunch shifts where they oversaw setting up tables in the dining hall, serving the food, and cleaning up after the campers left.

Sewa Beneficiary:

Kiddie Keep Well Camp, Middlesex County



Special Needs Support Services

LEADs volunteered at AttachAvi, an all-inclusive program on social and emotional learning for special needs young children. At this daily life enhancement program, the LEADs help to integrate the ones on the autism spectrum into the mainstream population of their community and to lead a purposeful life.

Sewa Beneficiary:

AttachAvi Autism Foundation, Piscataway

Community Outreach Programs

The Chapter LEADs have been regularly conducting community outreach programs to assist the underprivileged, in the form of sorting, packing and distributing food, clothing, and other essential items. LEADs assist the Jewish Relief Agency in the greater Philadelphia area where they make care packages containing non-perishable food items and other essential supplies such as toilet paper and deliver them to families in need. LEADs also spend their time volunteering at RISE Pantry, where they help by sorting and organizing new donations, distributing food items, and discarding expired food. LEADs contributed to sharing the love of reading by helping at BookSmiles, where they sorted books by reading and grade level. Then, they packaged the books so that they could be shipped out to kids all over New Jersey and Philadelphia.

Sewa Beneficiaries:

BookSmiles, Pennsauken
Jewish Relief Agency, PA
RISE Food Pantry, Hightstown



Serving at Places of Worship

The Chapter LEADs have been volunteering at Temples by helping with daily temple chores, maintaining the premises, and supporting religious and cultural events. The LEADs spent their time volunteering at Sai Datta Temple where they helped in the temple's kitchen, cutting carrots, cabbages, and other vegetables. LEADs also contributed to the Balaji Temple where they worked in maintaining the temple's cleanliness by vacuuming, sweeping, and organizing the space.

LEADs also volunteered at the Kanchi Mutt kumbabishekam event at Sri MahaPeriyava Manimandapam temple, where they helped direct cars through the entry and exit points.

Sewa Beneficiaries:

Om Sri Sai Balaji Temple, Monroe
Sai Datta Temple, Edison
Sri MahaPeriyava Manimandapam NJ USA



Feeding Programs For Hunger Relief

The Chapter LEADs have been regularly providing weekly homemade fresh SewaMeals for the homeless and needy. LEADs cooked many different dishes and individually packed them. Overall, LEADs delivered approximately **200** homemade meals to multiple locations.

Meal Items: Chips, Pretzels, Portuguese Rolls, Cold Pasta Salad, Salad, Roasted Vegetables, Pasta, Chickpea Burgers, Cookies, Brownies

Meals' Sponsors:

Parmita and Prakash Patel
Puja and Sameer Jain
Malini and Muralidharan Krishnan
Shilpa and Mukul Rathi
LEAD Siddharth Kakaraparthi Family
LEAD Devanshi Family

Meals' Recipients:

United Methodist Church, New Brunswick
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Trenton



Sustainable Agriculture, Biodiversity Conservation, and Environmental Protection



The Chapter LEADs have been participating in organic farming and maintaining community gardens to promote sustainable living, beautify the neighborhood and provide fresh produce for communities across townships in Central and South Jersey. The LEADs have also been involved in reforestation efforts to promote environmental sustainability and combat deforestation.

The LEADs volunteered at Ramblin' Sol Farm where they helped get the garden beds ready for cover crops and removed the plastic that was put on the soil. They also helped with harvesting beans and strawberries, which was donated to nearby food banks, homeless shelters, and religious places.



LEADs have been using their skills to grow multiple gardens in their own backyards.

They nurture their saplings by watering, fertilizing and taking care until they are stable and yield produce. The produce this month of 10 lbs was donated to the RISE Pantry, the Jewish Children and Family Center and was also used in Sewa Meals.



On a hot summer day, LEADs spent time at the Silverlake Pollination Garden, where they raked to make the mud suitable to plant seeds and add more plants.

LEADs helped at the Marlboro Community Garden by removing weeds, clearing vines, extending the garden beds with wood chips, and cleaning up the fences. At the KKWC Garden, LEADs helped with removing weeds, putting supports for the plants, and taking care of the garden to allow for good growth of a variety of fruits and vegetables.



LEADs worked at Mill Creek where they worked on planting a riparian buffer (trees near a body of water) so that the quality of water increases, and the good native plants grow.

At Dwyer Community Park Garden, LEADs did tasks such as weeding to make room for new plants to grow and pruning to enhance the growth of the plants. They also used wires to help keep the animals out of the garden. LEADs volunteered at the reforestation project at Neshaminy Park where they removed invasive plants and planted native trees in their place to provide a natural habitat for wildlife.

Sewa Beneficiaries:

Ramblin' Sol Farm, Cream Ridge
Dwyer Community Park Garden, Edison
Kiddie Keep Well Camp Garden, Middlesex County
Marlboro Community Garden, Morganville
Mill Creek, PA
Neshaminy State Park, PA
RISE Food Pantry, Hightstown
Silver Lake Pollination Garden, Edison
Jewish Children and Family Center, West Windsor



The key to recurring Sewa activities of the Central Jersey Chapter is consistency and dedication. The Chapter has chosen to serve in activities that resonate with and align with the skills and interests of the Chapter LEAD and adult volunteers. By making a commitment to help others regularly, the volunteers have made a significant difference in the lives of those who need it most.

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

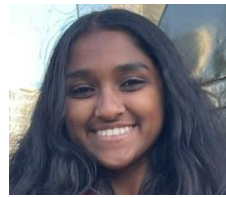
Newsletter Team



Aiswarya Chilukuri
Grade: 10
Interests: Music, Travelling
Favorite Sewa Project: Candy Drive



Aniketh Byram
Grade: 12
Interests: Volleyball, Guitar
Favorite Sewa Project: AttachAvi



Anushka Dubey
Grade: 11
Interests: Reading, Music
Favorite Sewa Project: Colonia Park Cleanup



Arshia Raghuvanshi
Grade: 11
Interests: Art, Guitar, Dance
Favorite Sewa Project: Green Fair



Charvi Iruganti
Grade: 11
Interests: Drawing, Clarinet
Favorite Sewa Project: Ozanam Family Shelter



Chetana Bidesi
Grade: 12
Interests: Drawing, Dancing
Favorite Sewa Project: Radha Gopinath Mandir



Meghana Narayanan
Grade: 10
Interests: Dance, Tennis
Favorite Sewa Project: SewaMeal



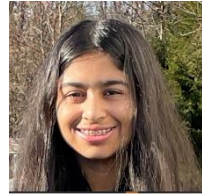
Navneeth Thanigai
Grade: 12
Interests: Cross Country, Math Tutoring
Favorite Sewa Project: Marlboro Gardens, SewaMeal



Pranav Shrivastava
Grade: 8
Interests: History, Business
Favorite Sewa Project: SewaMeal



Raghavi Navaneeth
Grade: 10
Interests: Dance, Music
Favorite Sewa Project: SewaMeal



Shreya Kalapatapu
Grade: 10
Interests: Reading, Drawing
Favorite Sewa Project: Amico Island Park Cleanup

Upcoming Events

- ❖ Fundraiser – Algebra Camp
- ❖ India Day Parade
- ❖ Pet Registration & Vaccination Campaign
- ❖ KKWC Summer Camp
- ❖ Watershed Event
- ❖ Produce Donations
- ❖ Gardening, Organic Farming, & Reforestation
- ❖ Sewa for Autism Foundation
- ❖ Sewa at Food Banks, Food Pantries, and Food Shelters
- ❖ SewaMeals for the Underserved at Churches/Shelters
- ❖ Sewa at Community Events
- ❖ Sewa at Places of Worship

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

Communication Channels

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

Twitter: @JerseySewa

FB: @JerseySewa or Sewa Central Jersey

Instagram: sewainternationalcentraljersey

Email: centraljersey@sewausa.org

Helpline: 702. 900.SEWA