

Sewa Central Jersey 'NJ Adopt-A-Highway' Cleanup

'Adopt-A-Highway' is a statewide, volunteer program created by the New Jersey Department of Transportation and the New Jersey Clean Communities Council to encourage volunteers to clean and maintain state highways. The aim is to reduce litter on state highways in an ongoing effort to enhance the appearance of New Jersey's landscape, protect the health and welfare of New Jersey residents, and promote a booming economy.

Sewa Central Jersey Chapter in a commitment to a Clean New Jersey, entered into an agreement with the Clean Communities Council of NJ in 2019 and adopted a 2.5 miles stretch of Route 27 at Metuchen. With this agreement the Chapter took on the responsibility to clean the highway 4 times a year, abide by safety regulations, follow protocol for the pickup and disposal of trash, and file reports cards after the cleanups.

Since 2019, The LEADs and adult volunteers of Central Jersey Chapter go through a Highway Safety Training workshop and have been cleaning the highway every quarter.

In recognition of the cleanup efforts of the Central Jersey Chapter of Sewa International, NJ Department of Transportation has put up a sign on Route 27 in Metuchen.

This year too in the month of June, the Chapter stepped up and volunteered to clean up this stretch of the state highway.



Sewa International sign put up on Rte 27 in Metuchen, by The NJ Department of Transportation in recognition of cleanup done by Sewa Central Jersey Chapter

Chapter Highlights

- ❖ NJ 'Adopt a Highway' Program
- ❖ KKWC Camp for the Underprivileged
- ❖ AttachAvi Autism Foundation Program
- ❖ Native American Fest
- ❖ American Cancer Society 'Run for Dad' 5K
- ❖ Bordentown Green Fair
- ❖ Marlboro Colors Fest
- ❖ Community Gardening, Organic Farming, Backyard Produce, Reforestation
- ❖ Plastic Bag Recycling Drive
- ❖ Sewa Meals for the Homeless
- ❖ Balaji Temple 3D Model Project

Center Highlights

- ❖ Township Events

Volunteer Spotlight



Reena Ji from Monroe Township, NJ started with The Central Jersey Chapter in 2020. Ever since she joined Sewa as a parent volunteer, she has stepped up to perform various tasks when needed. She actively involves herself in any parent volunteer need, like the Sewa Meals and managing the tracker for LEAD volunteering hours. Additionally, she works to spread the word of Sewa and what the organization does for the community, setting a great example as a parent volunteer. Outside of Sewa, she is a senior manager for financial systems at Rutgers, and in her free time enjoys arts and crafts, particularly using paints and tissue paper to make unique designs and patterns on clear glass plates creating beautiful pieces of art. She was born in Hyderabad, India, and has a husband and daughter who is a part of Sewa.



Sewa at Kiddie Keep Well Camp for the Underprivileged

The KKWC Camp accredited by the American Camp Association and licensed by the New Jersey Department of Health is a camp dedicated to providing summertime enjoyment to under-resourced Middlesex County children. The mission is to develop and nurture physical health, responsible social expression, self-esteem, mental well-being and other sustainable life skills through a holistic approach and diverse programming. This camp located at Roosevelt Park, NJ is a summer camp provided at no cost to over 600 children.

Central Jersey Sewa LEADs have been volunteering every summer for 3 shifts at KKWC Camp since 2019. This year too, over the summer months, the LEADs helped at the camp with preparing breakfast, lunch and dinner for the campers and also with setting up the tables and cutlery for dining and putting away the cutlery and carrying out post meals cleanup activity.

The service done by Edison and Somerset Center LEADs along with LEADs from other Centers have enabled the KKWC Camp to provide a fun, safe and health focused, away from home camping experience to many children of Middlesex County.



Sewa AttachAvi Autism Foundation Program

Central Jersey Chapter of Sewa International collaborated with AttachAvi Autism Foundation in 2021 and started a two-year all-inclusive program on social and emotional learning for special needs young adults. The Chapter LEADs volunteer at this life enhancement program to help integrate the young adults on the autism spectrum into the mainstream population of their community and to lead a purposeful life. The LEADs help out at the weekly classes for children with disabilities or special needs to enable them to socialize and communicate and prepare them for a classroom environment.



Sewa for Native Americans, Cancer Society, Historical Society, and Township Events

Native American Fest

Cherry Hill LEADs from the Central Jersey Chapter assisted the Redhawk Foundation's Native American Festival/Pow Wow in Middlesex County Fairgrounds, NJ.

The LEADs were in charge of assisting visitors to the event, and managing some of the parking as well. The LEADs also helped with handling visitors' queries, registration as well as helped with distributing pamphlets to the guests arriving.

This service opportunity gave the Central Jersey LEADs a great opportunity to connect with the local Native American community and leaders.



American Cancer Society 'Run for Dad' 5K



Central Jersey Chapter LEADs volunteered at the 'Run for Dad' 5K event by the American Cancer Society. This event is where participants and volunteers come together to honor cancer survivors, spread the word about reducing cancer risk, and raise money to help the American Cancer Society save lives.

The LEADs helped the participants with registration, setting up tables, sorting and distribution of t-shirts for the marathon runners, helping at the food and water stations, digital recording of the time of the runners, organizing the 'Kids Run' as well as keeping kids entertained with various forms of craft. They further helped the organizers to pack-up at the end of the event.

Being part of this event has given the LEADs an opportunity working with an organization of cancer survivors, advocates, volunteers, caregivers, and researchers doing everything within their power to save lives.

By devoting their time and energy our LEADs have helped the Cancer Society in their mission to save lives, celebrate lives, and lead the fight for a world without cancer.

Bordentown Historical Society Educational and Garden Tour

The Chesterfield LEADs visited BHS' Bonaparte Exhibit which was a great educational experience.

BHS' Bonaparte Exhibit featured paintings from the former King's extensive collection — he had, at one point, the largest art collection in America — as well as an original letter from Joseph to his famous brother, Napoleon. The exhibit also displayed numerous pieces of furniture, tableware and drinkware, books, and other personal effects, all used by Bonaparte at his Point Breeze Estate.

The exhibit also showcases former First Lady Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy's connection to Bonaparte, as her great-great-grandfather, Michael Bouvier, a furniture-maker who escaped to Philadelphia after serving in the French army at Waterloo, made a mahogany side chair for Bonaparte.

It also featured a large 1845 painting by Carlo Morelli depicting Bonaparte's grandson. The painting, like the new gaming table, also made its way to the BHS in an interesting fashion, having once hung in the penthouse of former Secretary of State George Shultz. After Shultz's death, BHS Director Peter Tucci, the foremost collector of Bonaparte artifacts, received a call from the diplomat's estate, and the painting was then shipped to the Meetinghouse.



The Bordentown Historical Society also had a Garden Tour event that provided a great opportunity to visitors to experience 20 beautiful gardens in the town.

The Plein Air artists painted views of some of the gardens. A landscape architect with expertise in native NJ trees and plants was there to answer gardening questions. There was also a children's art event at Hilltop Park.

The Chesterfield LEAD volunteers helped at the registration desk with the ticketing, directing & giving instructions to visitors.

Bordentown Green Fair

Over 25 LEADs from Chesterfield and Cherry Hill volunteered at the annual Bordentown Green Fair this month. LEADs assisted the vendors to arrange equipment, manage booths, and helped with decorations.

The Central Jersey Chapter also had its own booth in which LEADs explained the concept of 'Sewa' to the fair's attendees and described the Chapter's various service projects.

Furthermore, LEADs held a recycling trivia game, educating visitors on what can and cannot be recycled.

Finally, another group of LEADs did henna tattoos, sold books, and made bracelets, and raised funds for the Sewa International 'SHE' and 'SHE-CAF' program.

Thank you to all the LEADs who participated!



Chesterfield Township Volunteering



Chesterfield Center Sewa LEADs collaborated together to help Chesterfield Township sort and prepare tax bills so that they can be sent off to the residents of Chesterfield township. Each household in the township has an allotted tax bill which has to be sent to them.

The LEADs worked in two shifts in order to organize over 2,000 tax bills. Each tax bill was inserted into an envelope and then sealed.

The township was very grateful for the LEADs' hard work.

Marlboro Colors Fest

The festival of Holi is celebrated widely throughout India and is known as the festival of color where participants smear color and play with colored water. This holiday is one of the most revered traditions and celebrates spring and the deities Radha Krishna.

The Marlboro Indian Foundation organized a Summer Fest Colors event that had numerous activities such as Sri Ganesh Vandana, Shri Ram Stuti, US-India flag hoisting, performances, fun games, playing with colors, etc.

The Sewa LEADs helped out with the event by setting up tents, stalls, stage setup, managing the water stall, arranging chairs for visitor seating and cleaned up the place after the event.

LEADs had also set up a book stall to raise funds for Sewa International SHE and SHE—CAF programs. Some LEADs were also able to hone their marketing and communication skills by individually talking to families at the event and educating them about Central Jersey Sewa and encouraging them to buy books.

For the LEADs, the event proved to be quite interesting and built experience for them as they realized the importance and impact of teamwork with fellow volunteers in the middle of an ongoing, busy event.

This event was covered by the media and there was a coverage of the volunteering efforts of the Central Jersey Chapter at the event. The press quoted Anitha Krishnamurthi the Central Jersey Chapter Joint Coordinator, on the various service activities being done across townships by the Chapter's LEAD program and also on the local, national and international nonprofit relief efforts of Sewa International, USA.



Solstice Trail Run



Monroe Center LEADs volunteered at Solstice Trail Run at Pennington conducted by Watershed Institute. Over 200 people ranging from 4 years to 79 years old attended this event. The event was a great success and many families enjoyed one of the longest days of the year.

LEADs helped out at the registration table, handled water stations, as well as cheering the runners. LEADs waved to runners as they ran by and held up signs to encourage them. The most memorable was one that said, "May the course be with you".

Overall, Solstice Trail Run event was a great success.

Franklin Days

This month, Somerset Center was asked to be part of the Franklin Days event. The Center LEADs sold books, handmade jewelry, and bags. The LEADs spoke about the community service being done by Sewa International to all the visitors. The funds raised were donated to Sewa International SHE and SHE-CAF programs.

Central Jersey Sewa would like to thank Kalyani Ji for the bags donated. And thank you to the LEADs for their wonderful participation!



Sewa for Reforestation, Organic Farming, Community Gardening, Plastic Bag Recycling Drive and National Trails Day

Community Gardening at Bordentown, Edison and Marlboro



In June, Edison Center LEADs helped clean, plant, and water the (KKWC) Kiddie Keep Well Camp's garden in Edison. LEADs removed weeds, added new soil, planted and watered new and previously planted plants; such as beans, cucumbers, squash, spinach, zucchini, bell peppers, broccoli, and tomatoes. This gardening activity promotes growing healthy agriculture, and teaches us how to use earth's resources positively.

Monroe Center LEADs gathered multiple times at Marlboro Community Garden to help maintain the garden.

LEADs watered the plants and kept the beds clean. To suppress weeds, LEADs covered the area around beds with cardboard and mulched with wood chips. LEADs also sifted compost and filled up the Browns bin with compost.

This month LEADs were taught how to prevent weeds from growing by spreading plastic sheets on the garden bed to kill the existing weeds and prevent growth. They also learned how insects damage the plants and produce.



The Bordentown Community Garden is an initiative from Township's Environmental Commission & Green Team. The Central Jersey Sewa volunteers have been supporting the garden since 2019.

This year too, about 25 Central Jersey LEAD volunteers helped with the planting of various produce plants including tomatoes, peppers, beans, cucumber & many more. All the produce will go to local food banks such as Home front and St. Mary's food pantry.

The township also started a new pollinator garden this year. The LEADs planted more than 1,500 various native flower plants. A pollinator garden attracts bees, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds or other beneficial creatures that transfer pollen from flower to flower, or in some cases, within flowers.

Organic Farming and Backyard Produce

On multiple occasions in the month of June, LEADs volunteered at Ramblin' Sol Farm to help prepare the field, sow the seeds, and harvest crops on hot summer days.

This was a great opportunity for the LEADs to apply the gardening skills they learned from various garden projects and partake in an agricultural process that did not use harmful pesticides and chemicals. The produce grown here with the help of LEADs provides healthy, sustainable food to the surrounding community and promotes organic farming.

Recognizing their efforts, the farm was kind enough to donate beans, tomatoes, broccoli, kale, cucumber, eggplant & onion plants to the Central Jersey Chapter, for Chapter LEADs to start their own backyard produce gardening.



Central Jersey LEADs proceeded with starting their backyard produce garden this June with the plants donated by Ramblin' Sol Farm.

LEADs setup a site in their backyard, prepared the ground for planting with tillage and mulching, planned the planting of the various plants based on their compatibility and then went ahead with planting, adding soil and manure and irrigating them. Some LEADs did a combination of both ground as well as container gardening. In the weeks that followed the LEADs added soil and manure and watered the plants based on the weather.

LEADs plan to donate the produce to food pantries across townships or to use the produce in the SEWA Meal preparation.

Neshaminy State Park Reforestation



On a blazing Saturday morning, Cherry Hill LEAs hiked to a secluded location of Neshaminy Park to once again assist in the reforestation efforts.

The LEADs were responsible for clearing out numerous invasive and dangerous weeds that were causing harm to the trees planted in the location. These trees were planted by the Central Jersey Chapter LEADs over the course of two years to help create a natural barrier which is very important to help prevent flooding from occurring in the local region.

Without the monthly maintenance done by the LEADs, these invasive plants would have caused the deaths of numerous trees due to them stealing important nutrients from the local soil that is needed for the trees to grow.

Plastic Bag Recycling Drive



In November 2020, Governor Phil Murphy signed S864, which prohibits the use of single-use plastic and paper bags in all stores and food service businesses statewide. In May 2022, single-use plastic bags were banned in New Jersey.

In order to support this bill, the Central Jersey Chapter organized a plastic bag drive. Since March the Plastic Bags and Film Packaging Recycling Drive has been in effect.

This month too, Cherry Hill LEADs continued with this effort in helping dispose of the plastics as well as educating & encouraging the residents to reduce plastic bag usage and recycle plastics.

Township National Trails Day

This June, Cherry Hill Township and the Cherry Hill Environmental Board invited volunteers to participate in National Trails Day.

To do their part for nature, Cherry Hill LEADs signed up to help complete trail improvement projects at Croft Farm.

They also helped with various tasks such as removing invasive species, and picking up trash along the trail at Croft Farm and in nearby open spaces.



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

In June 2022, Central Jersey Chapter LEADs once again prepared meals for the food shelters and for the homeless. This month, Chesterfield Center LEADs completed 1 year of preparing and delivering these bi-monthly meals for those in need!



This month too, LEADs across Chesterfield, Edison, Monroe and Somerset Centers prepared and delivered a variety of appetizers, salads, entrees, dessert, kids meals and water. There were Mexican meals of Mexican rice, bean veggie medley, cheese quesadillas, vegetarian burritos, nachos, tacos, pasta salad and chips. Indian meals included methi pulao, spinach rice, rajma curry, mutter aloo curry, aloo matar sabzi, and dal tadka. In addition, there were dinner rolls and pita bread. Dessert consisted of brownies, muffins and fruits. Kids meals consisted of sandwiches and freshly baked cookies and brownies.



The Meals were delivered to:
 Hands of Hope, Edison
 United Methodist Church, New Brunswick
 Westminster Presbyterian Church, Trenton

The Sewa Meals for this month was kindly sponsored by:
 Smitha & Krishna Madireddy
 Tapasya & Sumit Singhal
 Karuna and Venugopal Keshireddy
 Shilpa Rathi & Mukul Rathi (State Farm)
 Sowmya Hemadri family
 Varun Magadum family
 Anushka family

Central Jersey Chapter would like to thank the LEADs, parents, & sponsors who made this possible!





Edison Center LEADs and parent volunteers also volunteered at Hands Of Hope food pantry that provides food and resources to those in need.

It is the responsibility of the LEADsc to organize, pack and give the packed food to the cars waiting outside the premises to be delivered to those in need.

This is a volunteering the Edison Center LEADs dedicatedly do twice a month every month through the year.


Om Sri Sai Balaji Temple 3D Model Project

This month of June, Central Jersey Chapter LEADs continued to work on the Om Sri Sai Balaji Temple 3D model project. LEADs meet every Sunday for two hours to work on the project. LEADs have almost completed plans for the first building; they have finished the mainframe and all the windows and walls with glass. Transparent plastic was used for windows and walls to get the realistic feel.

LEADs have now started with walls for building two, and building three is still in the planning phase.



Save the Date: Sewa International 2nd National Youth Convention – July 30, 2022!



SEWA INTERNATIONAL
LEAD

Join hands with our movement for service above self

SAVE THE DATE
SEWA INTERNATIONAL
2ND NATIONAL YOUTH CONVENTION

WHERE FUTURE LEADERS ARE MADE

SATURDAY, JULY 30TH 11AM-3 PM EST
ONLINE VIA ZOOM
(REGISTRATION AND ZOOM LINK TO FOLLOW)

<https://sewausa.org/Lead> Email: lead@sewausa.org

Sewa International's 2nd Annual National Youth Convention (NYC) will be an online event held this year on Saturday, July 30, 2022 from 11 am to 3 pm est.

The event is to celebrate the success and experience the power of the Sewa Youth – the LEADs and the 'Get Inspired' young adult volunteers.

'LEAD' Sewa's high school youth engagement program is geared towards students from 9th – 12th grade. The program aims at providing a platform for students to interact with community leaders and successful professionals through engaging symposiums. Students are provided with an opportunity to serve and develop leadership skills by networking with community leaders to discover special insights that will help them grow into well rounded citizens.

'Get Inspired' is a college internship program which allows young adults to explore and innovate new ideas geared towards community development.

The 2nd annual National youth convention program will be conducted virtually on Zoom and will feature about 800 high school and college students' part of Sewa's youth cohort from across the US.

This year's theme is: Environmental Protection; Conservation or Protection of our Natural Ecosystems.

The purpose of the convention is to provide a platform to present the work done by them throughout the year, interact with each other, get motivated by listening to inspirational speeches, participate in a live panel discussion on the topic of their choice and pass a resolution to protect our environment.

Let's convene to celebrate their success and encourage our future leaders and change makers.

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

Newsletter Team



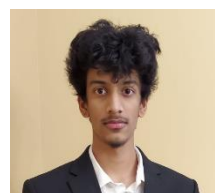
Varsha Akavoor
Grade: 11
Interests: Art, Dance, Singing
Favorite Sewa Project: KKWC Garden



Srimaye Chennapragada
Grade: 10
Interests: Guitar, Science, Biking
Favorite Sewa Project: KKWC Camp



Nithik Kambhampati
Grade: 9
Interests: Basketball, Reading
Favorite Sewa Project: SEWA Meals



Suhas Kavuri
Grade: 11
Interests: Volleyball
Favorite Sewa Project: Boatbuilding



Kushaal Latupalli
Grade: 11
Interests: Computer Science, Chemistry
Favorite Sewa Project: SEWA Meals



Anvita Malepati
Grade: 8
Interests: Swimming
Favorite Sewa Project: SEWA Meals



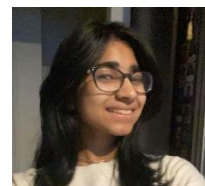
Anjali Menon
Grade: 12
Interests: Field Hockey, Basketball
Favorite Sewa Project: Bordentown Community Garden



Vanya Mittal
Grade: 9
Interests: Sports, Music
Favorite Sewa Project: Treats for Troops



Tanay Motamarri
Grade: 9
Interests: Football, Reading
Favorite Sewa Project: SEWA Meals



Sai Saaanvi Prathap
Grade: 9
Interests: Reading, Writing Poetry, Music
Favorite Sewa Project: SEWA Meals



Spoorthy Reddy
Grade: 11
Interests: Art, Dance
Favorite Sewa Project: Ramblin' Sol Farm



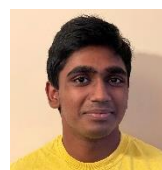
Archisha Sharma
Grade: 11
Interests: Reading, Dancing
Favorite Sewa Project: Tutoring, Ozanam



Abhishyant Karthikeyan Shobia
Grade: 11
Interests: Basketball, Gaming
Favorite Sewa Project: Hands of Hope



Medha Singireddy
Grade: 12
Interests: Reading, Baking
Favorite Sewa Project: SEWA Meals, Treats for Troops



Rijul Verma
Grade: 11
Interests: Swimming, Gym
Favorite Sewa Project: Neshaminy Park

Upcoming Events

- ❖ 2nd National Youth Convention
- ❖ Jagannath Dham Family Camp
- ❖ Sewa Summer Tutoring Program
- ❖ Summer STEM, Coding, Algebra and Arts & Crafts Camps
- ❖ Kiddie Keep Well Summer Camp
- ❖ Manavi - Support for Domestic Violence Survivors
- ❖ 'Keep My Street Green' Project
- ❖ Backyard Produce Gardening
- ❖ Volunteering at Community Gardens and Farms
- ❖ Reforestation
- ❖ Sewa Meals
- ❖ Sewa at Temples

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