

## Treat for the Troops

Central Jersey Sewa leads have initiated "Treats for Troops", a candy collection drive to support service men and women who have been deployed overseas. This initiative was huge success and kudos our leads were able to collect about 3000lbs of candy and chocolates.

All of this collection has been sent to organizations such as "Soldier Angels" and "Operation Gratitude" from where these would be delivered to the troops deployed overseas. Big **Thank You** to all the parent volunteers who have dropped of the candies to the drop off locations.



Cherryhill Center - 650 lbs.



Edison & Somerset Center(s) - 500 lbs.

## Chapter Highlights

- ❖ Treat for the Troops
- ❖ Sewa Diwali Food Drive

## Center Highlights

- ❖ Pumpkin Compost
- ❖ Desk Building
- ❖ Bagged Lunches
- ❖ Community Garden
- ❖ SewaMeal

## Volunteer(s) Spotlight



**REKHA RAVI**

Rekha ji - Yes, her 2019 new year resolution was to dedicate her time to volunteering. She began her journey with Sewa International as one of the 1st four-member team of NE Helpline. Rekha ji has been pioneer in starting the Central Jersey Helpline. She passionately served food to the stranded students. She also sponsored lunch for Union Urgent care center her own contribution for pandemic crisis. Rekha ji is a dedicated volunteer who worked on many cases - delivery of groceries to seniors or students, visa/immigrant questions of stranded passengers, COVID plasma donor matching & prescription assistance to stranded parents/grandparents through Sewa network of doctors. She recently completed her certificate in "Disaster Case management"





Chesterfield Center - 950 lbs.



Monroe Center - 800 lbs.

### Sewa Diwali Food Drive

Diwali is a festival of lights, a festival of sharing, triumph over misery and spreading happiness. This year it is all the more necessary for us to give back to our community and support our fellow human beings in need. In the true spirit of Diwali our SEWA leads across centra jersey chapter conducted a food drive and has received a overwhelming response from the local communities. Together they were able to collect a total of 10,645 pounds of non-perishable food donations.

All the food hence collected was delivered to various local food banks including Allentown Presbyterian Church, St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Homefront NJ, Rice Food Pantry, South Jersey Food Bank, Camden Cathedral Kitchen, Cherry Hill Food Pantry, Franklin Food Bank, Rise Food Pantry, Bethel Church, Methodist Church, Mercer Street Friends Food Bank, Ewing and Presbyterian Church.



Somerset - 670 lbs.



Cherry Hill – 975 lbs.



Chesterfield - 5300 lbs.



Monroe - 3700 lbs.

**Pumpkin Compost**

Did you know each year about a billion pounds of pumpkins are tossed and left to rot in the American landfills? When these pumpkins are left in a landfill, produces methane gas, a which is extremely harmful and contaminates the air that we breath. Our Chesterfield Sewa Leads took environmental safety pretty seriously. They reached out to the township residents and picked ~700 pumpkins from the curbsides. These pumpkins were dropped off @ Honey Brook Farm where they will be converted into compost. Big thanks to the township residents and the farm in making this initiative a big success.



## Community Desk Building

In response to the continued virtual learning, our Edison and Somerset Sewa Leads volunteered to build desks, for children in need. They have built over 100 desks so far. Impressed by the workmanship and commitment of our leads Woodbridge Home Depot has extended their support to donate plywood that would be required to continue this project.



## Bagged Lunch

Our Monroe Leads have committed to do bagged lunches every month and this month as well they have made 100 bagged lunches. Each lunch bag has peanut butter and jelly sandwich, water bottle, clementine, granola bar, bag of chips, and a napkin. The leads have displayed such good team work and coordination that they packed 100 lunch bags within two hours. The lunch bags were donated to RISE Food Pantry in Monroe Township.



## Community Garden

Monroe wrapped up the 2020 gardening activity by winterizing Marlboro Community garden beds. The extended their help by working on garden beds of the other gardeners who were ill and cannot do by themselves. Despite of the bone chill cold early November they have complete all the tasks of winterizing garden beds

- turning over soil
- raking beds clean of all dead plant's debris
- Spread layer of compost and top soil over the bed

Leads also helped in digging up the sweat potato's which were donated to food pantry on Marlboro. Our leads and master gardeners are eagerly waiting to start the activity back in 2021 Spring.



### Sewa Meal

Edison Sewa leads made 140 lunch bags with burritos, a pack of cookies n chips & a drink. The meal was sponsored by Rising Future/CODEie. Big Thank you to the Rising Future Learning Center of their generosity and giving our leads yet another opportunity to prepare and serve hot lunch to the homeless.



## Feedback(s)

THE MT. LAUREL SUN - DECEMBER 2-8, 2020

# A sweet surprise: Local teens rally their towns to aid in collection for successful Treats for Troops candy drive

By MADELEINE MACCAR  
*The Sun*

Hundreds of pounds of candy are currently on their way to troops overseas, thanks to the high school members of Cherry Hill's Sewa International chapter — and the communities they call home.

The humanitarian nonprofit brings together teens of the Hindu faith who are inspired to make a positive impact on the world through community service. The local chapter's most recent initiative, Treats for Troops, recently dispatched nearly 550 pounds of candy to active service members.

"I have a lot of people who I consider family in the military, and they don't get to come home to celebrate the holidays with their loved ones," said Marlton resident Rijul Verma, a 10th grader at Cherokee High School.

"Giving them and people like them something to do with home while they're overseas, it was something that really excited me, which is why I wanted to collect as much candy as I could."

Extending throughout both Burlington and Camden counties, with members hailing from Cherry Hill, Marlton, Moorestown, Mt. Laurel and more, the local Sewa chapter also partners with neighboring ones to make a bigger impact. Take Treats for Troops, for example: The combined efforts of 90 Sewa volunteers representing four New Jersey chapters resulted in the collection of nearly 2,300 pounds of candy in two weeks.

Kishore Palle, the chapter's commissioner, is in his second year of leading a group that's grown from four to 12 members. He and his son Pranav, both of Cherry Hill, were eager for a tangible way to say thank you to active service members.

"Knowing how much the troops do, I've always had a passion for supporting them," Kishore said. "They're stationed so far away, and Treats for Troops helped us to connect with them and appreciate their service."

"The military is very important for the defense of our country and I wanted to show that I'm grateful for them," added Pranav, a Cherry Hill East sophomore.

When the chapter's candy collecting efforts began, Kishore kept his expectations in check, fully expecting the pandemic to yield disappointing donation numbers.

*Special to The Sun*



Members and supporters of the Sewa International Cherry Hill chapter, who live in Burlington and Camden counties, collected roughly 550 pounds of candy for servicemen and women during their Treats for Troops donation drive.

*please see CANDY, page 14*

Thank you again for helping get the garden ready for next season

"Get it done." I think that is going to be my nickname for your group - The Get It Done Gang.

My love,

Ellen Simonetti, Rutgers Master Gardener and Supervisor Marlboro community garden

## Upcoming Events

- ❖ Winter Cloth & Toy Drive
- ❖ Birthday cards & Bracelets for senior citizens & children
- ❖ Books Drive for the children in orphanages
- ❖ Hot meals for the homeless shelter

## Newsletter Team

- ❖ Aashka Dave
- ❖ Adith Tummala
- ❖ Aditi Kudva
- ❖ Advita Gavini
- ❖ Aesha Jagannathan
- ❖ Akshara Narahari
- ❖ Ananya Bongoni
- ❖ Angela Anand
- ❖ Jaabili Kuruvella
- ❖ Krishna Soneji
- ❖ Muskan Seksaria
- ❖ Sreeya Kavuri
- ❖ Suja Sudhakar

## Communication Channels

Please visit our chapter Website and follow-on Twitter, Facebook & Instagram

Web: <https://Sewausa.org/central-jersey-chapter>

Twitter: @JerseySewa

FB: @JerseySewa or Sewa Central Jersey

Instagram: centraljerseysewa

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