

Sewa International, USA efforts in Columbia, SA and Adriana Ji's (ICCS) visit to The Central Jersey Chapter

ICCS- International Center for Cultural Studies – is a non-profit organization in Columbia, South America that strives for a world where indigenous cultural heritage and traditions are valued for their intrinsic wisdom to strengthen communities and enrich life. Adriana Salazar Vega, a hospitality professional and a global fellow of ICCS visited India in 2017 for a 5-month internship and experienced for the first time the rich and cultural diversity of the country.

And it was during this visit she saw firsthand the Sewa International projects and service activities in Kashi, Utrakhand and Arunachal Pradhesh in India. The knowledge gained and the interactions she had during the visit had a huge impact on her and she was inspired by the ethos of selfless service of Sewa volunteers.

"India is a land of rich culture and simple people. After coming here my ties with this country have deepened. All the places I have visited and people I have met, every moment and everyone has given me something which I will cherish all my life. I can't thank Sewa International enough for their help and all the lovely volunteers who made this journey even more meaningful and interesting. I am going back an enriched soul..." – Adriana Salazar Vega



ICCS sought a collaboration with Sewa International, USA for various rescue and relief efforts projects in Columbia.

With the mission of "Serving Humanity in Distress", the support of the unprivileged children across South America, was started in Colombia, by developing Learning Centers, 'Sanskara Kendras'. The objective was to protect the unprivileged children from the negative effects of an environment of poverty, little or no access to education, drugs, and violence, and to raise them with human values and education.



"The Garden of Joy" is one of such centers, which has been supporting more than 50 children and their families from the slums of Soacha, Columbia. It is home to victims of Colombia's conflict and thousands of Venezuelan immigrants. It was an initiative of positive child development and women empowerment.

Chapter Highlights

- ❖ Sewa International, USA efforts in Columbia, South America Visit by Adriana Ji
- ❖ Sewa Diwali Drive 2022
- ❖ Sewa for Cancer Survivors
- ❖ Appreciation from Manavi - Support for Domestic Violence Survivors
- ❖ Sewa for AttachAvi Autism Foundation
- ❖ Sewa Backyard Produce
- ❖ Sewa Community Gardening
- ❖ Sewa Meals for the Homeless

Center Highlights

- ❖ Sewa for Chesterfield Recycling Program
- ❖ Sewa for Chesterfield Harvest Fest
- ❖ Sewa at Franklin Day and Franklin Day Finale
- ❖ Sewa at Temples and Art Councils
- ❖ Book Bank Volunteering
- ❖ Bake Sale Fundraiser
- ❖ 2nd Anniversary of Somerset Center!

Volunteer Spotlight



Lakshmi Ramamurthy Ji has been part of the Central Jersey Chapter since 2020. She is an avid parent volunteer currently supporting the upkeep of volunteering hour tracker for all the LEADS, a sensitive, time consuming and critical task. She is the go to person for the Sewa leadership for data or metrics on the LEADS. Lakshmi Ji was born and brought up in Chennai and did her studies in Biochemistry at the famous Ramachandra Medical College Chennai. She loves to travel places with her husband & son, and when time permits she works as a substitute for Monroe Township schools. She connects with a lot of people in her neighborhood, and is known to help those around her.

Adriana Ji visited the Central Jersey Chapter of Sewa International, USA in September 2022 where she was welcomed by the Chapter's core volunteers and LEADs. She spoke about ICCS and it's and its collaboration with Sewa International, USA and the inspiring work being carried out in Columbia.



Rajesh Sharma Ji, Coordinator of the Central Jersey Chapter seen here with Adriana Ji from ICCS – Sewa Columbia, discussing collaborations with Sewa International, USA.

The LEADs learnt about the projects in the Amazon rainforest, the environmental education programs, the indigenous communities being supported, and programs to bridge the language barriers between the indigenous groups.

Below: Children participating in Yoga and meditation.



CHILDREN AND WOMEN IN SLUMS ARE PARTICIPATING EVERY SATURDAY IN THE PHYSICAL, MENTAL, SPIRITUAL AND TRAINING SESSIONS THROUGH MEDITATION, YOGA, ART, CRAFTSMANSHIP AND MUSIC



60 INDIGENOUS ELDERLY WOMEN + 20 INDIGENOUS CHILDREN FROM THE AMAZON RAINFOREST
 60 CHILDREN + 20 WOMEN FROM THE SLUMS
 115 PEASANT YOUTHS AND DEPENDANT CHILDREN FROM THE ANDEAN MOUNTAINS
 40 AFRO-DESCENDANT CHILDREN FROM THE HEARTH OF THE WORLD



Thank you Sewa for supporting us to acquire this knowledge



Top: Signs in front of homes indicating the homes as being environment and nature/bird friendly. The signs have been designed by the rehabilitated children. The logo of 'Sewa International' has also been incorporated in the design as an acknowledgement to the impact of 'Sewa' in their lives.

Adriana Ji went to speak about the interrelationship that the Amazon rainforest has to the rest of the world, its relevance to the sustenance and the well-being of people on this planet.

Adriana Ji also spoke to the Central Jersey Chapter LEADs about the onsite volunteering opportunity in Columbia, a well-established structured program that LEADs could participate in.

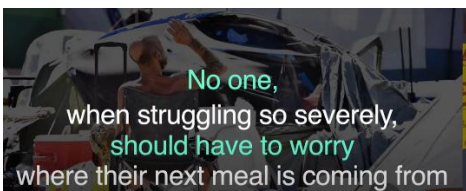
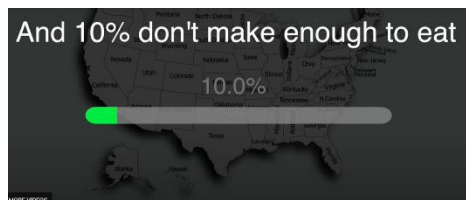


Sewa International, USA, flagship 'Sponsor a Child' (SAC) program, continues to provide education, cultural training, and opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing to the underprivileged children of Columbia, South America.



Sewa Diwali Food Drive 2022 Begins!


Sewa Diwali Food drive for 2022 begins this month of September across townships in Central Jersey. With the mission of fostering togetherness and selfless giving for the welfare of society, in the enlightening spirit of Diwali the drive is to celebrate this joyous occasion of Diwali by ensuring no one goes hungry.



SewaDiwali is a collective initiative of Hindu, Sikh, Jain Buddhist and other communities who believe in:

Service to Humanity is Service to Divinity
Sewā Paramo Dharmah





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


Sewa Diwali

Food Donation Drive by Sewa International Central Jersey

24th September to November 6th 2022

Service to Humanity is Service to Divinity

Please donate non-perishable, unbreakable, sealed food items and personal hygiene products with minimum six months of shelf life. Donations will go to food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens across Central Jersey.



2021 Food Donation

590,000 lbs

States

31

Townships

200

Beneficiaries

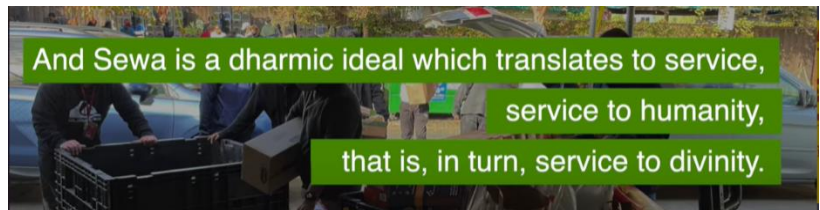
240

Estimated Meals

491,000

Sewa Diwali is a joint initiative of 300+ Dharmic American communities collaborating on a nationwide food donation effort during the festive season of 'Diwali'. For more information please visit <https://sewadiwali.org/>

For inquiries and donations, please contact 702.900.7392 (702.900.SEWA)



Sewa at YMCA 5K Run/Walk for Cancer Survivors

Sewa International, USA Central Jersey Chapter partnered with The YMCA of townships of Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge and South Amboy for the Annual 5K Run/Walk in support of cancer survivors. The 5K run was to bring awareness as well as a fundraiser to provide a free exercise program called LIVESTRONG at the YMCA for those who are living with, through or beyond cancer to strengthen their bodies, minds and spirits.

LEADs and adults volunteered at the event, where they assisted at the various stations across the runners' trail. They provided water and guided the participants with the trail information.

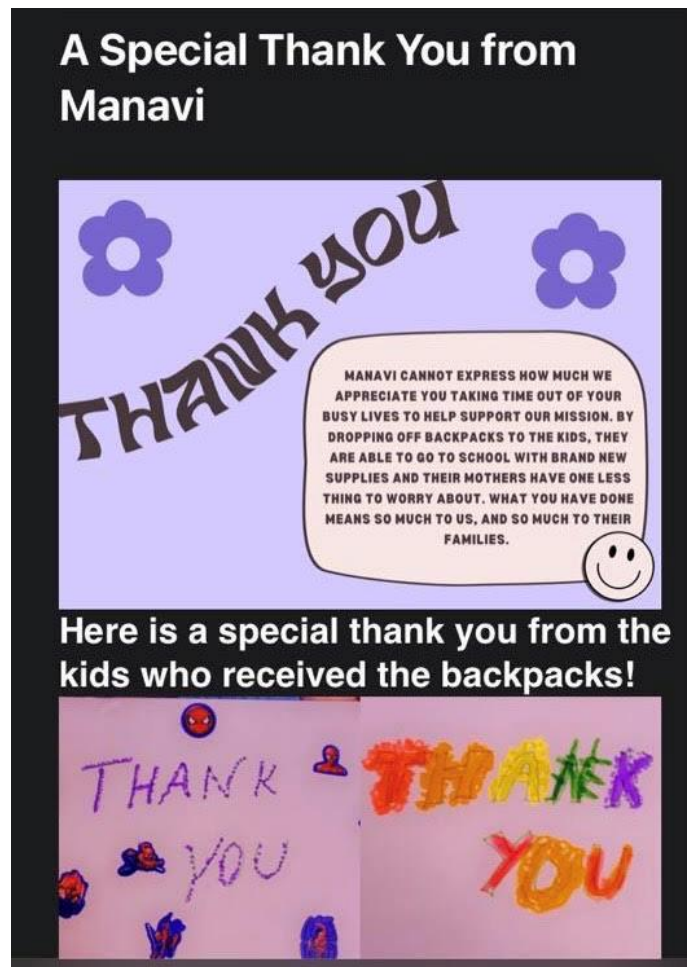
LEADs also set up a booth where they imparted information to the visitors to the event on the various national, state, and local community level service activities carried out by Sewa International, USA. They donated a large collection of children's books to the visitors. These were books that were collected from the book drives conducted by the LEADs across the various communities across Central Jersey. Visitors who appreciated the efforts of the LEADs donated towards funds being raised by the Chapter volunteers.



Appreciation from the children of Manavi

The Central Jersey Chapter of Sewa International, USA had funded school backpacks and back to school supplies for the children of Manavi - South Asian Women's Organization – an organization that supports survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Here is a special thank you note from Manavi and the children ...



Sewa at AttachAvi Autism Foundation

The month of September, Chapter LEADs volunteered for the AttachAvi Autism Foundation. The organization's goal is to support kids with autism and help them through enhancement programs and activities. The purpose of this program is to help enable autistic children to integrate into our communities. The program runs every Friday and Sunday at the AttachAvi center in Edison, where the LEADs help children around the age of 4 with games, nursery rhymes, puzzles, and help them complete obstacle courses.

Sewa for Chesterfield Recycling Program

Cardboard, Bottle, Can Recycling

Accepted Items:

- Empty, Clean & Dry Bottles
- Cans
- Papers
- Flattened boxes

Hours of Operation:
24 hours / 7 days a week

Scan the QR code to see the Burlington County Recycling Guide

Cardboard, Bottle, Can Recycling

Accepted Items:

- Clothing, Shoes, Sneakers, Belts
- Purses, Blankets, Sneaks, Pillow Cases, Drapes & Stuffed Toys

Hours of Operation:
24 hours / 7 days a week

Medication Disposal

Located in the Municipal Building lobby

Flushing medicine down the toilet can pollute waterways and throwing them out can contaminate landfills. To protect the environment, use this resource to dispose of medicines.

Recycle Today

Learn about the various recycling facilities in Chesterfield Township

Near the Public Works Facility, 300 Bordentown-Chesterfield Road, Chesterfield NJ 08515

Contact Us At
+1(609)-298-2311
<https://www.chesterfieldtwpnj.gov>

Scan the QR code to download this brochure

Plastic Bag Recycling

Recycle your used grocery bags and plastic bubble-wrap.

PLASTIC BAG RECYCLING rules:

- No Loose bags
- No Trash
- No Paper
- No Containers
- No packing peanuts

Please stuff your bags into a single bag, tie it closed, and push it into the opening on the bin

Hours of Operation:
24 hours / 7 days a week

Electronic Recycling

Accepted Items:

- Televisions of all varieties
- Computer Monitors, Towers, CPUs, Desktops, Laptops
- Computer accessories
- Battery backups for computers
- Cabling for printers, scanners, monitors etc.
- Power supplies for computers, battery chargers and plug-in transformers
- Telephones, cordless phones, cell phones
- DVD, CD players, portable radios, MP3 players/iPods
- Cash registers, scales, scanners, readers, CB's, amplifiers

Hours of Operation: Tuesday & Thursday, 7:30AM to 7:30PM
Saturday, 8:00AM to 3:00PM

Metal Recycling

Accepted Items: Washers, Dryers, Refrigerators, Freezers, Stoves, Ovens, Microwaves, Grills, Air Conditioners, Bikes, Scooters, Lawn Mowers and Lawn Power Equipment (no oil or fuel is permitted), Metal fence, Fence Posts (no concrete attached), Fence Rails, Pipes, Metal ladders, Shovels, Automotive parts like brake rotors/drums, small engine parts (without oil or fuel), Pots, Pans, Rocks, Etc.

Hours of Operation: Tuesday & Thursday, 7:30AM to 7:30PM
Saturday, 8:00AM to 3:00PM

Chesterfield Township has recycling facilities for cardboard/cans, plastic bags, metals, clothing, medicines, tree branches and brushes, but as is commonly seen in all towns, many residents are even now unaware of the resources available and how to use them properly.

The Chesterfield Center Sewa team proposed to the township about creating a flier to educate residents and bring about awareness on the importance of following the recycling procedure. The Chesterfield volunteers designed and created this flyer within a matter of 3 days. The flyer has been put up on the township website and has been distributed to all the residents in the township.

Sewa at Chesterfield Township Harvest Fest

More than 50 volunteers from Chesterfield & Cherry Hill Centers volunteered at the Harvest Fest in Chesterfield township. They spent the whole day helping with the setup, decorating tents with corn stocks, setting up the tables at the various township booths, washing 200+ pumpkins, helping loading/unloading merchandise, setting up the vendor booths, and post event clean up.

At the Sewa booth, the volunteers also conducted creative arts & crafts sessions, Chesterfield trivia games & Keep My Street Green Campaign. A few volunteers also baked cupcakes to raise funds.

The recycling flyers designed by the Chesterfield volunteers for the township were also distributed to the residents of the town to spread awareness on the importance and process of recycling.



The Chesterfield Mayor, Public Works Department, Township staff & many vendors have personally thanked the Central Jersey Chapter for their continued support towards the township community events.

Sewa Volunteering for Book Bank

Cherry Hill Center LEADs volunteered at the BookSmiles book bank in Cherry Hill.

BookSmiles is a nonprofit organization which donates books to underprivileged kids. Their mission is to promote reading and literacy in children throughout Philadelphia and New Jersey. Since 2017, they have donated over 950,000 books to children, teachers and caregivers.

Every weekend, LEADs drove out to the warehouse in South Jersey to organize and distribute books. LEADs would organize by the reading level, grade/age range of the books and pack them into boxes for classes to use during school.



Franklin Fun Day



Somerset Center LEADs volunteered at helping out at the Franklin Township for 'Franklin Fun Day' event at the Franklin Youth Center in Somerset.

It was a day full of fun and games for the youth. It was a day everyone could enjoy with games, snacks, and dancing.

Franklin Day Finale

This month, Somerset Center LEADs also volunteered in an event in Franklin called Franklin Day Finale. The LEADs helped out with many activities at the event, setting up tents, laying out tables, and helping with setting up games, and doing henna designs for the visitors.

Thank you to LEADs Muskan and Suja for doing some amazing and creative henna designs. They impressed many visitors!

Also thank you to LEAD Sreeya for staying 10 hours and contributing everywhere.

Lastly, thank you to all the LEADs for putting their full effort into this event!



Sewa at Om Sri Sai Balaji Temple



In the month of September, Sewa LEADs volunteered at the Om Sri Sai Balaji Temple in Monroe for many events held at the temple.

The LEADs helped with organizing and setting up for the various events. They set up tables and chairs, assembled display units, assembled cabinets, moved boxes, and helped with the digital storage project.

The LEADs helped at the Ganesha Pooja and procession and at the Nimarjanam event.

Sewa at Community Day

West Windsor Parks-Recreations hosted West Windsor Community Day at Duck Pond park in West Windsor in September. The event had food, kids rides, local vendors, organizations, fire trucks and much more!

Sewa LEADs helped set up the West Windsor Arts Council booth. They arranged the art supplies and papers on the tables for kids to try out their hand with art. LEADs also interacted with kids that visited the stall and helped them with scratch art, and paints. Overall, the West Windsor community day was a fun experience for LEADs and little kids.



Bake Sale Fundraiser



Sewa LEADs ran a bake sale to raise funds for the Sponsor-A-Child & Sanitation, Hygiene & Empowerment (SHE) program.

LEADs teamed up to prepare loaf cakes and muffins with vanilla and chocolate flavors. They experimented with various toppings such as walnuts, tutti-frutti, and chocolate chips.

Backyard Garden Produce and Community Gardening

The backyard produce project which started in summer this year culminated this month of September. The LEADs worked towards cultivating their gardens for one last harvest before the close of this year's season.

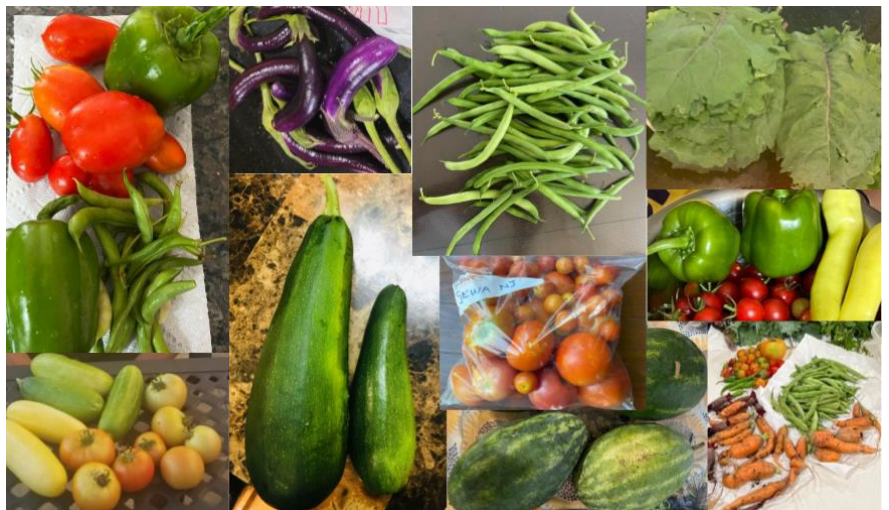
This project started with the Central Jersey Chapter receiving donations of seedlings from Ramblin' Sol Farm in appreciation of all the volunteering efforts of the Chapter in organic farming at the farm. This activity was designed by the Chapter primarily to give the LEADs an opportunity to learn to grow vegetables as well as to raise awareness on the importance of organic farming.

The LEADs of the Chapter planted these seedlings in their own backyard and over the summer put in all effort to soil, fertilize, water and maintain the plants to grow produce. They grew kale, tomatoes, beans, carrots, cucumbers, collard greens, eggplant, and peppers.

The produce grown was then used by the LEADs as ingredients in the monthly Sewa Meals that the LEADs prepared for the homeless. The LEADs were also encouraged to donate the organic and fresh produce that they had grown.

Recipients of this year's vegetables produce donation:

BAPS Temple
Camden Cathedral Kitchen
JFCS of Greater Mercer County
Kiddie Keep Well Camp
Monroe Senior Center
Rise Pantry at Hightstown
Save My Meals at Princeton



Every other Saturday, Monroe Center LEADs go to Marlboro Community Garden to help maintain the community garden. LEADs get assigned to various tasks which are completed during their time there.

LEADs pulled weeds around the plants, set up the picnic tables and chairs, mulched the area around garden beds, shoveled wood chips around garden beds to prevent weeds from growing around the garden beds in the future.

Every other Sunday, Monroe Center LEADs have helped maintain West Windsor Art Council's entrance area. They cleared the shrubs that surrounded the parking area, shaping and trimming the bushes, removed dead branches and vines from the plants, raked the area to remove any last bits of dirt and leaves, then collected the debris and discarded it in the designated area. The front yard looks much more tidy and presentable after the cleanup.



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

In September 2022, Central Jersey Chapter LEADs continued with their monthly service of providing home cooked meals for the homeless, food shelters and food pantries.

As part of the Sewa Meal for September, Cherry Hill and Chesterfield Center LEADs prepared and delivered 160 meals to the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Trenton. The meal included veggie pasta, salad, bread rolls, and brownies.

The team always enjoys preparing the meals and going in-person to deliver them. Thanks to all the LEADs for cooking, baking, and packing the meals, and thanks to all the parents for their support.



This month's meal was sponsored by:
 Annapurna & Uday Tekulapally
 Padmaja & Venkata Rayapureddy
 Malathi & Narayana Pulavarti
 Shilpa & Mukul Rathi
 Anjali & Anuj Gupta
 Kanika & Munesh Velloor
 Malini & Muralidharan Krishnan
 Monika & Shashi Khurana
 Sirisha & Murali Inapuri
 Uma & Srinath Rao Aravelli
 Shilpa & Mukul Rathi (State Farm)



In September, Somerset Center LEADs, cooked a Sewa meal for the homeless at United Methodist Church in New Brunswick. The LEADs made banana bread, pita bread, veg pulav, channa masala, muffins, and kids' meals.

Thank you Adwita and family for sponsoring and thank you to all the LEADs who participated in this meal donation!

In September, Edison Center LEADs and adult volunteers participated in the preparation and distribution of meals for members of the Ozanam Family Shelter. The shelter helps the less fortunate with emergency lodging and the transition to permanent housing, offering much-needed food and daily services in times of individuals' crisis.

LEADs worked with Ozanam to prepare a variety of meals and drinks for the residents, including water, fruits, rice, rajma, pasta, and hand-prepared sandwiches. The shelter has been extremely grateful for the service for those in need!



In the month of September, Sewa LEADs from Monroe Center prepared meals to serve the homeless at the United Methodist Church, New Brunswick. LEADs cooked 130 adult meals and 30 kids' meals. They prepared a variety of food such as Veggie Fried Rice, Tofu onion capsicum broccoli stir fry, Chickpea Salad, Veggie Spring Rolls, and Coconut macaroons. Fresh produce from the LEADs' back yard gardens were also used in preparing the food.

Thank you to LEADs Nandini and Sanika's families for sponsoring the September meals.

Volunteering at Food Pantry

Edison Center LEADs and adults volunteered this month at Hands of Hope food pantry, a nonprofit organization that distributes food to alleviate hunger in the community. Every month through the year the LEADs help with organizing the food in the pantry and bag the food to deliver to people in need.

2nd Anniversary of Somerset Center of Central Jersey Chapter

On September 25, 2022 the Somerset Center held its annual picnic to celebrate the second anniversary of the Center. All the families of the volunteers got together to celebrate this milestone.

The LEADs and their families had delicious food that was prepared by each family, and had a fun day with dancing, playing games, and sharing memories of the various community service activities of the Center.



The Central Jersey Chapter appreciates the contribution of every single volunteer of the Somerset Center and would like to thank the Center Head Chitra Kuppaswamy Ji for her initiative and dedication to service for Sewa International, USA.



Chitra Kuppaswamy Ji – Center Head of the Somerset Center of Central Jersey Chapter of Sewa International, USA

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

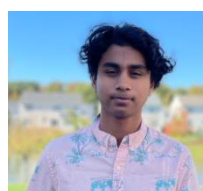
Newsletter Team



Anushka Dasari
Grade: 11
Interests: Dance
Favorite Sewa Project: 5K Run/Walk



Anvita Malepati
Grade: 8
Interests: Swimming
Favorite Sewa Project: Seewa Meal



Dheeraj Nali
Grade: 10
Interests: Reading, Art, Volleyball
Favorite Sewa Project: Reforestation



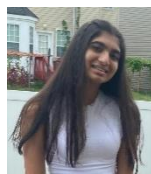
Hanshal Reddy
Grade: 11
Interests: Reading, Biking
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meal



Jabili Kuruvella
Grade: 11
Interests: Piano
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meal



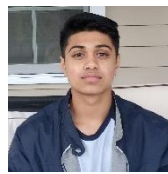
Rijul Verma
Grade: 12
Interests: Swimming, Gym
Favorite Sewa Project: Science Camp



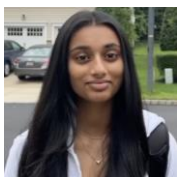
Sairah Khurana
Grade: 9
Interests: Reading, Art, Singing
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meal



Sanjay Ravishankar
Grade: 10
Interests: Art, Coding, Piano, Soccer
Favorite Sewa Project: KKWC



Sanketh Kamath
Grade: 12
Interests: Soccer
Favorite Sewa Project: Keep My Street Green



Sarayu Nalamalapu
Grade: 11
Interests: Running, Cooking, Baking
Favorite Sewa Project: Treat for Troops



Shreenidhi Ravishankar
Grade: 9
Interests: Reading, Dancing
Favorite Sewa Project: KKWC



Shruti Saravanan
Grade: 11
Interests: Basketball, Reading
Favorite Sewa Project: Ozanam Shelter Food Drive



Tanisha Khabe
Grade: 12
Interests: Singing, Piano, Reading
Favorite Sewa Project: Sewa Meal

Upcoming Events

- ❖ Fall Clean Ups Begin!
- ❖ Clean Ocean Action - Statewide Beach Clean Up
- ❖ Sewa Adopt A Highway Clean Up
- ❖ Sewa for NJ Walk for PKD
- ❖ Sewa Diwali Drive
- ❖ Produce Harvesting
- ❖ Community Gardening
- ❖ AttachAvi Autism Foundation
- ❖ Manavi - Support for Domestic Violence Survivors
- ❖ Sewa Meals
- ❖ LEAD 2022/23 Open House & Registration

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