



Sewa News - DC Chapter

September - October 2017

About the Chapter

Sewa International Washington DC Chapter has been actively conducting various community service programs with the principle of "Service to Humanity is Service to Divine" aligning to the goal and mission of the organization. The chapter actively collects donations for the various Sewa programs carried out internationally inspiring all age groups to participate and volunteer for the cause of humanity. The chapter continues to conduct Food and Donation drives, Tree plantation drive, and Adopt a Highway programs in DC, Northern Virginia, and Maryland regions where tens of families participate with enthusiasm promoting environmental awareness. For more information on our activities and join to volunteer Please write an email to washingtondc@sewausa.org or visit <https://www.facebook.com/sewausadc>

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Sewa Ganesh Utsav



*वक्रतुण्ड महाकाय सूर्यकोटि समप्रभ ।
निर्विघ्नं कुरु मे देव सर्वकार्येषु सर्वदा ॥*

Sewa International Washington DC chapter and Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) collaborated to celebrate Ganesh Utsav on 9th September 2017 at Centreville High School in Virginia. Altogether 90 families from the Northern Virginia region participated in the event.

Sewa International USA DC chapter has campaigned to support **Cauvery National Public School** in India at Bengaluru from the donations raised from this event. Along with supporting the School project, Sewa pledged to forward the event registration proceeds to **Sponsor A Child (SAC)** program.





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Sewa raised **\$9500.00** for the Cauvery National Public School and **\$5040** to sponsor **21** children for one whole academic year.

During the event, almost all families brought delicious homemade food as maha-prasad. A variety of cultural programs attracted the audience showcased by the Balagokulam kids and parents from 7 Shakhas in the area. Samskrita Bharati of USA, an organization with a mission to propagate spoken Samskrit has performed a skit in Samskrit educating the audience to realize the ease of using the language in their daily life. Enthralling Kuchipudi and Kathak dance performed by the students of Kalamandapam and Nrityamayi Dance Academy added to the spirit of festivity on the Utsav day. Sewa International campaign videos were screened that featured SAC, Cauvery National Public School, DC area activities, and testimonials by the kids who participated in the local community service.



After the Cultural Programs, the volunteers guided families to cafeteria to settle down on the designated spots for conducting Ganesh Puja. The 45 minutes Puja was led by a volunteer priest who explained the significance of Ganesh Utsav. At the end of the Pooja, a grand procession was conducted where Ganeshji's Murti was kept in a well decorated Palkhi. The procession was carried out in a traditional way with Dhol (drums), Lezim (Musical Instrument) and participants dancing with vigor and fervor. After the procession, Maha-prasad was served on recyclable and biodegradable dinnerware. Volunteers cleaned up venue and disposed the trash appropriately.

More than 25 volunteers formed into smaller groups to work on various tasks to make the Utsav successful. Around 30 families signed up to bring Maha-prasad that made the Utsav a real family-like event in the area.

Stop Diabetes Movement (SDM) Yoga Workshop

Stop Diabetes Movement (SDM) workshop, as designed by S-VYASA Yoga University, Bengaluru was organized to promote well-being by Prevention and Control of Diabetes. Prescreening was conducted one week before the start of workshop at India International School on July 16th. Twelve participants were prescreened on the day. Sewa DC chapter is thankful to Dr. Sheela Raghuram and Dr. Sharayu for their support during screening.



Sharadji Dandekar, a renowned Yoga Instructor and Therapist trained and certified by S-Vyasa, facilitated the workshop at India International School for 10 days. He demonstrated various yoga postures that are specifically chosen to rejuvenate Pancreas and other organs in order to help prevent/control Diabetes. Those postures included simple poses such as shashankasana to 12 steps Sun Salutation to more intense



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poses such as Janushirasana and Dhaurasana (Bow). Quick and Deep relaxation techniques for managing stress was also covered during session. Voice Instructions for Relaxation technique were recorded and shared with the participants.

Workshop was well received by all the participants and was rated excellent for the place, clarity of instructions and method of teaching. Workshop was concluded successfully on July 30th with Q&A session followed by presentation of a memento to Sharad ji.

Sewa Day 2017

Sewa-Day 2017, a day of volunteering was observed over a period of four weeks, from September 09 to October 08. This was celebrated and observed across the United States by the Hindu-American community for the seventh consecutive year. Volunteers worked on 32 community service projects in 27 cities across the country. **We are proud to announce that DC chapter has conducted eight Sewa Days during the five weeks.** The volunteers served about one hundred meals to the needy at the Reston



homeless shelter. Volunteers partnered with Optimists International to clean a one mile stretch in Clifton. On 17th, eight volunteers of DC chapter rendered their services course marshalling a 5K run conducted by a non-profit organization called Asha-Jyothi. Preserving culture and supporting organizations that promote native and classical cultures is an important service that the DC volunteers took part in. Fifteen volunteers rented a truck and helped Kalamandapam dance school to move and organize number of props and costumes. On 1st October, Sewa DC volunteers helped Hindu Temple of Virginia at Sterling by managing and organizing various activities for their Shilanyas program. On 8th

October, World Hindu Day was celebrated in DC area with many other organizations participating with notable speakers addressing the gathering. The Sewa volunteers from DC worked on planning and serving lunch to about 300 participants.



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Annapurna

Annapurna program is monthly lunch program served by the DC volunteers at the Reston homeless shelter since October 2015, with an objective of feeding nutritious Indian food to needy people at Shelter. The volunteers cooked delicious Indian dishes at home and served about two hundred meals on September 10th and October 1st. Over twelve to fifteen volunteers are involved on each Annapurna day.



Adopt A Highway

Sewa International DC chapter received the permit from Fairfax County to clean a stretch of highway in Virginia. As per plan Adopt-a-Highway was carried out on October 21, 2017. Cleaning was done on one mile stretch of South bound Fairfax County Parkway starting from Braddock Rd ramp to Lee Hwy. Total 6 bags of highway trash were collected by 10 volunteers in two hours of continuous work. Organisation has received the admiration letter from county and are in the process of placing the organization logo on that highway.



Tree Plantation

Sewa DC chapter organized the Tree Plantation event in coordination with Earth Sanga at Sunrise Valley Elementary School, Reston, VA on 14th October 2017. About 25 volunteers participated actively including children from age 5 where hundreds of samplings were planted.





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Pravas by Arun Kankani ji

Sri Arun ji Kankani was invited to the Indiaspora's 5th Anniversary Leadership Forum with an agenda to Bringing together leaders from across the nation and the globe to break new ground in strategic thinking. On October 1st, Sri Arun ji met with the DC chapter volunteers at IAACM studio and went over the Harvey relief efforts by the Sewa teams in Houston.



Youth for Sewa



On 21st October, the DC chapter has launched Youth for Sewa with five youngsters from the high schools in the area. Planning was initiated to conduct quarterly workshops for the high school students collaborating with the Project management Institute (PMI).

Diwali Food Drive

On Diwali, the 16th October, Sewa DC chapter has started annual food drive to collect rice bags for the DC Central Kitchen. By end of the month October, Sewa has collaborated with more than fifteen organizations and collected more than 3000 pounds of rice. The drive concludes on November 19th.



Current and Upcoming events:

- Annapurna: November 5th and December 3rd
- Diwali food drive: November 19th
- Annual Planning: December 3rd