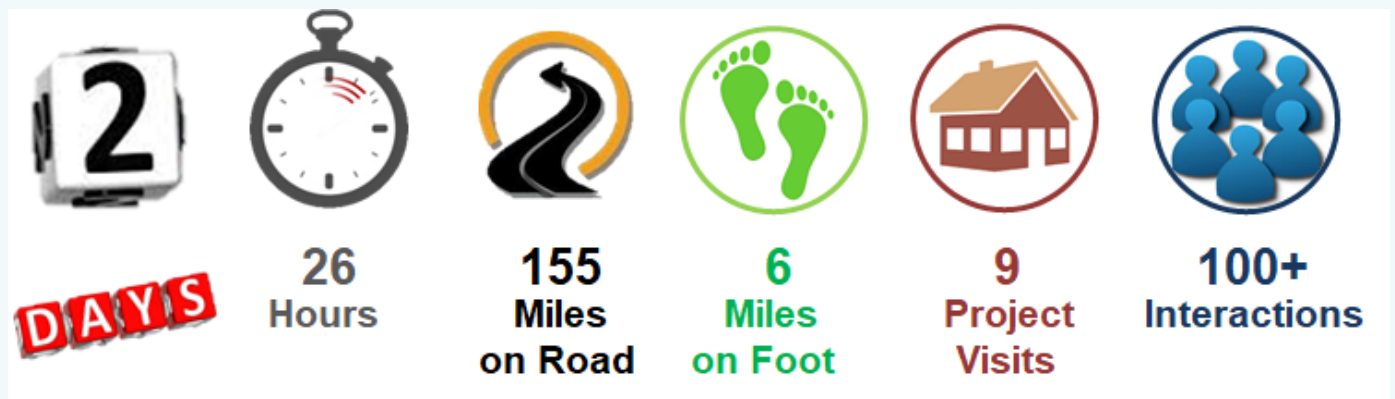


Sewa Team visits Kerala to Finalize Flood Rehabilitation Plan

The devastating southwest monsoon this year left the entire state of Kerala inundated leaving 221 collapsed bridges, nearly 6,250 miles of damaged roads, and it destroyed more than 42,000 hectares of crops that affected 260,000 farmers. Over a million people were displaced, and 370 people died in the floods.

Sewa International President Dr. Sree Sreenath, together with two Sewa mission-oriented staff -- Saravanan Dakshinamoorthy and Aravinda Rajagopal -- visited Kerala on October 9 and 10 to discuss and finalize the Kerala Floods Rehabilitation Program for which Sewa has raised \$375,000.



Contd. on Page 2

Executive's Corner

Dear Sewa Supporter,

I would like to share about some of the philosophical aspects of Sewa, in three parts: Sāadhanā (reverent practice), Sādhak (the aspirant), and Sādhya (achievable goal).

Sāadhanā is practice undertaken in the pursuit of a goal. Sewa sāadhanā is to elevate one's attitude from self-interest to self-realization by serving others. The attitude of 'helping others' comes from self-interest due to compassion, pity, desire for popularity, selfish gain, or some ulterior motive, whereas the attitude of 'serving others' comes from a total surrender to divinity, and the realization that we are but an instrument by divine design to render service on behalf of the divine. It creates a craving in the heart to give more as a vehicle of karma yoga.

The sādhak is an aspirant who follows a certain sāadhanā. Sewa sādhak (volunteer) should have a positive urge to serve others. The urge could come from their social and/or spiritual inspirations. Sādhak should have an innate urge to transform oneself. Such transformation should bring purity at all levels -- physical, intellectual, and

emotional. Additionally, the Bhagavad Gita advises that a true sādhak on the path of karma yoga should work with a degree of detachment.

Sādhya is the ultimate achievable goal. Sewa sādhya is to create a social order based on three principles: "Let all be happy" (*Sarve bhavantu sukhinah*); the "World is one family" (*Vasudhaiva kutumbakam*); and a "Strifeless global society" (*Jagat shanthi*).

Sewa International is an organization with a mission to achieve this sādhya by creating selfless workers ("Service above self"), with a bond of ideology (Hindu faith-based), who are ever ready to work together ("*Together we serve better*").

In this context, I would recommend reading "Sāadhanā of Service," a book authored by Eknath Ranade.


Sandeep Khadkekar
 VP Marketing



Sewa Team visits Kerala to Finalize Flood Rehabilitation Plan

Guided by Jinesh Lal, State Program Director, and Rajan, State Volunteer Head -- representatives from the local nonprofit organization, the Deeseya Sevabharathi Keralam (DSB), the Sewa team visited flood affected areas of Kunnukara, Parakkadavu and Thaikattukara in Ernakulam district and interacted with over a dozen flood victims and their families, taking note of their damaged homes and other losses. Wells have been contaminated with pollutants like iron and other salts making the water smelly, discolored, and unfit for human consumption. Homes need water softener systems, and in some cases they need the Reverse Osmosis (RO) filtering systems.



Only a portion of Dineshan's house remains standing after the floods. Sewa President Dr. Sreenath holds a picture of the house before the floods. Sewa volunteer Saravanan is in the background.

"Homes with exposed bricks (no plastering) are the most damaged. Loss of furniture, household equipment, utensils, important documents, valuables, etc., has caused intense trauma. Women in particular, across economic classes, seem to be more affected", said Dr.Sreenath.

The Sewa team also visited nine projects run by DSB in Ernakulam and Thrissur districts.

In the final meeting with the senior team of DSB, three areas were identified for rehabilitation intervention -- livelihood, trauma counseling, and rebuilding destroyed homes for the underprivileged. The DSB team will soon submit a detailed proposal and estimate based on the above plan for rehabilitation. After conducting an initial survey for identifying the possible beneficiaries, the rehabilitation plan would be rolled out before the year end.

Flash Floods in Trinidad and Tobago – Sewa International Pitches In

Heavy October rains battered different parts of Trinidad and Tobago causing river banks to breach, resulting in flash floods. As part of rescue and relief efforts, Sewa's local partner organization Sewa International TT (Sewa TT), distributed 13,000 meals, cleaning supplies, and other emergency aid to flood victims in North, East and Central Trinidad locations of Caroni, St. Helena, Bamboo, St. Augustine, La Horquetta, Sangre Grande, Mayaro, Oropune, Madras Road, and Warren. About 140 people benefitted from a medical camp set up for screening of water borne diseases.



Sewa TT volunteers ready to distribute meals and cleaning supplies

During November, Sewa TT plans to distribute \$100 food packs, clothing, and pet supplies. Volunteers are being mobilized to coordinate complimentary washing of clothes for the needy, as well as donation of pet supplies. Sewa International has released \$5,000 for relief operations in Trinidad and Tobago. Your financial support to help in the flood relief activities will be appreciated: [Donate now](#)

Hurricane Florence – Rehabilitation Work by Sewa International

In the aftermath of hurricane Florence that hit North and South Carolina and Virginia, Sewa Research Triangle Park (RTP) chapter volunteers, in partnership with United Methodist Church and North Carolina Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) took part in rehabilitation work. Under the guidance of four certified Sewa team leaders -- Kiran Krishna, Shekar Joshi, Radhika Kiran and Anant Deo -- trained in various aspects of early response to disasters, twelve Sewa volunteers set out to work on a damaged home. While one team removed damaged flooring and walls, another team worked on the damaged roof.



Sewa volunteers Praveen Chand, Dasharath Lohar, Prashant Phirke restoring the roof of a home in St.Pauls

After a fulfilling day of volunteering at St. Pauls, 110 miles from Raleigh, the team pledged their support to come back in November to work on over 200 hurricane-damaged houses.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Mayura Ashtakala has been associated with Sewa International since 2015. She is at present the Pennsylvania/Delaware chapter president.

Mayura has strengthened the chapter through careful planning over the years, and by creating and promoting activities with a team of passionate volunteers. Mayura loves to meet new people, and work with those who have a common interest in volunteering activities.

One of the issues she is deeply committed to is in empowering women and caring for children. She strongly believes that an empowered woman is the key to the wellbeing of a family.

Another cause that Mayura is deeply connected is with feeding the homeless, which has been made possible because of her passion for cooking, and her compassion for the poor and hungry. To this end, she has organized several food drives and sponsored soup kitchens.

Mayura is an animal lover, and is also a strong proponent for vegetarianism. Also, her love of nature makes her a big supporter of environmental causes like preservation and protection of endangered lands and animals. Mayura approaches volunteering as a divine activity and often speaks with teenage children on the impact of participating in selfless service and giving back to society.

Mayura is a software consultant with SAP America. She has been a Hindu Swayam Sevak volunteer since 2007. A native of Bengaluru, who speaks Telugu, Mayura has lived in many different places in India and has been in the United States for more than 22 years. She lives in Pennsylvania with her husband Madhu. They have two adult daughters – Vandana and Vaishali. In her spare time, Mayura enjoys cooking, volunteering for various causes, and taking long walks with her dog, Jake.



Sewa International

WEBSITE GETS A NEW LOOK

Check out the Sewa website with enhanced features, new look and feel, one click access to twitter feeds and facebook posts, and much more..

<https://www.sewaua.org>

Upcoming Events

Nov 18, 2018 : Sewa Boston | *Nrityameva Jayatey* | Keefe Technical School, 750 Winter Street, Framingham.

Dec 1, 2018 : Sewa Bay Area | *Annual Banquet* | Royal Palace, 246 Serra Way, Milpitas, CA 95035.

Sewa International

P.O.Box 820867
Houston, TX 77282-0867

(708) 872-7392
info@sewaua.org
www.sewaua.org



Editorial Team: Prof. Ramesh Rao, Columbus State University, GA; Shyam Byra, Media Entrepreneur, Philanthropist and Businessman, Phoenix, AZ; and, crucially supported by our mission oriented staff -- Aravinda Rajagopal and Kusuma, Sewa Bengaluru Office, India.