

India Herald

Sewa USA volunteer gets Greater Houston Service Award



Kiran Bhatia, left, Saroj Gupta, Alexis Angelo and Laura Frye, all from Sewa USA, Houston chapter, with the service award recipient Vasudev Singh, rear, at the awards luncheon on May 15 at Bayou City Event Center.

Wed, May 21, 2014

Sewa International USA, Houston chapter and its volunteer Vasudev Singh were honored at the 30th annual Greater Houston Service Awards luncheon on May 15 by Volunteer Houston.

The Greater Houston Service Awards is a signature event of Volunteer Houston recognizing local citizens for acts of uncommon volunteer services.

The event shared the stories of quiet citizens who choose to spend their time improving lives of others in the community.

Conoco Philips and Exxon Mobil were among the corporate service award recipients.

Awards were presented to finalists in 10 different categories: Animals welfare, and wildlife, arts and recreational activities, health services, civic and community development, human services, disaster services, military and volunteer services, education and youth services.

In the civic and community development category Vasudev Singh of Sewa international was among the three nominees, with Diane Salmond of Ten Thousand Villages Houston and David Godwin of LIFT. Singh was the final award winner.

The judges, while citing the volunteer work of Singh for Sewa International, noted that despite his full time job and having a young daughter, Singh found time to help Bhutanese refugees re-settled in Houston, by providing mentorship, education and other needed assistance.

Vasudev works with Schlumberger Consulting Service as Petroleum Engineer. He holds a graduate degree from University of Texas at Austin and undergraduate degree from Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University, India. Vasudev has a strong background with student organizations and community service projects. He has also received Akhil Chopra Memorial Award of Community Service for his services in South Asian community of Houston. He is a founder and team member of various new Initiatives in Houston such as Get Inspired Houston and ASPIRE

Sewa International is a Hindu-based charity serving as a grassroots organization that spreads the message of service to low income families. Sewa's refugee empowerment project includes youth mentorship and community empowerment. The youth program helps provide schools students with academic help and holistic development, and the community empowerment assists refugee adults become self-sufficient, through vocational skills.

Sewa also offers family services to assist families in need of help. Sewa offers internship opportunity for young adults through "Get inspired Houston" program.

Jim McIngvale, known as "Mattress Mack" was the keynote speaker at the awards luncheon.

McIngvale described Volunteer Houston, serving Houston for the past 40 years, as "truly a wonderful organization" and was inspired by the incredible stories of the volunteers.

"I learned the importance of volunteerism first from my father," he said.

"All volunteers today believe in the words of Pope John Paul II that the essence of living is giving," McIngvale said. He cited the story of his own daughter, who at 13 struggled with mental illness with little hope, but thanks to the volunteers she graduated from high school. She worked hard to remove the stigma of mental illness and a week ago she received her doctorate in social work. That was someone whom many said would not graduate from high school.

Whatever be the area of work, there is always plenty left to do, McIngvale said. Volunteers step forward every day to make Houston a better place.

"Volunteers are the backbone of this country. They built this country. Volunteers set an example. They are the opposite of narcissists. Volunteers are concerned with other people. Your legacy will show how much difference you make in the world," he said.

[submit your comments](#)