

Sursangam Concert Helps Raise \$60,000 for COVID-19 Relief



Sewa International & TV Asia Present

SUR SANGAM

WITH

SUNDAY 14 JUNE

01:00 PM ET
12:00 PM CT
11:00 AM MT
10:00 AM PT

WATCH FREE @ WORLD BBTB
Download World BBTB App on mobile, laptop or SMART TV

Madhushree, Ankit Tiwari, Shaan, Anup Jalota, Daler Mehndi, Jaspinder Narula

Contd. on Page 2

Executive's Corner

Dear Sewa Families & Friends,

All of us know how the COVID19 pandemic has impacted the entire world in a negative way. I want to write about the positive that happened while people were locked inside their homes. In just three months, Sewa International went through various phases.

In the initial phase, we kept our focus on PPE distribution and appreciating the first responders and medical professionals by serving them hot meals. So far, we have distributed 625,000+ PPE in the country by spending over \$500,000. Eleven non-medical helplines were started so that people can call volunteers for any help. More than 100 volunteers were trained to handle the call volume. In this phase, we started to organize webinars to educate the community on various topics related to the pandemic.

In the second phase, we continued all the activities of the initial phase but included help for visiting parents who were stuck in the US due to visa restrictions and the lock-down in India. These parents were running out of medications. Sewa International volunteers talked to doctors who wrote the necessary prescriptions.

Our team started a plasma registry website (<https://www.sewacovidplasma.org/>) so that people who had recovered from the virus infection could donate plasma to those currently ill. We were also getting many requests for DIY masks. Hundreds of our volunteers started stitching these masks.

People were losing jobs, so our team started offering help to these people who were running out of money. We bought groceries for them. At the same time, our team started serving meals to homeless people. In this phase, 1000+ dharma and sewa community organizations were contacted in the US to

pool ideas, collaborate and build confidence in our community. Sankalp Patra was a pledge and 250+ dharmic organizations signed it.

Neighborhood Sewa is an outbound activity. It is an opportunity to serve our neighborhoods in these challenging times. Sewa International identified four areas of action that addresses societies needs in a big way.

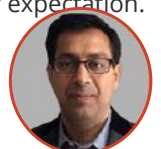
Sewa for care givers	Sewa for seniors
Sewa for the underprivileged; and	Sewa for emotional and mental wellbeing

In the current phase, we are still working on many of the activities that we were conducting in the first two phases, but our key focus areas are:

- Fighting Hunger: Food distribution to the needy
- Emotional and Wellbeing Support: through proactive prevention, ongoing education and awareness, interventions, and support through Case Management; and
- Career Transition and Support: Mainly for international students, which may also be beneficial to people impacted by job loss period

When I look back on our activities these past three months, my heart is filled with bliss, joy and love for our community and gratitude to all on how efficiently we have, as a community, responded during this pandemic. Our community has donated \$1 million to Sewa International to conduct all these activities and we want to make sure that we live up to your expectation.

Swadesh Katoch
VP Disaster Recovery



Sursangam Concert Helps Raise \$60,000 for COVID-19 Relief

Sursangam, the mega music concert, simultaneously broadcast on TV Asia and streamed live on Sewa's Social Media channels helped raise \$60,000 for Sewa's COVID-19 relief efforts. Held on Sunday, June 14 in partnership with TV Asia, the concert featured six leading singers from India and enthralled thousands of viewers.

Highly popular bhajan singer Anup Jalota anchored the concert that started at 1 pm EST and which lasted almost two hours. Ankit Tiwari, Shaan, Jaspinder Narula, Madhushree Bhattacharya and Daler Mehndi sung many popular songs and also endorsed Sewa during the concert.

Sewa raised \$50,000 through concert sponsorships and another \$10,000 during the concert from viewers who called in to support Sewa. TV Asia also streamed the concert online through its World BBTv app.

Throughout the concert, TV Asia played Sewa's advertisements, appeals and endorsement videos from Sewa's donors during the breaks and did not play any commercials. Sewa's marketing team and several volunteers worked closely over many weeks with TV Asia to organize and present the concert, which involved some new online outreach efforts. TV Asia managed the programming part including artists selection and content. "We learned new things, technically and organizationally, in presenting this concert to the public. It has been a wonderful learning experience, and we have in TV Asia a partner who can help us reach out to the public in future," Sandeep Khadkekar, Vice President, Marketing & Fund Development for Sewa said.

Sewa's Austin Chapter Steps up To Help the Community

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Austin chapter of Sewa International has come to the aid of Texans through several initiatives. Chapter volunteers have donated 500+ N95 masks and 2,000+ three-ply masks to Williamson County EMS, physician groups at Baylor Scott & White, Ascension Seton, Cedar Park Regional Medical Center, and other hospitals. Through US Representative John Carter's office, they have also distributed 5,000 masks to first responders, which were accepted and distributed by Bell county Judge Blackburn. Along with masks and hand sanitizers, twelve Sewa volunteers in Austin showed their gratitude for first responders by making home cooked meals for the Round Rock Police Department, Cedar Park Police Department, and the Round Rock Fire Department. They also delivered fresh meals from restaurants to area police departments, helping local businesses as they reopen after lockdown.

Sewa International Austin is not only stepping up to support frontline workers in their fight against COVID-19, but their outreach has extended to help the public who have been affected by the pandemic. The continuous cooperation between Sewa International Austin and local partners extends the chapter's reach to the entire community, bringing people together in these tough times. Sewa Austin has partnered with over 20 Indian organizations in the Austin area to fundraise for the Central Texas Food Bank, a group working tirelessly to provide meals for underprivileged families during the pandemic.

Sewa Austin has also raised enough money to provide 27,000 meals to people across Texas. Partnering with the local chapters of the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), Gayatri Pariwar, and Ekal Vidyalaya, the Austin chapter opened a helpline for those needing information or services.

Along with raising money for food banks and providing services via helplines, Sewa volunteers also distributed 100 food kits and masks in a span of two weeks to needy people living in Round Rock area apartments, thanks to the support of many local organizations. Twenty volunteers from Sewa, Sisters in Austin, and HSS made 550 masks for distribution under Sewa's Mask Making initiative.

The services Sewa International Austin provides helps build a strong community, and in turn these strong communities serve as a resource to Sewa volunteers enabling them to learn, grow, and provide leadership.

Sewa International Distributes Hot Meals and Groceries in East San Jose



Sewa International's Bay Area Chapter distributed hot meals, groceries, and hygiene kits to more than 1000 people and several schools-supply kits to children in a drive through distribution event held at the Nam Giao Restaurant in San Jose, CA on Friday, June 19. Over the past month, the Bay Area chapter distributed almost 6,000 meals and 7,000 masks to individuals as part of its COVID-19 relief efforts. Sewa volunteers are posing for a picture with the hotel owner in front of the Nam Giao restaurant above.

- To Know more about Covid-19 related activities [click here](#)
- Follow us on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/sewainternationalusa>
- **Donate** Covid-19 Fundraiser through SewaUSA

Helping Native American Communities



Sewa volunteers & Native American Community Members prepared boxes and bags of vegetables to ship to the Navajo Nation Native American Community.

While the outbreak of COVID-19 has sparked concern all over the world, Native American communities are among those that have been hit the hardest, with some of the highest known infection rates in the world. These vulnerable communities live in isolated areas and are unable to access essential services during this time. In response to their needs, Sewa International is collaborating with International Center for Cultural Studies (ICCS) and is in direct communication with the tribal leaders of the Navajo Nation, Yakama Nation, and other Native American communities in the U.S. to provide them with critical supplies and help them fight the pandemic.

The Navajo Nation is the largest Native American territory in the United States, spanning parts of Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico. Already, over 4,000 residents have tested positive for the virus, and at least a hundred deaths have been reported among the Navajo. In response to this crisis, Sewa International's Phoenix Chapter has donated over 1,300 masks and helped more than 200 Navajo families with groceries, medical supplies, and other necessities. The monetary support for these items comes from local Sewa volunteers, who are working tirelessly to contact organizations and raise money for this initiative.

Another community benefitting from Sewa's support is the Yakama Nation in Washington state. When this Native American community of 3,000+ families sought help through our sister organization ICCS, Sewa International responded immediately with a critical supply of masks for protection, including more than 1,000 surgical, 300 KN-95, and 2,120 home-made masks. Sewa volunteers went above and beyond the call of duty in helping this community, delivering directly to the Tribal Camp Office a total of 126,000 pounds of groceries and custom medical supplies such as non-contact infrared thermometers.

Sewa International is collaborating with many service organizations across the world to provide these essential services. We are partnered with Protect Native Elders and ICCS Global, among others, and by working together we are able to make a significant and positive impact on these Native American communities.

Sewa International's Houston Chapter Distributes 100,000 Pounds of Food to the Needy



Sewa International's Houston Chapter partnered with more than 15 local community organizations and distributed more than 100,000 pounds of food in Greater Houston area in last eight weeks. Sewa organized 15 food drives in Houston's low income neighborhoods and gave kits containing 30 pounds or more food to more than 3400 families. In the picture above Sewa volunteers are distributing food kits to families in an apartment complex in Houston, TX.

Rebuilding Rosharon – Sewa's Partnership with the American Red Cross

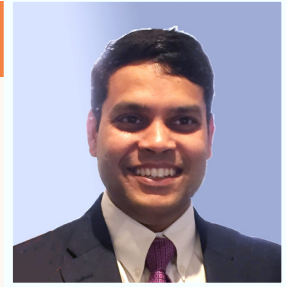
Hurricane Harvey was a devastating Category 4 hurricane that hit Texas and Louisiana in 2017 and caused catastrophic damage. It took the lives of hundreds of people and forced thousands to leave their homes. Fortunately, with the help of dedicated Sewa International volunteers working with several organizations, places in Texas were able to successfully recover and rebuild. One of the most affected communities was Rosharon, an economically underprivileged community in Brazoria County, part of the Metro Houston statistical area.

Sewa International went above and beyond their goals of helping Rosharon recover from the devastation of the hurricane, staying true to their motto "Together, we serve better". The American Red Cross awarded a \$499,823 RFP grant on September 1, 2018 to Sewa. The grant agreement's initial goals consisted of repairing 24 primary homes and rebuilding 11 primary homes, with 4,000 hours of Recovery Services being performed by 200 volunteers in the community. By the end of the grant settlement on February 27, 2020, Sewa International had outperformed their initial goal, reaching out and serving many more needy people in the area. Using the grant money, Sewa was able to repair 73 primary homes and rebuild 11 primary homes.

What stood out most was how many devoted volunteers worked together to rebuild this community. Nearly 500 Sewa volunteers performed an amazing 15,539 hours of service. Rashmi Singh and Carole Juarez did outstanding work on the Rosharon Rebuild. However, the project would not have been a success without Phan Prak, Ruby Chanxay, and Johnny, who are from the local community and who deserve special mention for their unwavering support of the project.

By working together, Sewa International and the American Red Cross were able to make a significant impact and provide meaningful services for people affected by Hurricane Harvey. Although the grant has ended, there is still one more house left to rebuild that is expected to be completed later this summer. As the project comes to a close, the American Red Cross sent a letter of thanks and commendation to Sewa for the dedicated work of volunteers and expressed the hope of continuing Red Cross' partnership with Sewa in future projects.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Vivek Srivastav, an ardent devotee of Lord Shri Hari, has been volunteering for Sewa International, Atlanta Chapter, since 2014. He was introduced to Sewa by Yashwant Belsare who informed him about the Bhutanese community in the Clarkston, GA area and between 2014-2016 he worked very closely with this community organizing the "Getting Inspired" program, which focused on cultural programs (music, dance and bhajan classes were added to the program during this time), tutoring, and summer internship. The Bhutanese Heritage Camp, that was organized during this time to provide a sense of identity and instill a sense of pride in the community youth about their own cultural heritage, was replicated in other chapters nationwide.

Under the auspicious guidance of his preceptor Shri Vidhyatma Teerth Swami, Pontiff of the Madhwa Matha, Uttar Pradesh, Vivek has been sponsoring a free medical clinic since October 2016 in Prayagraj near Triveni Sangam in UP. During his college life at St. Stephen's, Delhi, he used to read books to the blind, participate in adult literacy, organize blood donation camps, and teach underprivileged kids.

In 2016, Vivek, went to India for three years, leaving his wife and son behind, to serve the country as the Head of Research and Innovation at a new IT organization set up by the Reserve Bank of India. During this time, he made several meaningful contributions to RBI tech policy and was instrumental in the development of technical specifications for Account Aggregator. He participated in several committees to help materialize the Public Credit Registry initiative of RBI. After returning from India in October 2019 he has re-joined Sewa and is engaged with the like-minded team of dedicated volunteers in serving the community in Atlanta during the COVID-19 pandemic. He strongly believes in the Sewa motto that "together, we serve better" and thinks that serving others is a service to divinity.

Vivekananda Yoga University Launches Online Yoga Master's Program

Vivekananda Yoga University (VaYU), the world's first university, outside India, devoted to yoga education and research, launched their Online Master of Science (Yoga) Program on June 13th. Applications for the Fall 2020 semester are open with the first day of classes being August 24, 2020. Students can access more information at www.vayuusa.org.

Upcoming Events

- Apr 7, 2020 to Jul 5, 2020 : Sewa Philadelphia and Delaware | Sewa for COVID-19 PA - GRASSROOTS Mask Making
- May 1, 2020 to Aug 31, 2020 : Sewa Bay Area | Authentic Yoga to Prevent, Control and Manage Diabetes | Fremont, San Jose, San Ramon, Saratoga in Bay Area, CA
- Jun 8, 2020 to July 10, 2020 : Sewa Atlanta | Summer Internship 2020 | Atlanta
- Jun 20, 2020 to Aug 1, 2020 : Sewa Austin | LEAD Austin Summer 2020 | Austin
- Jun 29, 2020 to Jul 3, 2020 : Sewa Bay Area | Animation Camp for LEAD Participants | Virtual via Zoom
- Jul 6, 2020 to Aug 13, 2020 : Sewa North Jersey | Summer Camp for Students | Virtual via zoom

Sewa International

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