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# Sewa International

Service to Humanity is Service to the Divine

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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## **Sewa International's Boston Chapter Gives \$50,000 Grant to Help Children with OCD**



**Dr. Erica Greenberg, Head of the Pediatric OCD and Tic Disorders program in the Department of Psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston speaking on Sewa's grant in a video released by the hospital.**

Boston, MA (June 12, 2020): Sewa International's Boston Chapter announced a \$50,000 grant to the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) to help children suffering from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). This grant will help Pediatric OCD and Tic Disorders program in the Department of Psychiatry at the hospital to increase families' access to care and reduce the waiting list.

Sewa volunteers who recently had a conversation with Dr. Erica Greenberg, Head of the OCD program and the Department of Psychiatry on how COVID-19 pandemic impacts the children with OCD were told by Dr. Greenberg that the "Coronavirus is generating terrible anxiety, stress and fear: the fear of illness, the fear of death and loss, and the stress of social distancing. The result is an increased need for mental health care for OCD pediatric patients". "We were moved by the plight of these children and raised funds for the grant," said Ashwani Garg, Sewa's Vice President for Administration and its Boston Chapter Coordinator.

"Sewa's grant will fund the OCD and Tic Disorders clinical team to recruit a part-time social worker. This person will provide virtual therapy to patients, manage requests for physician referrals, collaborate with schools and

run virtual patient and parent support groups,” said Dr. Suresh Jain, Mentor of Sewa’s Boston Chapter and a community leader.

Thanking Sewa for the grant, Deborah M. Farr, Senior Director of Development at the MGH said, “Your partnership is deeply meaningful to us and comes at a critical time for Dr. Greenberg’s patients and their families”.

OCD is a brain and behavior disorder that often begins in childhood, causing severe anxiety and obsessive behavior, intrusive and unwanted thoughts, images, or urges that occur repeatedly. Children with OCD often display compulsive behaviors such as incessant handwashing, going back and forth to check if doors are locked, or repeatedly apologizing. Sometimes these children repeat phrases or noises as if to eliminate upsetting feelings or to prevent bad things from happening. These obsessions and compulsions ultimately consume the child and negatively interfere with their daily life. If untreated, OCD increases in severity over time.

For these children, while life in the pre-COVID world was difficult, the onset of the pandemic has made matters worse. Their fragile mental health situation is now under acute pressure with resultant impact to their academic performance, friendships, and self-esteem. It has also increased suicidal thoughts among these children.

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### About Sewa International

Sewa International, a leading Hindu faith based, Indian American nonprofit organization, has extensive experience in disaster rescue, relief, and rehabilitation operations having responded to 24 disasters in the US and abroad. In 2017, after Hurricane Harvey struck the Houston area, Sewa volunteers helped in the rescue of nearly 700 people, and have served thousands of affected families since then through their case management service. Sewa raised over \$3 million for Hurricane Harvey recovery, Sewa continues to rebuild houses, and, greenhouses that serve as a means of livelihood. Sewa International has also rendered relief in the wake of hurricane Maria in 2018 and Hurricane Imelda in 2019. Sewa teams in the San Francisco Bay Area continue to build and donate tiny homes for those rendered homeless in California Camp Fire of November 2018.

Among its other accolades, Sewa International has been recognized by Charity Navigator – the premier nonprofit rating agency – as the number five among the “10 Highly Rated Charities Relying on Private Contributions.” Sewa has for the last three years continuously scored the topmost-rated 4-star from Charity Navigator, and has earned perfect scores for its Financial Health and Accountability & Transparency.

For more information on Sewa International and its activities, please visit <http://www.sewausea.org>. For more information on Sewa International’s efforts to support communities nationwide during the COVID-19 crisis, please visit <https://sewausea.org/covid-19>.

