Recent Events

Run for Sewa

Every year, Sewa Atlanta's high school volunteers organize the Annual 5K Run. This year it was conducted on August 12, 2017 at Riverside Park in Roswell, Georgia. The entire work from planning the event to reserving the venue, and from managing the logistics to designing the T-shirts was done by the students. Over 200 people participated and enjoyed the event. The proceeds from this run went to Camp Cadi (www.campcadi.com), an organization that helps women who have suffered domestic abuse by providing therapy and counseling. Along with the run, the students organized a complementary yoga session, breakfast, and distribution of free T-shirts for all the participants. The run not only developed team spirit among youth volunteers but also raised $3,936 that was donated to Camp Cadi.

Food Drive – Food for the Hungry

“Food for the Hungry” is a monthly event organized in collaboration with the MSG Foundation, a 501(c) (3) organization. The event is held at the Otwell Middle School cafeteria on the third Saturday of each month. It has been more than six months since Sewa began partnering with MSG Foundation, and our volunteers and recipients have shown tremendous zeal and enthusiasm in participating in the event. More than 400 people are served each month, and the majority of recipients are Hispanic. The next three events are scheduled for October 21, November 18, and December 16. Sewa encourages volunteers to participate in the event and experience the joy of feeding the needy.

Sewa is also working with Forsyth County School System to offer school tutoring to students from these communities. With our dedicated team of volunteers, we lend support to the challenged in the community by offering a hand up.
Disaster Relief for Harvey

Hurricane Harvey was one of the most destructive hurricanes making landfall in the US. From August 25, 2017 when it made landfall, over a four-day period, many areas received more than 40 inches (100 cm) of rain causing catastrophic flooding. The damage was severe with 200,000 homes being destroyed, a million cars wrecked, and metro stations, schools, highways and other public facilities flooded.

Sewa International was the biggest Indian-American organization which brought together over 800 volunteers for the critical rescue effort which has now transited into a relief effort. The Sewa Houston Team mobilized an unprecedented army of volunteers. The Sewa Hot Line was flooded with requests every few minutes. Volunteers came from every part of the state to help in any way they could, be it removing sheet rock, flooring, walls or cabinets or removing damaged furniture or just helping people clean up.

A total of 1577 requests were handled, and around 687 people were rescued. Sewa’s efforts were commendable as we were able to recruit and energize more than 1200 volunteers for the rescue and relief efforts. Sewa International raised $250,000 in the first 10 days. Sewa International has been at the forefront and rescued the needy and distressed from floods by providing food and shelter. Volunteers worked shoulder-to-shoulder with the US Coast Guard and other agencies in rescue and relief.

Disaster relief for IRMA

Hurricane Irma was an extremely powerful and catastrophic Cape Verde type hurricane which affected Florida most and reached Atlanta on September 11, 2017. Sewa Atlanta had been active with all the preparations to face the hurricane in Atlanta. A large group of people committed themselves to helping those in distress. The Hindu Temple of Atlanta was the first to open their doors to provide shelter to the needy during the time of the disaster, which eventually led other Hindu temples to join the mission.

According to Vishwanath Koppaka, Sewa’s Coordinator of Hurricane Irma relief efforts in Atlanta, “Sewa led a coalition of twenty temples and professional, linguistic and religious Indian-American organizations in the Greater Atlanta region. Generous Atlanta host families provided shelter and food at their homes for those who preferred to stay in homes rather than at the temple or in hotels.”

The work done by Sewa Atlanta volunteers included the following:

- Hotline Help Desk was active, and was based in Atlanta, GA.
- Sewa Atlanta, GA team set up partnership collaborations and was in charge of the relief logistics.
- Flyers were designed by Atlanta, GA team in collaboration with our Bengaluru, India, teams.
• A press release was sent to media outlets, and a Sewa volunteer took on the role of media spokesperson.
• Local area physicians offered free medical consultation to the displaced families.
• Freshly prepared hot food was served.

As a result, Sewa helped find and provide shelter to over 300 people in temples and individual homes. Many other organizations partnered with Sewa and over 1,000 people were provided shelter, food and support.

**Cricket for Sewa**

The Cricket for Sewa tournament began in September and is due to be completed in the first week of October. We initially started only with a men’s tournament but because of overwhelming demand and public response we introduced a women’s tournament too. The cricket tournament is being played with lot of energy and excitement in the Cumming Cricket Ground with 15 men’s and 6 women’s teams. The winners are yet to be announced. The semi-finals and final matches will be played on October 7 and 8. The proceeds from the tournament will be donated to the Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund.

**Adopt a Road**

Sewa Atlanta adopted a two-mile stretch of road between Majors Road and Castleberry Road in Forsyth County under the “Adopt a Road” program. All cleaning supplies were provided by Forsyth County. Young volunteers accompanied adult volunteers as they picked up the trash in their effort to help keep the city clean and beautiful. The effort had an additional benefit: from a health perspective it gave the opportunity to each volunteer to complete walking at least 10,000 steps.

**Bhutanese Empowerment Project**

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

Empowering Bhutanese children was another initiative successfully carried out by Sewa Atlanta. Ten Bhutanese children from different cities visited Atlanta for 10 days, stayed with Sewa volunteer families, and were offered care and love by the families. The objective of this program is to build confidence and interpersonal skills among the Bhutanese children/youths. We are helping the Bhutanese community to run Nepali language classes, as well
as offering dance lessons. We have also organized tutoring for SAT exams and offered math classes for high school students. During this 10-day period the Bhutanese children exchanged a lot of ideas and shared knowledge about a variety of aspects of life as well as developed a strong bond with the families that took care of them and people they met. At the end of the program the children expressed happiness and seemed to have emerged more confident in their skill levels.

Sewa, in collaboration with other organizations, also conducted the "Students' Experience in Inter Cultural Living" program.

Upcoming Event(s)

Food Drive
Food for the hungry event is carried out in collaboration with the MSG Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, at the Otwell Middle School cafeteria the third Saturday of every month. The next event is on October 21, 2017. On the event day food is packed and delivered to the needy families.

Sewa Annual Fundraiser
The fundraising event is scheduled for November 3, 2017 at Holiday Inn, 909 Holcomb Bridge Road, Roswell, GA 30076. An overview of various Sewa projects will be presented followed by cultural events, including music (Jaltarang) and dance. Dinner will be served. The location https://sewausa.org/chapter/atlanta/event/Fund2017

Adopt a Road
The next “adopt a road” event is being planned, and the tentative date is second week of December.

About Sewa International

Sewa International is a non-profit 501(c)(3) Hindu humanitarian organization running service projects with partner organizations in India, USA and other countries in many areas such as health-care, education, child and women development, refugee support, tribal welfare and disaster relief. Over the last few years, the fledgling Atlanta chapter has helped promote the spirit and joy of giving, volunteerism and selfless service in the community through local community service, fund-raising, and Bhutanese refugee support.

For more information, please visit

Sewa Website https://sewausa.org/chapter/atlanta/atlanta-overview

Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/atlanta.sewa/