



Sewa News

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Sewa International Ranked Among Top Ten Highly Rated Charities



CHARITY NAVIGATOR
Your Guide To Intelligent Giving

Charity Navigator, one of the major American evaluators of charities, and the largest and most-utilized evaluator of American charitable organizations, recently ranked Sewa International among the Top 10 "Highly Rated Charities Relying on Private Contributions", with Sewa ranking fifth among the ten such listed charities.

According to Charity Navigator, "Ranked by overall score, these 10 excellent charities draw revenue solely from direct and indirect public support. They report no government funding, no membership fees, and no revenue from earned income. As a result, more than 95% of their total revenue comes from private contributions, which makes the efficiency of their fundraising operations all the more impressive".

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Executive's Corner

Dear Sewa Families & Friends,

I was hoping to see all our karyakartas and celebrate Sewa's seventeenth birth anniversary at the National Conference 2020 in Washington, DC on May 2nd and 3rd, but unfortunately at this juncture, we are not sure about the meeting because of COVID-19. We will keep you updated.

Sewa International in its teens is undergoing a growth spurt. We grew this big due to the enthusiasm, selfless dedication, and relentless hard work of our volunteers. To sustain the growth and to trigger further expansion of the Sewa movement it is time to strengthen our systems and to improve our working dynamics.

I have been entrusted with the responsibility of supporting our *Projects and Programs* both domestic and international. My objective will be to empower project teams and chapters in order to implement best practices, make more effective use of technology, avoid unexpected pitfalls and resource burnout, adopt successful programs from other chapters, and achieve faster and sustainable growth of the Sewa movement so that we can reach more underserved populations and do it more efficiently.

Without hampering team and chapter creativity and independence, we will be working on knowledge and Resource sharing, streamlining certain processes, templetization, record keeping, law of the land, reporting

metrics, team building, project and program planning, and execution with tangible goals and timeframes.

Some of our teams such as in the Bay Area, Atlanta, and Houston are creative and are successful in implementing our programs locally. This year, New Jersey took 160 high schoolers into the LEAD program. The program was launched in February and will close in December, with each student contributing a minimum 100 hours -- that is 16,000 hours -- and we could end up with 20,000 hours of service. It enables the NJ chapter to undertake many local service activities and also support our international development projects such as *Sponsor a Child (SAC)*, *Pubic Hygiene and Empowerment (PHE)*, and Colombia Sewa Learning Centers.

Our flagship projects -- SAC and PHE -- need a further boost, and every chapter should support these. ASPIRE, Get Inspired, LEAD and SERVE programs are very rewarding and I hope every chapter will also adopt these. In the coming months I will be working with all of you in achieving these goals.

Sincerely,

Prem Kumar Pusuloori
Director, Programs and Projects



Sewa International Ranked Among Top Ten Highly Rated Charities

Sewa International's overall rating is 100.00, scoring an impressive 100.00 on both financial rating as well as accountability and transparency. "I am proud of our dedicated volunteers and indefatigable executive team who do really know what selfless service is all about, and it is they and the gracious and generous donors who have enabled Sewa International to reach these heights and to earn such accolades," said Prof. Sree Sreenath, President, Sewa International. "We will continue to work hard and keep doing the good work we have been doing, and we hope more of the Indian American community in particular and the American community in general will entrust their faith in us, donate generously, and support the good causes we pursue," he said.

Sewa International Adviser Honored with *Padma Bhushan*

A doyen of marketing and an academic who has taught and done research at the University of Southern California, the University of Illinois, Columbia University, MIT, and Emory University, Prof. Jagdish Sheth was conferred the Padma Bhushan, for literature and education, by the Government of India, on January 26, in the annual tradition of recognizing and honoring top Indian scientists, artists, activists, and community leaders on Republic Day – the day India adopted its Constitution on January 26, 1950.



In the photo above, taken at the Sewa International Atlanta Chapter Gala, October 2019, are (from left to right) Arun Kankani, Executive Vice President, Sewa International, Mrs. Madhuri Sheth, and Prof. Jagdish Sheth

Dr. Sheth and his wife, Madhuri, are also well-known philanthropists, and through their Madhuri and Jagdish Sheth Foundation and the Sheth Family Foundation, given generously both in terms of financial aid and advice, to over 50 community, academic, and healthcare organizations in Atlanta and around the world. Among those owing their gratitude to Prof. Sheth is Sewa International, and it was no coincidence that at the annual fundraiser of the Sewa International Atlanta Chapter on October 18, 2019 Jagdish and Madhuri Sheth were honored with the "Outstanding Community Services" award.

Dr. Sheth is the recipient of all top four academic awards given by the American Marketing Association: they include the PD Converse Award for Marketing Theory (1998), Charles Coolidge Parlin Award for Marketing Research (2004), the Richard D. Irwin/McGraw Hill Marketing Educator Award (2004), and the William L. Wilkie "Marketing for a Better World" Award (2014). Dr. Sheth has also received over more than 30 awards as an expert in the field of marketing, consumer behavior, and emerging markets.

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Building on Success, LEAD Program Expands

Sewa International Bay Area chapter has announced a year-long LEAD internship program for high school students. Building upon success of this popular program, three other chapters have now taken up LEAD as one of their main projects.

The Bay Area LEAD program runs from January 1 to December 31 this year. New Jersey extended the internship to six months in 2019 summer, and the Phoenix chapter has now followed suit. The Phoenix LEAD program is organized between March 15 and September 6 this year.

Observing how the LEAD program is expanding to add value to high schoolers, Arun Kankani, Executive VP and COO of Sewa International encouraged Sewa volunteers to keep the program quality high to deliver a great experience to LEAD participants and their families.

In an email message sent to Sewa volunteers, Arun Kankani pointed out that very focused team effort and detailed planning with diligent execution would be needed to make the LEAD program memorable and productive for participants as well as volunteers.



Sewa International Bay Area LEAD volunteers pose for a photograph

Socially Conscious Leadership

LEAD introduces socially conscious leadership to young adults and expects the interns to commit to a minimum 50 hours of service including direct service in volunteer events. This program also involves lectures from community leaders from different fields such as media, social work, non-profits, and business.

In 2019, the Sewa Bay Area chapter LEAD volunteers participated in the following activities:

Bio Design (STEM) “Design to Lead” – A collaborative effort with Professor Anurag Mairal, who led the Global Outreach Programs at Byers Center for Bio Design at Stanford University. The project focused on training high-potential, socially minded teenagers in design-thinking based approach to understand and address society’s most significant challenges.

Social Cause -- Be the face of Sewa International’s Girls’ Hygiene Project: “Yes, I can go to School!” -- <https://sewausea.org/Toilets>. LEAD participants actively engaged with the larger team to raise awareness and funds for the program.

Arts and Humanities -- In partnership with EnActe Arts, a talent incubator and a platform for engaging diverse populations in conversations on social issues to create greater awareness and tolerance from a South Asian perspective.

Technology -- Sewa Programming Club -- A collaborative effort with Steam Vision for Online Mentoring/Tutoring between LEAD participants and children from Cameroon.

The LEAD program is open to high school students from all national, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, and candidates are selected on a first-come, first-served basis.



Raju Kunaparaju, who has been volunteering for Sewa for over five years, is working as chapter coordinator for the Pennsylvania and Delaware chapter. He was introduced to Sewa through the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS). Prior to his role as a coordinator, Raju helped Sewa in coordinating some of the *Stop Diabetes Movement* (SDM) programs and Cricket for Sewa events. Raju was part of the team to initiate a cultural branch as an addition to the well-established sports and yoga programs at the local chapter.

"*Svara Sewa*," the cultural program, has proven to be a good driver for fund raising as well as for establishing a distinguished identity for Sewa International among various local "Sewa/Seva" organizations. Apart from performing at the annual fundraising event, local singers started to perform at private events to raise funds for Sewa and promote Sewa. The Pennsylvania/Delaware chapter also introduced the LEAD program in 2019. Raju says, "it was a great program for the local chapter, and thanks to our hard working and enthusiastic volunteer leaders we had over 70 events in 2019 alone, creating the name recognition for Sewa while developing future Sewa leaders".

Raju has a master's degree in computer science from Andhra University, and a master's in finance from the Harvard University Extension School. He works as an IT specialist at the financial firm Vanguard and as a part time teaching assistant at Harvard University. In his spare time, he works as a committee member for the local Boy Scouts troop, attends HSS *shakha*, and coordinates performances for local singers. He lives in West Chester, PA with his highly supportive family: wife Rani, son Sreekar, and daughter Sruthi. He says, "I have known local Sewa leaders and volunteers for over 10 years and am blessed to be a part of the passionate and dedicated team. As a relatively small chapter team, we have tremendous opportunity to engage more volunteers in Sewa International".

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Sewa International Adviser Honored with Padma Bhushan

"We are excited and proud that our supporter, well-wisher, mentor, and adviser has been honored with this distinguished award by the Government of India," said Viswanath Koppaka, National Marketing Director, Sewa International, and Atlanta Chapter volunteer. Arun Kankani, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Sewa International, who was chief guest at the Atlanta Fundraiser last year, and honored Dr. Sheth with the "Outstanding Community Services" award said, "It was my privilege to spend some time with Dr. Jagdish Sheth and Madhuri Sheth last October, and it is no surprise that the Government of India has acknowledged his work and his dedication to the welfare of all people with the second highest civilian award. What a great joy!

Upcoming Events

- Dec **16**, 2019 to Jun **30**, 2020 : Sewa Bay Area | *Authentic Yoga to Prevent, Control and Manage Diabetes* | Fremont, San Jose, San Ramon, Saratoga, Bay Area, CA
- Jan **1**, 2020 to Dec **31**, 2020 : Sewa Bay Area | *LEAD Program for Middle & High School Students*
- Feb **8**, 2020 to Sep **30**, 2020 : Sewa NJ | *LEAD Program for High School* | Parsippany, NJ
- Feb **21**, 2020 to Mar **1**, 2020 : Sewa Houston | *Stop Diabetes Movement Yoga Camp - Feb 2020* | Sugar Land, Katy & West Oaks Mall
- Mar **15**, 2020 to Sep **6**, 2020 : Sewa Phoenix | *LEAD Phoenix 2020* | Phoenix AZ

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