



Sewa News

www.sewausea.org

June 2017

Eleventh Sewa International Conference held at Houston

It was an unusually cold May morning that welcomed 81 participants to the 11th Sewa International Conference in Houston. This was a unique gathering of volunteers and mission-oriented staff who came from all across the country driven by a passion for service.



Houston, that has just replaced New York as the most diverse American city, was the perfect location to host this conference. Diversity was visible not just in the highest number of women participants in this conference, but also in the backgrounds of the volunteers that made this conference a big success: we had several physicians, engineers, and IT professionals who rubbed shoulders with academicians, philanthropists, CFO's and a fair number of young volunteers and teenagers. Sewa International attracts these wonderful

people from various walks of life because of its vision of "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah" a belief and a hope that we can all be happy and prosper together. This was clearly reflected in the various projects that the organization supports: from tutoring and mentoring refugee kids in Houston who come from the most troubled nations in the world like Iraq and Eritrea, to helping students on a football team to graduate from high school and break the cycle of poverty in Cleveland, and supporting

Executive's Corner

Dear Sewa Supporters:

Summer is already here! Here are two simple suggestions to make it unique and memorable:

If you are traveling to Bharat this summer, please make some time to visit a service project near your city. Every time I visit a service project, I return with great inspiration and wonderful memories of dedicated and selfless workers doing service work relentlessly. These visits are not only a great motivator for us to do more good in the world, they are also a great boost to those doing immensely challenging work in the face of many challenges. Please do remember to take friends and family with you as it can be a transformational experience for some. Send a note to sewayatra@sewausea.org and we can help connect you with a local service project near your city.

Summer is also the time of graduations, *arangetrams*, weddings and other special occasions. Please consider making a difference in the lives of the less fortunate, during these joyous occasions.

"Mangal Nidhi" is a great way to share the joy with others. Many Sewa supporters have been sharing up to ten percent of the total money spent on these occasions. Your support will go to educate a child or to build a girl's toilet in a school.

Purvika and Sanskriti Ashtekar of San Antonio celebrated their *arangetram* by supporting a school in Kalburgi; and Shri Swadesh Katoch of Atlanta celebrated his 40th birthday by sponsoring 40 cataract eye operations in a tribal area of Kerala. I hope that some of you will make your own inspiring story this summer by sharing the joy, as happiness truly 'multiplies' when we 'divide' it. Write to funds@sewausea.org to facilitate this if you plan to make your summer memorable.

When you visit a service project or help a cause during your celebrations this summer, please share it on Facebook and other social media. Inspiration is contagious!

Arun Kankani
Arun Kankani
Executive VP



Stop Diabetes Movement (SDM)

Stop Diabetes Movement or SDM is a movement to limit the effects of diabetes in our communities.



Education and awareness of the causes of diabetes, including how changes in food habits (what to eat and when to eat), lifestyle, attitude, and stress management can help people manage their diabetes for better outcomes.

Sewa conducts SDM camps nationwide, in a ten-day format, two hours each day. During these two hours patients are given information about the disease, and trained in yoga and cyclic meditation. This helps participants to make a paradigm shift in their food

habits and lifestyle, and continue practicing what they have learnt. After ten days, the participants are asked to practice for a month on their own and then come back for a follow up session.

Sewa started conducting SDM camps five years ago, and has organized 40 camps, in 10 chapters, which has benefited over 500 people. The camps have been very successful with participants reporting significant drop in Fasting Blood Sugar and HbA1C levels.

Sewa is encouraged by the impact and outcomes of the SDM camps, and has ambitious plans to extend this service. In the short term (three years), the plan is to stabilize the program in 10 focus cities. Each of these cities will have a support group that has learnt the SDM way and is leading the SDM lifestyle. In the long term, Sewa wants to expand the program and educate doctors, insurance companies and local governments about the program and train more Yoga teachers for wider awareness and acceptability of the SDM way.

Tamil Nadu Flood Rehab

The December 2015 floods in Tamil Nadu caused severe damage, and left many people homeless.

As part of the rehabilitation work, Sewa donated a Mobile Medical Van, and is working with a local partner organization, Sewa Bharati, to provide healthcare facilities to those affected by the floods. At present, twelve camps are held weekly covering 12 urban slums in Chennai -- Besant Nagar, Hasthinapuram, Kotturpuram, Kundrathur, Mappedu, Mudichur, Pallikaranai, Pazhavanthangal, Pozhichalur, Toraipakkam, Virugambakkam, and Velachery.

The medical team comprising of a general physician, a paramedic and a pharmacist carries on the routine medical camps under the guidance of Chakra Multispecialty Hospital. Launched in the second half of 2016, the program provides physician consultancy and medicines, with facilities for checking of blood pressure, blood sugar levels, and ECG monitoring. All these facilities are provided at no cost to the patients.

In the first seven months after launch, 345 medical camps have been conducted benefiting 16,386 patients.

Adult females accounted for 58% of the beneficiaries, 23% were male adults, and 19% were children. With the outbreak of Dengue fever in the slums of Chennai, over 23,000 adults and children were administered two doses of "Nilavembu Kashayam", an anti-viral preparation under the traditional Siddha system of medicine. The initiative was carried out in collaboration with the *National Institute of Siddha*, as a preventive measure against spread of Dengue.



Sewa National Conference

The conference was an unique opportunity for all these amazing participants from different parts of the United States to get together, learn from, and be inspired by each other.

Of the 81 participants more than 50 were out-of-towners. These were accommodated in the homes of volunteers and supporters of Sewa. Over the past year there were nearly 624 volunteers who were active in various Sewa International chapters, and they collectively logged more than 100,000 hours of service. The Family Services Case Management team handled more than 40 cases in the past year and hundreds of people were helped through the Stop Diabetes Camps through Yoga. ASPIRE tutorials educated 150 + kids and more than 300 families benefited through various public health initiatives like vaccination drives and medical screening camps. Together, we worked hard in soup kitchens, adopted highways and parks, and taught yoga to inner city, urban poor.

Sewa International is unique as most of its office bearers and key position holders are volunteers, which helps the organization in keeping its overheads low. This organization is driven by the Hindu philosophy that “Serving Humanity Is Serving Divinity” and that we serve humanity without any prejudice or discrimination by race, religion, color or gender.

International Youth Activities

YOUTH activities

The Houston Sewa Chapter hosted a successful orientation to start off the Get Inspired Houston (GIH) Summer Internship Program of 2017.

New interns gathered at the Sewa Houston office and were given a warm welcome by the mentors. Interns heard about the various opportunities offered at GIH and found out what it truly means to help the refugee community, and the history of the Bhutanese refugees. The interns became familiar with the organizational structure of Sewa, and the many ways they can get involved to make a difference in the lives of people who need a helping hand.

Interns and mentors engaged in creative activities that challenged participants to go beyond their comfort zones and think outside the box. Through these enjoyable learning experiences, interns understood how a non-profit organization like Sewa works: using limited resources wisely, getting the best out of each volunteer/individual, channeling the power of teamwork to create something powerful, tackling failure, and starting over with a stronger and refined plan of action.

Interns received Sewa shirts, took a break for meals, and posed for a picture with mentors to capture the spirit of Sewa in the two-month GIH program.



Dr. Rupesh Raina joined Sewa International in 2015, and is Chairman of the Sewa Cleveland Chapter Advisory Board. He has been instrumental in initiating and energizing the y Services program as well as the *Active Student Participation Inspires Real Engagement* (ASPIRE) Program that provides educational support to inner city high school students. Dr. Raina has been a vigorous fund raiser in support of the Sewa mission.

Dr. Rupesh Raina

Dr. Raina graduated from King George Medical University in Lucknow, India and completed a research fellowship in the Department of Urology at the Glickman Urology and Kidney Institute, Cleveland Clinic. After residency, Dr. Raina embarked on a combined medicine and pediatric nephrology fellowship with special interest in transition and continuity of nephrology care from childhood to adulthood at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation and the Rainbow Babies and Children Hospital. Dr. Raina is currently a combined adult and pediatric nephrologist at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation of the Akron General Medical Center, and Akron Children's Hospital. He is also a member of the faculty and research staff at Case Western University School of Medicine, besides other prestigious academic appointments.

Dr. Raina has spearheaded many Sewa projects benefitting the medical community in the Greater Cleveland area by organizing "Happiness through Sewa". Dr. Raina's family originally hails from Kashmir, India. His father, M. L. Raina, is a well-known businessman and social worker in Lucknow. Dr. Raina is married to Dr. Geetu Pahalajani, who practices Family Medicine. They have two wonderful children, Mannan and Manya.

Upcoming Events

- Jun 13 San Jose - GIBA Summer Internship Program Orientation
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- Jun 16 -17 San Jose - LEAD Orientation for East and South Bay Group
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- Jun 17 San Jose – Construction 101 – volunteering activity with partner nonprofit Habitat for Humanity East Bay
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- Jun 18 San Jose – Sewa Family Picnic for youth volunteers and their families
-
- Jun 24 Cleveland - International Yoga Day at Huntigton Beach in Bay Village, Ohio - 9 to 11 am
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Sewa congratulates its volunteers Parth Mehta, Aaria Nayak and Adway Raje on receiving the 2016 President's Volunteer Service Bronze Award for volunteering. The award recognizes United States citizens and lawfully admitted, permanent residents of the United States who have achieved the required number of hours of service over a 12-month time period or cumulative hours over the course of a lifetime

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