

Sewa's Sponsor a Child (SAC) Program Supported 10,000 Children in 2022



SAC Supported Children with Volunteers in Bengaluru, Karnataka on December 4, 2022

The Sponsor a Child (SAC) program witnessed phenomenal growth in 2022, enabling 10,000 children from low-income families across India, Colombia, Iraq, and Pakistan to pursue their education. India alone accounted for 9,840 children supported by SAC.

The program started in India in 2011 with 400 children and expanded yearly to cover more children. Its popularity among donors, and its positive impact on thousands of working families, encouraged Sewa to extend SAC to other countries.

As the donors and volunteers have noted, the SAC program significantly changed the lives of children who could not afford a good education. Among the children supported by SAC, 46 percent are girls, and 54 percent are boys.

The 2022 SAC report features two prominent donors: Dr. Seshu Sarma and Dr. Ravi Sarma. They are donors from Washington, DC, have been involved with Sewa for about three decades. They support the education of 47 children from Vikarabad, Telangana, India, through the SAC program.

Executive Corner

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Dear Friends,

Hope you are all doing well!

Sewa's service activities are in full swing in all chapters. With great enthusiasm and vigor volunteers are conducting different events and participating in numerous Sewa activities at the local level.

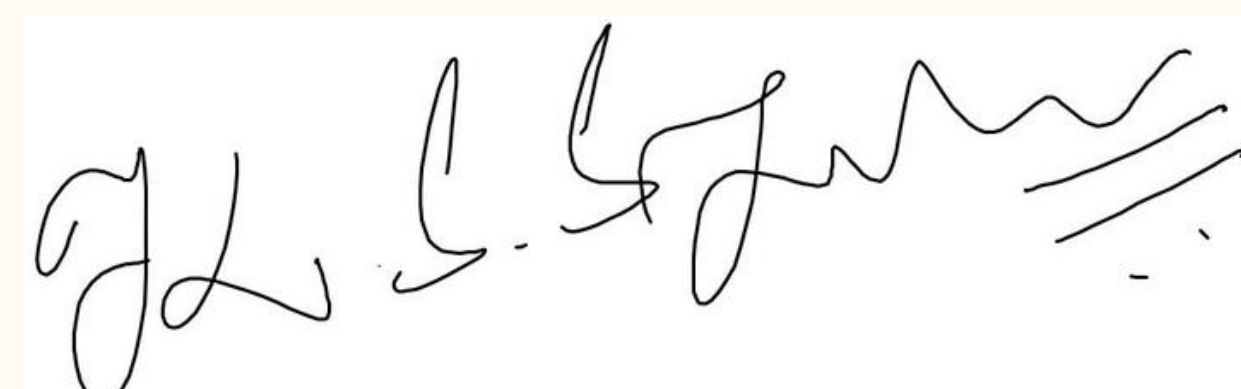
Work is in progress...

About 20 chapters have completed annual planning for 2023. Some national team members have traveled to and attended these planning sessions and guided local teams in designing the programs and annual calendars. Chapter's core team members have attended these meetings and will prepare the SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analyses and assess the chapter's current situation.

Based on the SWOT output chapter teams will design the programs for the calendar year. Chapters have been conducting these meetings for the past ten years and we find it very beneficial for the growth of the chapter.

Sewa is conducting its seventeenth national conference on May 6-7 in Atlanta this year! We are expecting around 150 people attending the conference from across the nation and from our 43 chapters. The Atlanta team is in an upbeat mood and ready to welcome all participants.

Sincerely,



Syam Kosigi
Vice president (Organization)



Syam Kosigi
VP, Organization

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Executive Corner

Required planning and preparations are on, and the Atlanta team is making all arrangements necessary for the conference to make it a successful event. The goal of the national conference is sharing our experiences, networking, listen to inspiring stories, and learning from each other. We have observed that these national conferences are energizing and are helping establish new bonds among our volunteers and helping Sewa's growth. I am looking forward to meeting you all in Atlanta!

Sewa has released 485 Presidential Service Awards to LEAD and Get Inspired participants. It is very encouraging to see that so many youth volunteers are showing interest in Sewa's initiatives and participating enthusiastically in LEAD and Get Inspired programs. It is heartening to learn that our youth are implementing innovative projects with the help of chapter volunteers, parents, and professional resources.

Through services activities the young are getting experiences that last a lifetime. We are getting many positive reviews from parents regarding these programs. Kudos to all those volunteers in making these youth programs a big success.

Thanks to all those volunteers, donors, and partner organizations working and collaborating with Sewa and supporting wholeheartedly Sewa's initiatives. Your encouragement means a lot to us, and when we all come together, we can indeed make a difference in our local communities.

Sewa's work is infinite but just an hour every weekend makes a big difference. Can you commit an hour every weekend? Please bring new volunteers and partners to Sewa and let them be part of this divine journey! "Together we serve better" is our mantra, and we believe in that hundred and ten percent!

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Dr. Ravi Sarma and Dr. Seshu

Dr. Seshu and Dr. Ravi Sarma are happy with the sincerity, dedication, and organizational skills of SAC volunteers. Ranjani Kapoor, a SAC volunteer, has been working with this couple for the last two years, keeping them abreast of the developments of the SAC programs.

Another donor featured in the report, Madhu Siluveru, from New Jersey, working as a Director at Merck & Co, has supported 20 children since 2018 through the SAC program. Thanking the volunteers and staff of Sewa International for providing him with an opportunity to serve, he said he could rest assured that 100 percent of his contributions go to the cause.

He does not mind which particular child benefits: he leaves it to Sewa, as all children are like his own to him. He said it is a satisfying experience for him and his family, who would like to continue their support for many more years and hope to expand.



Madhu Siluveru

The Sponsor a Child (SAC) 2022 Annual Report mirrors the results of Sewa International's partnership and dedication to its mission. The report reflects Sewa's commitment to transparency and accountability. Sewa appreciates its donors, volunteers, and partners for supporting the Sponsor a Child program that has a lasting impact on the lives of children in need of education.

For more details, please do mail us to sac@sewausa.org

Bay Area Public Officials Honor Women Volunteers at "Chai with Sewa" Event



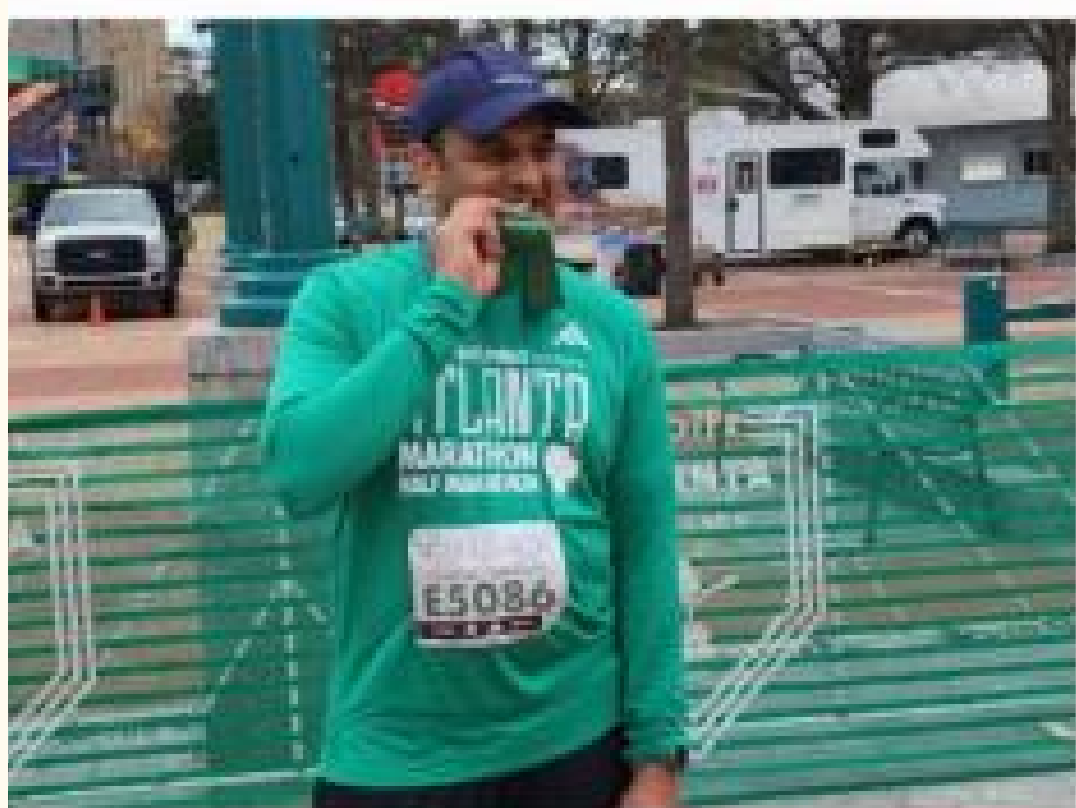
Sewa's women volunteers at the Sewa Community Center in Milpitas, CA

Sewa's Bay Area Chapter celebrated Women's Day on March 5 by organizing a Chai with Sewa event at the Sewa Community Center in Milpitas, CA. Over 60 people, including Carmen Montano, Mayor of Milpitas, and Lily Mei, Mayor of Fremont, attended the event.

In his opening address, Chapter President Dr. Anurag Mairal explained that Sewa organized the Chai with Sewa event to appreciate the role played by Sewa's women volunteers. To encourage women to get involved in Sewa activities and to respect the unique role they are currently playing, Sewa is showcasing the work of one or two volunteers on its social media channels every day, he said.

Milpitas Vice Mayor Evelyn Chua, Council Member Hon Lien, Santa Clara's Kathy Watanabe, and many Sewa women volunteers attended the event. Milpitas Mayor Carmen Montano honored Sewa with the city proclamation praising Sewa's work in Milpitas.

Officials who attended the event shared their interaction with Sewa volunteers and appreciated their work in helping those in need. Sewa presented the book American Veda by Philip Goldberg to the official invitees. The Sewa women volunteers spoke about their roles and projects they are working on and expressed gratitude to Sewa for providing them an opportunity to serve. All participants relished the hot chai, coffee, samosas, and cake served at the event.



It all began in October 2022 when I completed my first half marathon. Gathering at a friend's house for lunch, I casually mentioned that I had signed up for the 2023 Atlanta Publix Marathon and was already getting trained for it.

Curious about my experience, my friends started to wonder if they could do it too. I told them that each of us could, and that was enough to motivate ten of us to sign up for the race that day.

We created a WhatsApp group and invited more friends from our neighborhood to join us. Before long, nineteen of us had committed to running the half marathon.

With just 112 days to the race and the winter season in full swing, the group was determined to stay on track with our training. We ran 3-4 times a week, and eventually, most of us had run the half marathon distance in training.

On the race day, nine of us picked up our packets and prepared to take the challenging Atlanta course. Despite the hills, we all completed the race feeling proud of our hard work and dedication.

Our journey to the Publix Half Marathon was a testament to the importance of self-care. As we know, it all starts with the first step, and the rest follows from there.

I am immensely proud of my friends Ram Doma, Mukthesh Saraf, Srinivas Medicherla, Santhosh Yellu, Balaji Peddireddy, Sivakumar Reddy Dodla, Sateesh Tatipalli, and Satish Srikakulapu for completing the race.

Together, we have shown that anything is possible when you have the right support and motivation. It is also a testimony to the power and influence of Sewa International's SELF program.

Proud Accomplishers of Publix Half Marathon 2023 at Atlanta, GA. Top left corner- Satish Srikakulapu, Top right corner-Santosh Reddy Yellu, Middle pictures from left to right - Muktheshwar Saraf, Viswanath Koppaka, Ram Doma, Balaji Peddireddy, & Sateesh Tatipalli, Bottom left-Srinivas Medicharla, Bottom right-Sivakumar dodla.

In early March, I had an opportunity to run the Publix Half Marathon alongside my eight closest friends. This incredible achievement was not only a personal victory for me, but it was also a testimony to the inspiring journey we all took together to get there.

--Vishwanath Koppaka

Sewa Aids Joshimath Residents

Joshimath, a sacred town in the Himalayas, is in trouble. The floods in February 2021 caused landslides, and over 700 homes developed cracks by January 2023. Broken roads and tilting buildings created fear. The district administration demolished damaged homes and buildings, including some hotels, and moved the residents to temporary shelters.



Sewa Relief Work at Joshimath

Sewa International, a first responder during disasters, started relief work with nearly 400 self-help groups in Uttarakhand state. Sewa's ongoing work among farmers in Uttarakhand proved instrumental in creating teams and enabled them to detect and identify 723 disaster-affected buildings in nine wards. The district administration has so far moved 94 families to various temporary accommodations. The administration has selected sixteen safe facilities with a capacity of 213 rooms in Joshimath town for the rehabilitation of the disaster-affected community.

Sewa volunteers conducted household surveys and collected information from over 250 households about living conditions, health, other affected families, and livestock. In addition, Sewa is assisting people to network, helping them connect and work with the district administration, providing groceries and other essential items to over 250 families, and conducting community counselling.

The environmental crisis in Joshimath has resulted in various mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and stress. To address the emotional and psychological effects of the disaster, Sewa is offering community counselling sessions to help people regain a sense of hope and stability. So far, over 200 families have attended these sessions. Remarkably, people are trying to accept the reality of losing their homes and getting back on their feet.

The eighth-century sage philosopher Adi Shankaracharya established Joshimath, now home to about 25,000 people. Its remote location compels residents to depend on agriculture and allied occupations, challenging these culture-rich and tradition-rich peasant communities.

Samiksha Deme wins OneStar Foundation's "Make a Difference" Award

Samiksha Deme, one of Sewa International's AmeriCorps team members, was honored with the National Service "Make a Difference" Award by First Lady Cecilia Abbott, the Honorary Chair of the Governor's Volunteer Awards. This award, presented by OneStar Foundation, recognizes individuals, groups, and organizations that have made a significant contribution to Texas communities through service in the past year.



Samiksha Deme

Samiksha Deme (Sami) joined Sewa International's Disaster Preparedness Group as an AmeriCorps Outreach Specialist.

Her work is transforming crucially needed disaster preparedness training within underserved and often marginalized individuals, encouraging them to take an active role in their community. With her educational knowledge and skillset in environmental science, Sami's preparedness is centered around environmental justice, healthcare equity, and the crossroads between natural and human-caused disasters.

Even outside her service responsibilities, Sami takes on several other volunteer projects, from vaccine clinics to clothing drives for Afghan refugees to personal essentials drives for the homeless. She truly embodies the essence of sewa -- selfless service to humanity.

Sewa International congratulates Samiksha and thanks all the Houston Chapter AmeriCorps stakeholders and mentors for taking this program to a new level as it continues to progress through these community outreach efforts.

LEAD Internship Plans Expansion This Year – 800 Students Participate in 2022

In 2022, eighteen Sewa International chapters conducted the LEAD (Leadership Development through Community Engagement) internship program locally, and about 800 high school students participated. In 2023, Sewa plans to extend it to 22 US metro areas out of 43 chapters nationwide.

Addressing LEAD coordinators and chapter representatives wanting to implement LEAD in a virtual orientation program, Prem Pusuloori, Sewa's Director for Programs, explained how the LEAD program is structured, the resources chapters need to start the LEAD program locally, the guidelines to follow, and the processes and patterns that work.

LEAD coordinators from 15 chapters and a few new attendees participated. The LEAD team organized the orientation program to train Sewa volunteers to accomplish program goals holistically by collaborating with the national team.

Two weeks before the program, the team sent a survey to the existing coordinators to learn about the challenges they faced in running the program. Survey feedback shaped the orientation program's agenda. The meeting outlined the guidelines and steps to run the LEAD program, answered questions, and spurred discussion on future initiatives.

The national LEAD team, consisting of Jyothsna Prasad, Mani Venkat, Sandesh Kamath, and Prem Pusuloori, aims to provide the necessary resources to every Sewa chapter to run the LEAD program efficiently. In addition, engaging high school students by offering opportunities to serve their local communities through food banks, homeless shelters, and other volunteer programs and running motivational programs to build their leadership strengths are core ideas that drive LEAD.

For more information about LEAD, email: lead@sewausa.org

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Shital Khabe

Shital Khabe has been an active volunteer with the Central Jersey Chapter since 2021. She coordinated the chapter's newsletter and social media work in 2022. Shital enjoys discussing the chapter's current projects with the "Leadership, Education, and Development" (LEAD) volunteers and promoting Sewa events such as the Sewa Diwali

Food Drive and Plastic Recycling Drive in her neighborhood. Preparing and delivering the monthly "Sewa Meals" is another activity Shital enjoys. Before joining Sewa, she raised funds for another nonprofit organization.

Shital Khabe is a resident of Florence, NJ, where she lives with her husband and two daughters. In addition to the work and volunteering for Sewa, she enjoys reading, practicing Vipassana Dhyana (meditation), and visiting new places with her family.

Sewa International

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