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Smart Giving Tools

Sewa launched a planned giving initiative offering free tools to help families quickly create a will, designate beneficiaries, and make tax-smart gifts such as stock, crypto, IRA assets, or Donor-Advised Fund grants.

Sewa leaders said a will is an act of love and protection, and the program aimed to reduce financial vulnerability and support long-term stability.

Sewa Partners with DFW Hindu Temple to Launch Mobile Pantry



Tushar Basu, Khemchand Nanrani, Secretary and Chairman of the DFW Hindu Temple Board Of Trustees and Gitesh Desai, President of Sewa International – Dallas Chapter (Seated from left to right). Standing behind them are the executive team members of the DFW Hindu Temple and Sewa, Dallas Chapter

Sewa launched a mobile pantry in collaboration with the DFW (Dallas–Fort Worth) Hindu Temple in Texas on October 26. The Pantry served essential groceries to over 100 families on the day of the launch.

The program expanded ongoing monthly food distributions that have supported hundreds of households since 2020. Sewa and the temple leaders signed a one-year lease for space adjacent to the temple at a nominal \$1 per year to streamline packaging, storage, and weekly delivery routes across the Dallas–Fort Worth area.

The agreement allows Sewa to use the space exclusively for food distribution activities. Temple representatives noted the shared purpose behind the effort. “We are proud to continue working with Sewa International in serving the community,” said Khemchand Nanrani, chairman of the temple trust.

Srikanth Gundavarapu added that the partnership strengthens efforts to reach families unable to travel to fixed sites. The mobile pantry aims to expand access to nutritious, nonperishable food and build long-term food security across North Texas.

Sewa Provides Temporary Shelters and Medical Aid After Cyclone Ditwah Hits Sri Lanka



Sewa volunteers cleaned a flood-affected facility in Ratnapura after Cyclone Ditwah devastates Sri Lanka

Sewa launched relief activities immediately after Cyclone Ditwah devastated Sri Lanka on 27 November, as landslides and floods swept through communities. Volunteers moved quickly to deliver food, and water, support families in temporary shelters, clear debris, and prepare meals—an early response focused on safety and essential services.

The storm affected over 1.5 million people, displaced nearly 200,000 residents, and damaged over 41,000 homes, according to officials at a December 2 briefing in Ratnapura. By December 4, deaths climbed to 470 and number of people missing to 366. Authorities reported that floods and landslides were making remote areas difficult to reach.

Cyclone Ditwah formed from a deep depression off the south-eastern coast, intensifying as it crossed the island. It also caused heavy rainfall in several districts in Tamil Nadu, India. “Sri Lanka needs help,” Sewa’s Vice President for Disaster Relief Swadesh Katoch said. “we continue to provide emergency kits, medical aid, and clean water, while beginning to plan for recovery and rebuilding.”

“Daily Giving, Idam Na Mama”: A Conversation with Shrikant Kelkar

“Idam Na Mama” — “this is not mine” — is the spirit that guides Srikanth Kelkar, a longtime Sewa supporter whose commitment to donating every single day has inspired many. Raised in Pune, Maharashtra, he grew up seeing generosity as *Karma Yajna*—a humble duty to society. For him, daily giving keeps the heart connected to service in a way that large, occasional donations cannot.

After moving to the United States 24 years ago, Shrikant continued his involvement with social service through Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) in Sunnyvale, California, before connecting with Sewa in recent years. A product manager in Silicon Valley, CA, he began thinking deeply about charitable habits during the pandemic. He realized that while auto-pay donations are convenient, they often distance donors from the emotional connection behind giving. So he chose a different path: logging into the Sewa website every day to make a small donation, a practice he describes as adding “one drop to a bucket.”

His worldview is shaped by both American and Indian values—cultures he believes share a deep commitment to compassion, democracy, and service. His parents remain his role models, and he sees their influence reflected in his children, who have naturally embraced volunteering and community values. He hopes to help create a simple, youth-friendly daily-giving app and even test it himself as the first user.

Looking ahead, Shrikant believes nonprofits must adapt to the “Spotify generation” by using modern tools, AI technology, engaging content, and friction-free donation platforms. He emphasizes that Sewa’s greatest strength lies in its volunteers—whose dedication, he says, far outweighs any financial contribution. Shrikant’s message is simple yet profound: giving is not an act, but a daily practice that cultivates humility, connection, and inner peace.

Giving is not an Act, a Daily Practice

“Since childhood, my parents instilled in me the belief that giving is a form of Karma Yajna. They always emphasized that, occasionally, even if you are unable to volunteer physically, you can still give back to society in some way, especially remembering that society supports us in countless ways. From farmers growing our food to numerous unseen contributions, we often don’t realize how deeply interconnected we are. That’s why giving back is not just an act of generosity—it’s a duty.”

My parents had a unique perspective on giving. While donating either money or efforts, they always encouraged saying Idam Na mama, which means “this is not mine.” This serves as a reminder to stay humble and not take pride in the act of giving...”

-Shrikant Kelkar

To read the entire interview visit:
<https://sewausa.org/Blogs/13572940>

Diwali Giving in San Antonio, TX, Spreads Warmth and Hope

Sewa volunteers engaged thousands of attendees and raised enough money to sponsor eight children by reselling donated saris and tying turbans at the Diwali event in San Antonio, TX, on November 1. The booth promoted reuse through a sari initiative that reduced waste and encouraged sustainable choices. The event organizers said the effort supported education, nutrition, healthcare, and holistic development for each child at a cost of \$360. “Sponsor a Child isn’t just about financial support — it’s about giving children in need the gift of hope and opportunity for a brighter future.” Participants welcomed the hands-on experience and appreciated the event’s practical impact.



Volunteers engaged thousands at a Diwali booth, tying turbans, promoting sari reuse, and sponsoring children in San Antonio, TX

Seniors Inspired Others to “Serve and Find Meaning” at Diwali Celebration



Dr. Pranav Loyalka, President of Sewa’s Houston Chapter, Dr. Dasika Narasimham, Diagnostic Radiologist, and senior volunteer Madan Luthra joined the Senior Diwali celebration in Houston, TX, where they honored Somir Paul and Umang Mehta (pictured left to right). Participants also enjoyed Garba and Bhangra, traditional Indian dance forms (shown at far right)

More than 200 seniors, Sewa volunteers, and families gathered at the Diwali celebration in Houston, TX, on November 9. The event featured cultural performances and recognition of longtime contributors to family assistance programs. In his keynote on “purpose after retirement”, Dr. Dasika Narasimham urged seniors to “Stay active, serve others and find meaning in life,” adding that “life after retirement can be fulfilling. By serving with compassion, you can live life with purpose.”

Sewa honored Umang Mehta and Somir Paul for strengthening Family Service efforts. Youth volunteers from the LEAD (Leadership, Education, and Development) program managed registration, guided guests, and supported program logistics. Uma Nagarseth opened the celebration with a Ganesh Vandana dance, and later Bhangra and Garba performances energized the audience.

Annual Banquet: an Evening of Reflection and Impact in San Jose, CA



Dr. Anurag Mairal, Vibhor Gupta, and Rohit Jain (first photo, left to right) participated in a fireside chat, and Shailesh Rao & Shravan Goli (far right) took part in a discussion during the business leaders meet at the Sewa's annual banquet in San Jose, CA. Sewa volunteers are in the second photo.

Over 240 attendees—including business leaders, donors, volunteers, and families—gathered for Sewa's annual banquet in San Jose, CA, on November 15. Dr. Anurag Mairal, President of Sewa Bay Area, gave an overview of the chapter's work and impact. Dr. Vibhor Gupta, Founder of Pangaea, offered personal reflections, including stories such as receiving Diwali cards from students. and Rohit Jain, CIO of the Harvard Business School Association of Northern California, emphasized ASPIRE's (Achieving Students' Progress, Instilling Resilience, and Excellence) "generational change" for students.

In a corporate leaders meet, Shravan Goli, CEO of Colibri Group, shared leadership lessons and insights on scaling nonprofit work nationwide. Shailesh Rao, Founder of Arc180, spoke about organizational growth, The program honored Narasimhan (Sim) Gopalan with the 2025 Excellence Award and featured classical melodies by Vijayendra Rao. Donor support continued to advance ongoing impact goals, and speakers highlighted the chapter's key achievements and the lives reached through this year's projects.

Funds Raised and New Chapter Leadership Team Announced in the Detroit Gala



Sewa donors, volunteers, and partners gathered at the first annual fundraiser gala dinner in Farmington Hills, MI

Over 100 participants raised approximately \$20,000 in immediate contributions at the first annual fundraiser gala dinner in Farmington Hills, MI, on November 8. Sewa President Srikanth Gundavarapu said the event "set the foundation for long-term growth." He attended the program and offered his support as the chapter prepared for its next phase. During the event, Gundavarapu announced that Dr. Kamal Gupta had been appointed as the newly elected president of the Detroit chapter. Sewa leaders welcomed his leadership and expressed confidence in the chapter's direction. The gala brought together donors, volunteers, and organizational partners to support ongoing programs and expand future engagement. Leaders highlighted the event as a launchpad for sustained fundraising efforts.

Washington D.C. Gala Highlights Donor Generosity and Expands Support



Sewa donors, partners, and volunteers gathered at the annual gala in Washington, D.C.

Over 150 attendees took part in the annual gala in Washington, DC, on November 1. Kannan Sundaramoorthy, Chapter Coordinator, who shared information on Sewa's local partnerships and national disaster-response efforts, said, "Over 95% of contributions go directly to programs, a model that builds long-term trust and impact". A 76-year-old U.S. Navy veteran moved the audience when he shared, "I choose to live simply so that I can give more generously to others," a reminder of the power of intentional giving. Asmi Gambhir and the Berklee musicians performed in the evening. The event brought together donors, partners, and volunteers who backed programs that support food drives, youth initiatives, free clinics, and emergency relief.

Local Dharmic Organizations Provide Food to Pantries in Columbus, OH



Dharmic groups donated 7,400 pounds of food to four Columbus-area pantries during the annual Sewa Diwali food drive in Columbus, OH

Thirty-three local, dharmic organizations donated more than 7,400 pounds of food at the annual Sewa Diwali food drive in Columbus, Ohio, on November 15. The effort supported four area pantries: NNEMAP Columbus Food Pantry received 1,500 pounds, Dublin Food Pantry collected 2,461 pounds, People in Need Delaware took in 2,706 pounds, and Reynoldsburg Helping Hands received 750 pounds. Volunteers emphasized the importance of coordinated action, noting that shared effort strengthens local support systems.

Colorado Students Support Global Health with Weekend Service



LEAD families sorted medical supplies to support Project C.U.R.E. in Colorado which helps clinics in under-resourced countries

LEAD (Leadership, Education, and Development) program participants and their families sorted medical supplies at a volunteer session to support Project C.U.R.E. (Commission on Urgent Relief and Equipment) in Colorado on November 15. The group sorted donated items that would be supplied to clinics lacking basic healthcare tools in low-income countries. Participants said the hands-on work showed how a few hours of effort can strengthen access to essential care. "Service builds character. Service builds community," Jyotsna Guntur, LEAD coordinator noted. Students asked questions, worked carefully, and took pride in contributing to a mission that will benefit people they may never meet. The partnership highlighted how youth engagement supports global health needs and strengthens teamwork and service habits.

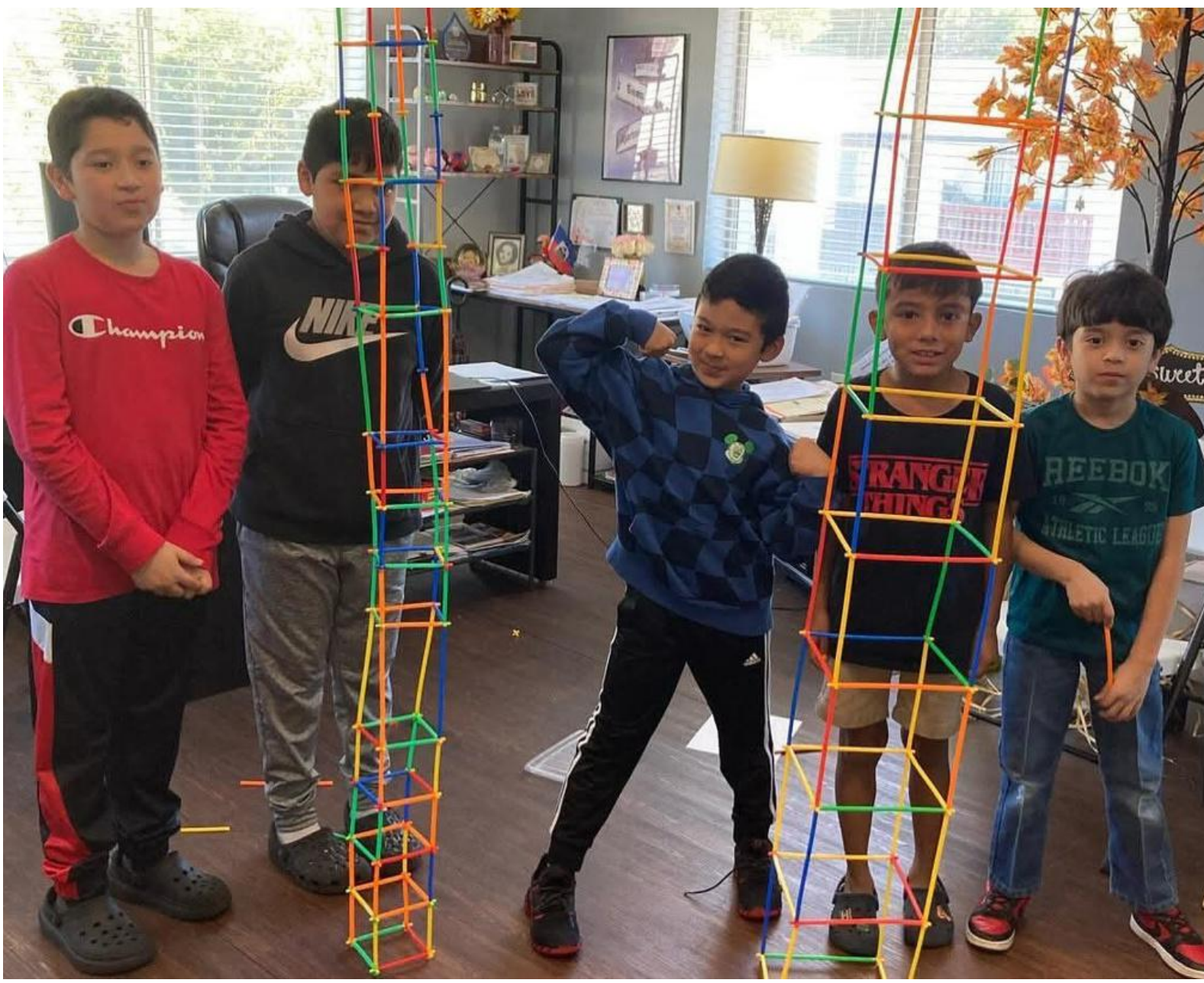
Treats for Troops: Sewa Delivers 2500 Pounds of Candy to Soldiers



Volunteers delivered 2,500 pounds of candy to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst during the Treats for Troops ceremony in Wrightstown, NJ

Volunteers delivered nearly 2,500 pounds of candy to tri-service Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst on the occasion of the Treats for Troops ceremony in Wrightstown, NJ, on November 16. Over 120 people attended, including active-duty personnel, veterans, and representatives from partner groups. Speakers included Chief Master Sergeant Francis Mitokpe, Regina Arcuri, and Nicki Sales, president of SoJBMDL (Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst), who highlighted the value of local support for military families. High school volunteers Dev and Krushna shared how they collected large quantities of candy through persistent outreach. The program opened with the National Anthem performed by the volunteer band featuring Lakshmi Shetty, Sonika Chinthakayala, Amaani Rao, Shankar Sathyanarayanan, and Kavin Soundarajan. The event concluded with a thank-you note from coordinator Nageswararao Motamarri and acknowledgments to the partner organizations that helped make the drive possible.

Students Explore Geography and Gain Skills Through STEM Activities in Atlanta



Students explored STEM, art, and global cultures through hands-on activities and teamwork in Atlanta, GA

More than 20 students participated in the AmeriCorps learning session at the youth workshop in Atlanta, GA on November 1. The session introduced Simple Machines, followed by the Tallest Tower Challenge, where teams tested design skills and problem-solving. Students also joined a Collaborative Drawing activity and ended the day with an energetic round of Freeze Dance. Another segment explored world geography and students' countries of origin, highlighting how cultural awareness strengthens understanding. Key insights include how interactive learning builds confidence, encourages teamwork, and connects students to both STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) concepts and global perspectives.

Young Volunteers Support Worcester Families with Meals and Hygiene Kits



Youth volunteers prepared meal bags and hygiene kits to support families in Worcester, MA

Twenty youth volunteers assembled more than 100 meal bags and hygiene kits at the service session in Worcester, MA, on November 10. Sewa and The Brown Bag Project hosted the activity and opened it with a reflection on serving with dignity, compassion, and collaboration. Volunteers worked in teams to pack supplies and discussed how small actions strengthen collective impact. Organizers praised their effort, saying, "The volunteers' teamwork today truly showed that together we serve better." They added that youth-led service "helps build collaboration and supports neighbors facing daily challenges."

Volunteers Pack Thanksgiving Meal Boxes at the Turkey Times Event in NJ



Volunteers packed Thanksgiving meal boxes and shopped for essential items at the Turkey Times event

Volunteers packaged dozens of Thanksgiving meal boxes at the Turkey Times event in New Jersey on November 15. The group assembled food kits with all the essentials for a hearty holiday meal and helped shop in bulk for hard-to-find items. Participants said, "The hands-on work created a strong sense of shared purpose. It was a unique and rewarding experience that brought everyone together in the spirit of giving and gratitude." The effort supported local families preparing for the holiday and strengthened ongoing partnerships.

Walk/Run Brings Neighbors Together in Sugar Land, TX



Neighbors joined a 5K Walk/Run in Sugar Land, TX, to promote health, connection, and shared purpose

Sewa's 5K Walk/Run drew about 175 participants at the event in Sugar Land, TX, on November 8. The gathering featured warm-up exercises, partner remarks, and a shared South Indian breakfast. It brought together the Avalon Community, Brazos Landing, Commonwealth (ABC) communities, and Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) to promote health and sustained engagement. County Commissioner Andy Meyers appreciated the effort to unite diverse groups and supported the event with fruit and snacks for participants.

Mallakhamb coach Uday Deshpande said, "Health is wealth," and praised partners for encouraging yoga, meditation, and regular physical activity. Heartfulness highlighted its free meditation sessions, and HSS shared information about local shakhas (branches) that help young people build discipline and cultural awareness.

A participant said, "We enjoyed the route, the weather, and the sense of togetherness." She added, "Collaborative events strengthen relationships, encourage healthy habits, and create shared experiences we remember long after the finish line."

Youth Volunteers Help Seniors with Wellness and Digital Skills, Woburn, MA



Youth volunteers led Zumba, shared cards, and supported digital learning for more than 80 seniors in Woburn, MA

Over 80 seniors participated in an intergenerational service day at the wellness session in Woburn, MA, on November 12. Youth volunteers led a choreographed Zumba (a dance-based aerobic fitness workout) class, shared handmade holiday cards, and served lunch. Alongside them, the Digital Literacy Project team delivered a session on online safety designed to help older adults navigate technology with confidence. A senior attendee said, "The blend of movement and practical learning strengthened connections across generations." He added, "Interactive programs reduce isolation, help people feel included, bring people closer, and create friendly spaces where people care for one another."

Youth Volunteers Provide Food to Families in Hopkinton, MA



Youth collected over 600 pounds of food and water to support local families in Hopkinton, MA

Sewa youth volunteers collected more than 600 pounds of food and several crates of water and delivered them to families in need during the Diwali Food Drive in Hopkinton, MA, on November 13. Youth Legacy Farms volunteers, joined by supportive parents, led the effort. Their work supported project, "Just Because", which provides essential supplies to households facing hardship. "Youth's consistent dedication, year after year, strengthens our local support networks and shows how small actions create a lasting impact. Youth-led initiatives foster responsibility and a commitment to continued service," Sewa organizers said.

Children Trained In Ancient Acrobatics Mallakamb in Houston



Youth volunteers energized Field Day activities and supported Mallakhamb training in Houston

Mallakhamb took center stage at the Houston Maharashtra Mandal (HMM) Shala Field Day on November 8. Youth trained by Mallakhamb (Pole) coach, Padma Shri awardee Uday Deshpande showcased their skills during the event. Sewa youth volunteers assisted throughout the sessions, supporting children as they learned Rope and Mallakhamb, an acrobatic discipline that builds strength and concentration. Participants played many traditional Indian games like Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, Lagori, Vitti Dandu, Langadi, and the Tire Race.

Around 20 Sewa youth also handled event logistics, including check-ins, parking. A Sewa adult volunteer said, "We deeply appreciate the youth' support. Their teamwork truly shaped the day's success." The volunteer added, "Shared responsibility, cultural games, and hands-on skill-building create meaningful connections and memorable experiences for participants of all ages." Adult volunteers and the HMM team worked closely with the youth group to keep activities running smoothly.

Chesterfield, MO Hosts a Lively Halloween Parade and Party



Volunteers helped deliver a festive Halloween parade and activity day in Chesterfield, MO

Dozens of children and families joined the Annual Halloween Parade & Party at the Crosswicks Community House in Chesterfield in Missouri, on October 26. Kids in creative costumes paraded down Main Street before enjoying games and activities on the basketball courts. Teen and parent volunteers assisted with setup, game stations, crowd flow, cleanup, and teardown, ensuring each part of the event ran smoothly. Such collaboration continues to shape inclusive events that bring people together across ages and interests.

Hyderabad School Visit Reviews Progress of Students



Seventeen students received Sewa SAC (Sponsor a Child) support at Madhava Vidyalaya in Hyderabad, India, where Sewa volunteer Jayanth Korlimarla and other volunteers visited on November 20. Korlimarla, a 15-year Sewa volunteer, said the program creates long-term opportunities for children facing major barriers. He applies his engineering and leadership skills to strengthen SAC operations. The team met students, spoke with teachers, and visited families to understand their needs.

Youth Take the Lead at Pearland Diwali Mela



Over 30 youth volunteers supported cultural activities and event logistics at the Diwali Mela at Berry Miller Junior High School in Pearland, TX, on October 25. The celebration, organized by VHPA (Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America) and Pearland Desi Girls, featured performances, food stalls, and interactive activities that highlighted the festival's themes of light and renewal. Youth assisted with ticketing, setup, crowd flow, food service, and cleanup while also performing in cultural programs.



Venya Raghavan raised funds for Sewa's SHE program through Bharatanatyam Arangetram in Washington, DC

Venya Raghavan raised nearly \$3,000 for Sewa's SHE (Sanitation, Hygiene, and Empowerment Project for the Girl Child) Program through her Bharatanatyam *Arangetram* (South Indian Classical Dance Debut) in Central Jersey, NJ, recently. The contribution will help provide menstrual health education, sanitation, and essential supplies for underprivileged girls. Venya marked her artistic milestone by choosing to support an initiative she cared about, turning a personal celebration into a moment of thoughtful giving.

Venya began volunteering as a LEAD (Leadership, Education, and Development) participant and supported dozens of activities over three years. She has involved as an alumna, reflecting a steady and sincere commitment to service. Her parents also played a key role in shaping and supporting her decision to use her debut performance to uplift others.

Sewa organizers noted that her gesture set an example for young volunteers who want to link personal achievements with social impact. "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others," Mahatma Gandhi once said. Venya's actions echoed this message, showing how individual leadership can create lasting change. Her story highlighted how compassion and creativity can expand opportunities for girls while inspiring her peers to act with purpose.

Pumpkin Drive Supports Local Animal Shelters

Sewa volunteers gathered hundreds of pumpkins from residents and delivered them to four animal-care sites at the Pumpkin Drop Off – Phase I in New Jersey on November 8. Youth and parents managed the sorting, loading, and transport.

"Pumpkins are rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber," Sewa organizers noted, emphasizing their value for pigs, chickens, and cows. The effort reduced waste and supported local shelters with nutritious feed.

Key insights include how simple actions strengthen collaboration across counties and promote sustainable practices. A second pickup round will take place on December 29.



Hundreds Gather for Dandiya Night in Los Angeles



Over 950 attendees gathered recently at the Dandiya Night celebration at Thousand Oaks High School in Los Angeles, creating a vibrant evening of music, dance, and cultural pride. Over 30 adult volunteers and more than 20 youth volunteers supported event operations, while eight external booths offered food, merchandise, art, and wellness activities. "Celebrations like this build cultural connection and offer meaningful leadership experiences for our youth," Sewa Los Angeles Chapter Coordinator Srinivas said. He thanked all participants and partner organizations for the events success.

Upcoming Events

- Dec 20, 2025: Phoenix LEAD 2025 — Registration Deadline / Program Activity | Sewa Phoenix, AZ, (online / chapter program)
- Dec 29, 2025: Pumpkin Drive — Phase II pickup | Angels Wings & Hooves Animal Rescue / drop-off locations, South Jersey, NJ

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