

9/11 Memorial Unveiled In Chesterfield, New Jersey



State Senator Latham Tiver (far left), Assemblywoman Andrea Katz (center), and Sewa International USA board member Sridhar Talanki (far right) unveiled the monument symbolizing the Twin Towers

On September 11, 2024, a 9/11 memorial was inaugurated in Chesterfield, New Jersey, during a special ceremony to honor the victims and heroes of the 2001 terrorist attacks. Over 350 people, including local officials, state senators, assembly members, and first responders, attended the event.

Lt. Col. Eric J. Tolska, a key figure in the 9/11 rescue efforts, reflected on the courage and challenges of that day. State Senator Latham Tiver emphasized the need to embody values of care and pride daily, while Assemblywoman Andrea Katz urged everyone to reconnect and be kind. Mayor Matthew Litt expressed gratitude for the memorial, noting its role as a space for reflection and unity. Sandesh Kamath, Sewa's Chapter Coordinator, highlighted the power of unity, saying, "When we come together, work together, and support one another, nothing is beyond our reach."



Executive Corner

Pranam,

All of you must have seen the social media posts and other information about the dedication ceremony of the 9/11 memorial in Chesterfield, New Jersey, led by the Sewa International team there. In this context, we need to remember the words of Swami Vivekananda in Chicago at the Parliament of World Religions on September 11, 1893. He addressed the audience as "My dear brothers and sisters, "resulting in thunderous applause from those who heard this salutation for the first time instead of the traditional "Ladies and Gentlemen".

This sentiment echoing the principle of "one humanity" (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam) was truly manifested when the New Jersey 9/11 memorial was dedicated to the nation on September 11, 2024.



Police Chief Davidson (second from left), Officer Matthew Litt (third from left), and Lt. Col. Eric J. Tolska (fourth from left) stand with other police officers at the Pentagon monument.

The memorial, a collaborative effort between Sewa's South Jersey Chapter and Chesterfield Township, serves as a tribute to the resilience and unity of the American spirit.

Built in just 23 days, the memorial was made possible through the generous contributions of donors and sponsors, representing a collective effort from veterans, first responders, and local organizations.

The solemn event featured the unveiling of three key monuments symbolizing the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and Flight 93. A dedicatory plaque at the memorial's entrance provided an overview of its significance, highlighting the importance of remembering and honoring the lives lost.

The 9/11 memorial in New Jersey, constructed under the leadership of the Sewa team of the South Jersey Chapter, with the full support of the city, administration, local businesses, and the entire community, is a testimony that American Hindus share the same dreams of this nation with other Americans. The message of "Universal Oneness" reflected in the words of Swami Vivekananda in Chicago found expression in the actions of American Hindus of Chesterfield who cast this feeling in stone acknowledging all the sacrifices on September 11, 2001.

This event is significant in more than one way and perhaps is a milestone in the journey of the American Indian community. This is probably the first memorial of its kind in the country initiated by Indian Americans, solidifying the shared memories and shared dreams of a nation.

With regards,

Arun Kankani

Arun Kankani, President, sewa international, USA

Denver Raises \$39,000 for Sponsor A Child



Sewa hosted a fundraising concert to support underprivileged children through SAC at the Broomfield Auditorium in Broomfield, CO,

On September 8, Sewa Denver, in collaboration with Niche Entertainment of Pune, hosted a fundraising concert at the Broomfield Auditorium in Broomfield, CO, raising \$39,000 to support the education of underprivileged children through Sewa's Sponsor A Child (SAC) program.

The concert, Pancham, a tribute to Indian Hindi film music director RD Burman, featured an engaging performance by Milind Oak and his troupe. Sridhar Talanki, Member, Sewa Board of Directors, and Sewa chapter's president Dr. Janak Joshi highlighted SAC program's significance.

The event highlighted Sewa Denver's initiatives, including vaccination drives, disaster relief, family services, women's empowerment, and educational support for underprivileged children through school supply drives and the SAC program.

The event's success was attributed to strong community support, donors, volunteers, media personnel, and business sponsors. Through the funds raised in the event, Sewa Denver has sponsored 65 children. To reach its target of sponsoring 100 children, Sewa is appealing to donors to help it sponsor the remaining 35 children. Donations can be made at: https://sac.sewaua.org/?_gl=1*r7h97l*_gcl_au*MjAyNjE5MDg1MS4xNzI3MDI0NDI0

Atlanta Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

Sewa Atlanta's AmeriCorps Afterschool Tutoring Program hosted a celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month at Sienna Ridge Apartment Complex on September 21.

Twenty-five attendees, including Sewa staff, AmeriCorps members, and children from diverse backgrounds, attended the event and enjoyed authentic Spanish cuisine, music, and educational activities honoring inspiring Latino figures.

Program Director Varsha Chauhan emphasized the program's spirit of "Unity in Diversity," bringing together individuals from various backgrounds, cultures, and age groups.

"This celebration deepens our connections and understanding of one another," Chauhan said. "Our afterschool tutoring program provides educational support and values every voice and story." With 117 registered beneficiaries, Sewa Atlanta's program fosters a culture of inclusivity and shared learning experiences.



Sewa Atlanta's AmeriCorps Afterschool Tutoring Program honors Hispanic Heritage Month with music, food, and fun

LEAD Interns' Achievements Recognized



Judge Juli Mathew addressed Sewa's GIH and LEAD interns during the graduation ceremony at the T.E. Harman Center in Sugar Land, TX

Sewa Houston Chapter hosted a graduation ceremony for its "Get Inspired Houston" (GIH) and Leadership, Education, and Development (LEAD) interns at the T.E. Harman Center in Sugar Land on August 18.

Judge Juli Mathew, Presiding Judge of County Court at Law 3, emphasized the importance of perseverance and community leadership. "Continue to work past adversity and focus on the goal ahead," she urged. The event honored 47 interns who completed nearly nine weeks of community service, accumulating over 3,500 hours of service. Sewa Houston awarded certificates of completion and gave special recognition to exceptional individuals.

The interns made a difference in the Houston community by serving 75 children at Sewa's Achieving Students Progress, Instilling Resilience, and Excellence (ASPIRE) centers. They supported over 1,000 families through the Houston Food Bank and disaster relief efforts. They also participated in a 5K Walk and underwent FEMA's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training.

Chapter Coordinator Nikhil Jain encouraged the interns to continue spreading kindness and generosity. Alings Chinese Bistro sponsored the event.

SHE-CAF Supports Transgender Communities through Sustainable Livelihood Initiatives



India's Union Minister Nitin Gadkari involved in a conversation with a transgender entrepreneur at the inauguration of the "Ardhanari Food Truck" in Nagpur, Maharashtra, India

India's Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, inaugurated the "Ardhanari Food Truck" on October 6.

Supported by Sewa's Sanitation, Hygiene, and Empowerment for the Girl Child (SHE) and Covid Affected Families (CAF) programs, five transgender individuals in Nagpur, Maharashtra, have launched this mobile food truck business. The initiative, undertaken by Sewa's partner organization, Mission Vishwa Mamatwa Foundation, empowers these individuals by enabling them to serve daily meals and snacks, fostering economic empowerment and social inclusion.

In August 2024, Prem Pusuloori, Sewa's Vice President of Programs, visited the beneficiaries to discuss providing additional support for transgender communities, emphasizing Sewa's commitment to helping them gain financial independence.

Additionally, Sewa focuses on sustainable livelihoods through farmer and producer organizations, skill training, and financial aid. Sewa is helping marginalized communities by promoting indigenous weaving, yarn banks, and improved agricultural practices.

Boston Volunteers Support Visually Impaired Children

Sewa Boston volunteers assisted visually impaired children at the National Braille Press in Boston, MA, by organizing an event to help assemble Braille books. Over twenty volunteers participated in the event held on September 21.

Chapter Coordinator Kumar Subramanian said, "We're excited to spread joy this holiday season by ensuring that blind children across the country can enjoy reading literary classics. The workshop participants gained insight into the lives of visually impaired individuals and how the National Braille Press educates and empowers them to engage in society."

Subramanian thanked everyone for their efforts in creating a more inclusive world. All participants expressed their eagerness to continue supporting this initiative. Additionally, Chapter President Harish Patel and his wife Mrudula donated \$300 to the Braille Foundation through Sewa International.



Sewa volunteers assembled Braille edition of 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas' at National Braille Press in Boston, MA

Youth Orientation Inspires Community Service, Personal Growth



Dr. Yashwant Pathak addressed participants during Sewa LEAD orientation session at a public library in Tampa, FL

Sewa International's Advisory Board member, Dr. Yashwant Pathak, led an orientation session for Sewa Leadership, Education, and Development (LEAD) youth at the New Tampa Public Library on September 14.

Over 30 LEAD youths, accompanied by their parents, attended the event.

Dr. Pathak emphasized the importance of volunteering, community service, and personal growth, encouraging them to become T-shaped personalities ("The vertical bar on the letter T represents the depth of related skills and expertise in a single field, whereas the horizontal bar is the ability to collaborate across disciplines with experts in other areas and to apply knowledge in areas of expertise other than one's own"). The session aimed to instill a sense of belonging, responsibility, and empowerment among the volunteers.

Raghuveer, a member of the Sewa Tampa Chapter advisory board, shared the experiences and successes of Sewa International and the Tampa Chapter.

The event set the vision for the Tampa LEAD chapter's 2024-2025 initiatives, focusing on community outreach and volunteer drives. Sewa International's efforts aim to empower LEAD volunteers and their families, fostering a culture of selfless service.

Commemorating the 9/11 National Day of Service in Milpitas, CA



From left- Guru Prasad, Coordinator of Sewa Bay Area; Dipak Awasthi, Milpitas Planning Commissioner; Hon Lien, Milpitas Councilmember; Carmen Montano, Milpitas Mayor; Dr. Anurag Mairal, Sewa Bay Area President; Evelyn Chua, Milpitas Vice Mayor; Frank Morales, Assistant Chief of Police, Milpitas; William Lam, City Council Candidate, and Praveen Dhir, Coordinator of Sewa South Bay

Sewa partnered with AmeriCorps to host an event in Milpitas, CA, recognizing the 9/11 National Day of Service and Remembrance.

Milpitas Mayor Carmen Montano, Vice Mayor Evelyn Chua, and Assembly Member Alex Lee joined veterans, environmentalist Dr. Sailesh Rao, and other notable figures to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the 9/11 tragedy.

Dr. Rao shared his 9/11 experience, and how it inspired his environmental advocacy and veganism programs. Veterans shared stories, while public officials emphasized unity, resilience, and community service.

Dr. Anurag Mairal, Sewa Bay Area President, said, "Our participation in the September 11 National Day of Service reflects our mission to promote selfless service and strengthen communities. We invite everyone to volunteer, attend educational sessions, or reflect to honor 9/11 and inspire future generations with a legacy of unity and service." The event concluded with planting wildflower seeds featuring Sewa and AmeriCorps logos, representing growth, hope, and unity.

Golf Event for Hurricane Relief

The fourth annual charity golf event, held in remembrance of 9/11, teed off at the scenic Clear Creek Golf Course in Houston on September 14. It drew 92 participants across the city, forming 23 teams in a four-person scramble format.

Mayor Dan Davis of Manvel highlighted his city's growth and collaborative efforts with organizations to meet community needs before taking the ceremonial first shot. Notable teams included an all-women's team, the Pearland Police Department team, and a high school girls' team.

Program Manager of Sewa Houston's Disaster Management Team Rashmi Singh shared Sewa's response to Hurricane Beryl, assisting over 300 families across five counties. She emphasized Sewa's guiding principle, "vasudhaiva kutumbakam" (the world is one family), and commitment to serving all without discrimination.

Rushi Patel, Pearland's first Asian-American city council member, and Elizabeth Gerbel, Founder and CEO of EAG Inc., presented prizes. Patel praised Sewa's support for Brazoria County families, while Gerbel shared her connection to Sewa through the summer internship program.

The event, organized by a team of Sewa volunteers, raised funds for charitable service projects in Houston and hurricane relief efforts in Brazoria County. Several families from the Cambodian community in Rosharon attended the award ceremony and expressed gratitude.



Sewa volunteers hosted a charity golf tournament at Clear Creek Golf Course to support community initiatives in Houston, TX

Sewa leaders thanked the sponsors, including EAG, Navigature, Will and Beth Ruiz, the Law Office of Leena Bhasin, Deep Foods, Monks Restaurant, Alpha Juice, and others.

The event's success marks a significant step towards Sewa International's mission to serve underserved communities. With plans to expand the event, Sewa International Houston continues to be guided by the principle of unity and service.

Seniors Celebrate Janmashtami



The Sewa senior group celebrated Krishna Janmashtami with cultural festivities at the Fort Bend County University Branch Library in Sugar Land, TX

Sugar Land's Sewa senior group hosted the Janmashtami celebration at the Fort Bend County University Branch Library on September 17, drawing over 30 participants. The event blended entertainment, education, and community bonding.

Meera Khanna Kapur led warm-up exercises and "chair yoga" sessions. Dr. Kamlesh Thakar offered insights on senior healthcare topics, including a discussion on diabetes and arthritis.

Dr. Arvind Thekdi presented a historical perspective of Labor Day. He asked attendees to share humorous anecdotes about adjusting to life in the U.S. Prakash Majmudar and Bindu Malhotra sang songs and bhajans, adding a festive touch.

TiE Atlanta Foundation and Sewa International Launch CSR Platform



Representatives from TiE Atlanta Foundation and Sewa Atlanta came together at a dinner gala to officially launch a CSR platform, fostering collaboration for greater community impact

TiE Atlanta Foundation and Sewa Atlanta unveiled a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) platform at a dinner gala on September 19. The initiative brought businesses and local communities together to plan and deliver social and environmental change.

Leaders from both organizations emphasized their shared vision of growth and service. Sanket Patel, President of TiE Atlanta Foundation, highlighted the importance of giving back and creating lasting positive impact. Madhav Durbha, President of Sewa International Atlanta, echoed the sentiment, stressing mutual commitment to service and entrepreneurship.

The partnership aims to nurture the next generation of entrepreneurs and support underserved populations through free tutoring, healthcare services, and food drives. The CSR platform offers companies opportunities to support meaningful community service while promoting sustainable business practices.

The combined efforts of Dr. Paul Lopez, Sid Mookerji, Sanket P, Aryn Sadruddin, Sebastian Salinas, Srikanth Gundavarapu and many other volunteers and business leaders made the event possible. Jagruti and Raj Radhakrishnan served as co-chairs, guiding this collaborative event.

Central New Jersey Hosts Blood Donation Drive



Sewa's Family Services organized a blood drive in Central New Jersey

On September 21, Sewa Central New Jersey's Family Services hosted a blood drive in collaboration with the American Red Cross and the Township of Edison. Over 50 participants from the community signed up to donate blood, alongside numerous walk-ins. Medical professionals from the Red Cross collected 38 pints of blood.

Rajesh Sharma, Central New Jersey chapter coordinator, said, "This blood drive showcases the power of community service. We deeply appreciate the generosity and commitment of participants, Sewa Family Services volunteers, and Red Cross personnel who worked for the success of the event." Family Services volunteers managed registration, participant flow, and post-donation care, while Red Cross professionals facilitated blood collection.

Tampa Volunteers Beautify Ridgewood Butterfly Garden



Sewa volunteers tidied up Ridgewood Butterfly Garden, promoting city's natural beauty in Tampa, FL

Tampa chapter volunteers joined forces with Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful to clean up and plant trees at the Ridgewood Butterfly Garden on September 21. Over 20 Sewa volunteers contributed four hours each to preserve Tampa's natural beauty.

The collaborative effort benefited the City of Tampa and demonstrated Sewa's commitment to environmental stewardship. This initiative marked the beginning of a monthly partnership between Sewa Tampa and Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful.

Ramanathan Rama Subbu, the Tampa Chapter Coordinator, said, "Future events will focus on butterfly garden beautification and beach cleanups. Sewa Tampa is reaching out to volunteers from other organizations, encouraging them to participate in driving positive change."

Devastating Floods in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana



Torrential rains ravaged Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, claiming 48 lives, destroying infrastructure, and displacing thousands. The floods left a trail of destruction, threatening lives, homes, businesses, and livelihoods. Over 400,000 people in Andhra Pradesh and 200,000 in Telangana have been affected, with many more struggling to access necessities.

Sewa volunteers are providing critical aid and relief to flood-affected families. They are distributing essential food kits to families in the hardest-hit areas, providing temporary shelters, clean water, and basic medical care, and supporting farmers and small business owners whose crops and shops have been destroyed, helping them rebuild their livelihoods.

In Andhra Pradesh, 43,417 people have been relocated to 163 relief camps. In Telangana, 150,000 acres of farmland have been destroyed, resulting in damage amounting to ₹5,000 crore (\$60 million). The floods have also disrupted essential services, with 432 trains canceled and severe shortages and power outages reported.

Donations to support relief and rehabilitation can be made here:

<https://www.sewausea.org/SupportTelanganaAndhraPradeshFloodRelief>

Sewa Honors Veterans and First Responders on 9/11 Day of Service



Sewa Dallas Fort Worth (DFW) volunteers commemorated the 9/11 Day of Service at the Coppell Senior Center to honor the 2001 terrorist attack victims

On September 14, 2024, Sewa International Dallas Fort Worth (DFW) volunteers gathered at the Coppell Senior Center in Texas to commemorate the 9/11 Day of Service, honoring veterans and first responders.

Over 30 active military personnel, veterans, first responders, and 150 community members attended the event.

Councilmember Ramesh Premkumar, on behalf of Sewa and the City of Coppell, presented tokens of appreciation. The event also recognized young environmental advocates for promoting reusable bags, reflecting the community's dedication to sustainability. Special guests included Coppell Councilmember Biju Mathew, Coppell Police Chief Danny Barton, and Lewisville Police Chief Brook Rollins. Sewa DFW President Gitesh Desai highlighted Sewa's humanitarian work, locally and globally.

Joint Coordinator, Mukul Saran, expressed gratitude to all volunteers and partners whose efforts made the event a meaningful celebration of service. Coppell Mayor Pro Tem, Kevin Nevels, opened the program with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the singing of the national anthem by Coppell High School senior Minori Kunte. Vandana Sirotiya was the event's emcee.

SHE Empowers Rural Communities

The Sewa SHE team completed the construction of eight new toilets in two schools in Ranchi, Jharkhand through the funds collected by the Sewa Chicago Mother's Day Fundraiser.

Additionally, repairs are underway for eight non-functional toilets in rural schools in Udampur, Jammu, supported by Riya Dadheech of Purple Paint. Link-- <https://youtu.be/kPOLqhRZw4>

Sophie and Sid Mookerjee's generous funds will help build over 40 new toilets in underprivileged schools in Mysuru District, Karnataka. Link-- https://youtu.be/Rmj1Xf_ogU

The SHE team conducted menstrual health and hygiene awareness workshops for over 100 adolescent girls across Chhattisgarh, Jammu, and Wayanad, distributing reusable and eco-friendly sanitary napkin kits. Link-- <https://youtu.be/8pVdvpRf94M>

Students also benefited from a 14-day yoga and self-defense workshop. Independence Day and Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations were held with our beneficiaries in various locations. Link-- https://youtu.be/8V9_QBGI_dk

Sewa's skill development programs empowered rural and tribal women across nine states, including Assam, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Meghalaya, Manipur, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh.

Link-- <https://youtu.be/KCfanWo5Anw>

Link-- <https://youtu.be/USCwqGLATyU>

Link-- <https://youtu.be/ITfvjEUuERc>

Currently, 232 women are participating in training programs focused on tailoring, weaving, Nakshi Kantha embroidery, computer skills, bangle making, and traditional crafts.

In Nagpur, the SHE team helped five transgender beneficiaries start micro-enterprises, and in Raipur, 25 beneficiaries received tailoring and embroidery training.

Sewa's SHE-CAF program has transformed the lives of over 50 women in Tangta, West Bengal, providing sustainable livelihoods through skill-based training. Link- <https://youtu.be/Viu4BufCf-s>

Upcoming Events

- Nov 9, 2024: Avalon, Brazos, Commonwealth (ABC) of Sugar Land and HSS & Sewa - 5k Walk/Run | Brazos River Park, Southwest Fwy, Sugar Land, TX
- Nov 16, 2024 End Oct 31, 2025: Sewa LEAD 2024-25 | Youth Engagement Program for High School Students | Detroit, MI
- Nov 17, 2024: HELP 2024 - Fundraising Gala | GSH Events Center, Houston, TX

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