

Hindu University of America Honors Ramesh & Kiran Bhutada in its Gala in Houston, TX



Over 500 people attended the Hindu University of America (HUA) Gala in Houston, TX (Left) Ramesh Bhutada addresses the Gathering (Right)

The Hindu University of America (HUA) recently honored Ramesh Bhutada and his wife, Kiran Bhutada, for donating one million dollars to HUA at a gala held on March 26, 2023, at the Vallabh Priti Seva Samaj (VPSS) Haveli in Houston, TX. Ramesh Bhutada is a member of Sewa International's Board and the chairman of Star Pipe Products in Houston. Kiran Bhutada is the Chief Executive Officer of Star Pipe Products. Star Pipe Products is a domestic and global manufacturer of a broad array of iron products for the water and wastewater industries.

HUA organized the event in collaboration with Hindus of Greater Houston (HGH), and over 500 people attended the event. The gala featured music performances by HUA faculty member Dr. Kanniks Kannikeswaran and a short video showcasing HUA's courses and programs. HUA's Chairman, Prof. Ved Nanda, and President, Kalyan Viswanathan, spoke about the institution's rejuvenation and plans for the future. HUA faculty members, Dr. Raj Vedam and Chandra Raghu, also spoke at the event.

Hinduism for Happy Life

Ramesh Bhutada, in his address, emphasized the importance of gaining a deep knowledge of Hinduism, its culture, and traditions to live a happy and productive life. He urged attendees to support HUA's efforts to become a leading Hindu knowledge and learning hub. HUA's President, Kalyan Viswanathan, invited attendees to support HUA's mission and join forces to build a Hindu university that lasts a thousand years. HUA has enrolled over 2,600 students since October 2019 and offers 15 continuing education programs with over 150 courses taught by more than 70 faculty members.

The institution's motto is Vidya, or knowledge that liberates. HUA's mission is to provide education in knowledge systems based on Hindu thought, involving critical inquiry, ethics, and self-reflection. It prepares students for service, leadership, and global engagement while fostering the culture and traditions of Hindu Dharma in an atmosphere of academic excellence and freedom.

Seventeenth National Conference 2023 – Atlanta, GA



Attendees at the Sixteenth Annual Sewa Conference in Washington, DC.

Sewa's Atlanta chapter is hosting the 17th national conference on May 6 and 7, 2023, in Atlanta, GA. continuing a unique Sewa tradition, Atlanta volunteers will pick up and drop off attendees at the airport. They are also working with local families for staying arrangements and requesting volunteers to register at the earliest.

Participating in the national conference is a great way to network with other volunteers, learn about the organization's progress, and get inspired. Participation is by invitation only.

Date & Time: 8 AM, Saturday, May 6, 2023, to 1.30 PM, Sunday, May 7, 2023

Venue: Hotel Twelve, 361 17th Street NW, Atlanta, GA 30363

Register online: <https://sewausea.org/nc2023>

SHE Program Trains 1121 Women in SHE-CAF First Phase



SHE-CAF hosts a Health Awareness Camp on Women's Day

In March 2023, Sewa's Sanitation, Hygiene, and Empowerment Project for the Girl Child (SHE) team constructed 30 new toilets in schools across Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, Madurai in Tamil Nadu, India and Viratnagar, Nepal. The contributions of key donors, including Google, EKAM USA, and the Laxmibai Dwarkadas Charity Trust, made this possible.

The SHE team is also working on constructing an additional 30 toilets in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, and in Viratnagar. North Jersey LEAD volunteers and individual donors fund these toilets.

The SHE team conducted menstrual health and hygiene awareness workshops for over 150 schools in the states of Rajasthan and Maharashtra. They also organized yoga, self-defense, and mental wellness workshops for teenage girls in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

The SHE team's goal is to provide skill and livelihood opportunity training to 3,000 women across 15 states through its Covid Affected Families (SHE-CAF) program. In phase one, the program trained 1,121 women. Phase 2, which is currently underway, plans to teach 2,651 women bringing the total to 3,772.

The team celebrated Women's Day with SHE and program beneficiaries on March 30 in Bengaluru, India. Nearly 120 women participated in the celebrations. The SHE team also provided the participants with helpline numbers to call when they faced abuse.

SHE Program Dashboard

The SHE team has created an online dashboard to provide a consolidated view of the program across India, accessible at <https://sewa-she-platform.glide.page>. Volunteers and donors can check this dashboard for program statistics and an overview of the SHE program status across various states in India.

The SHE-CAF team also arranged a Cancer Screening & Health Awareness Program in Karisandra, Bengaluru. The SHE team conducts a beneficiary survey all over India to ensure the beneficiaries stay connected with Sewa and are well-placed and employed. They are also working on building an online platform for the weavers and artisan communities, and a SHE helpline number to assist their CAF beneficiaries.



SHE Team Launches Skill and Livelihood Training Program in Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

Sewa Announces New Information Technology Policy

Sewa's Information Technology (IT) team announced the implementation of a new policy, effective April 06, 2023. The policy is a result of the constant efforts to improve information technology operations and ensure the safety and well-being of our employees, volunteers, supporters, visitors, and well-wishers.

The primary objectives of this policy are to protect our IT assets from unauthorized access; ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of sensitive information; promote responsible and ethical use of technology by employees; provide guidelines for the acquisition, installation, and maintenance of hardware and software; and ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements related to IT use and data protection.

Anil Deshpande, Vice President, Technology Services, urged all to read the policy details carefully and familiarize themselves with them.

Anil Deshpande, Vice President, Technology Services, urged all to read the policy details carefully and familiarize themselves with them. He said that this policy will help protect restricted data, provide guidelines for the acceptable use of technology resources, improve communication and transparency, mitigate risks associated with technology use, and ensure that Sewa employees use IT resources securely, efficiently, and effectively.

Anil Deshpande said that Sewa is committed to implementing this policy fairly and transparently. "We recognize that change can be challenging, so we are open to feedback and suggestions on how it will improve this policy in the future. We would like to emphasize that compliance with this policy is mandatory for all employees. Any violations will attract the organization's disciplinary procedures per the Information Technology Act of 2000," he said.

Arunachal Vikas Parishad: Helping Tribes Sustain Their Culture



Chandrakant Narkhede Memorial Hall in Namsai



AVP conducts a Free Health Camp in Taksing, in the Upper Suban Siri District, Arunachal Pradesh, India

Arunachal Vikas Parishad (AVP) is a non-profit organization that runs over 600 projects throughout Arunachal Pradesh, India. AVP focuses on improving people's lives through education, health, women's empowerment, youth development, socio-cultural initiatives, and rural development. The emphasis on skill development and youth empowerment highlights AVP's commitment to promoting sustainable regional development.

The organization's work in Namsai and other parts of the state reflects its understanding of the challenges faced by tribal communities in India's northeast region and the need for projects explicitly targeted to address their unique needs. AVP's projects span the eastern district of Namsai. This area is home to diverse tribal communities, including Khampti, Singpho, Adi, Galo, and Deuri.

Chandrakant Narkhede Memorial

Among AVP's initiatives, one noteworthy project is the education and skill development program organized in Namsai's "Chandrakant Narkhede Memorial Hall". This multi-faceted program offers a range of activities, such as yoga classes, skill development courses, cultural displays, group discussions, and lectures, all in one convenient location. In addition, the program provides young people with the tools they need to succeed in life, including improved physical and mental health, job skills, and cultural awareness.

The hall has a seating capacity of 150. Neha Narkhede and Sachin Kulkarni, an entrepreneur couple from the US, enabled AVP to construct this venue through their generous donations. They have also helped the organization to continue its critical work and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those it serves.

Sewa India Launches Fellowship Program to Nurture Young Leaders

Sewa Fellowship

Sewa Fellowship is a strategic investment in human capacity, and grassroots organisations to build solutions for India's complex socio-economic-cultural matrix.

We believe in the power and potential of youth to drive ideas, run movements, nurture organizations, and seek truth and justice to together build a better Bharat.



fellowship@sewainternational.org

Sewa Fellowship Launched by Sewa International, India

Sewa International, India recently launched Sewa Fellowship, a 100-week experiential learning program designed to nurture young grassroots leaders and offer creative solutions to India's most complex problems. The program aims to provide a platform for the youth in India to serve their country for two years in various service domains.

The fellowship program aims to instill the values of sewa, a spirit of service that emphasizes selfless service. The program brings multi-disciplinary curriculum-based learning, experiential work at the grassroots, and one-on-one mentorship by master practitioners.

It is designed for young leaders between the ages of 21-30 with some volunteering experience and a minimum of one year of equivalent work experience.

The program offers a stipend of ₹20,000 (about \$250) per month, accommodation and food at the respective organizations and a grant amount of around ₹175,000 (about \$2,200). Fellows will have access to an extensive interdisciplinary curriculum delivered by practitioner's worldwide, expert mentorship from more than 50 experienced professionals, and live projects to support learning on self, society, development, and the world.

First Cohort

The fellowship program has successfully placed 30 fellows from the first cohort in various organizations across different states. The recruitment process for the second cohort has commenced, and interested individuals in India are encouraged to share the information with their friends and families. The program is seeking 30 young leaders to join the fellowship for 2023-25.

The Sewa Fellowship Program is a unique opportunity for young leaders in India to gain practical experience and mentorship while positively impacting society. Interested individuals can apply through the Sewa International website.

Sewa's New Chapter in Orlando, FL



Sewa Orlando Volunteers in a Service Event

Sewa International's Orlando chapter is a new addition to the Southeast regional chapters. Girish Sharma is the coordinator for the chapter. Early on, the Orlando chapter had operated as a subsidiary of the nearby Tampa chapter. The Orlando team had tried to organize events over the years but with limited success. Over the last few months, Girish Sharma tried something new to boost volunteer participation. He engaged high school students to participate in collecting food and donating it to nearby pantries.

This turned out to be a great idea. The group found a common cause to get together as they realized that they wanted to make a difference in the local community. It started with a handful of volunteers in 2022. Now the chapter has grown to over 25 volunteers in just a few months. Their target is to grow the volunteer count to 50 at this location in the next three months and run it consistently with 50-60 people. Sewa Orlando aspires to reach an overall strength of about 150-200 volunteers in the next couple of years.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Shekhar Nallabotula with his Family

Shekhar Nallabotula has been involved with Sewa International for the past five years, first in Milwaukee, WI, and now in Raleigh, NC. Originally from Nalgonda District in Telangana, India, he attended the RSS Sandeepani Shakha in his home town. Shekar lives in Raleigh with his wife Swathi Thokala, daughter Sreehitha, and son Shreyansh.

Shekhar is inspired by Sewa's vision of serving selflessly and with compassion to create a positive impact in communities. Shekhar believes that hunger is one of the worst plights faced by families. The Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) and Sewa's Research Triangle Park (RTP) chapter, in collaboration with over 30 other organizations in the Raleigh area hosts a food drive campaign for Diwali each year. Bringing his experience from Milwaukee, Shekhar has been involved with this project in Raleigh for the past two years and started leading the efforts.

He mobilized over 100 volunteers in the community and inspired almost 30 local organizations and collected around 5,000 pounds of food. These items are delivered to local food banks in the Raleigh-Durham area. Shekhar has also organized a volleyball game involving the local team to promote volunteerism.

Upcoming Events

- May 6, 2023: SERVE Houston - May Volunteering Event- Food Bank | Houston Food Bank, 535 Port wall St. Houston, TX
- May 6, 2023: Ronald McDonald House - Serving Hot Meals | Barbara Jordan Blvd, Austin, TX
- May 10, 2023 to May 19, 2023: Stop Diabetes Movement in Detroit | Virtual - Zoom Sessions
- May 10, 2023 to May 19, 2023: Stop Diabetes Movement in Chicago | Webinar
- May 13, 2023: ICCL, Sewa - 5k Walk/Run | Challenger Seven Memorial Park, Webster - W Nasa Blvd, Webster, TX
- May 27, 2023: Sewa Austin: Volleyball Tournament | Millburn Park, 1901 Sun Chase Blvd, Cedar Park, TX
- May 31, 2023: Sewa Detroit Blood Donation Drive | Sri Venkateswara Temple & Cultural Center, Taft Rd, Novi, MI

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