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### On Sewa

**“Let the giver kneel down and give thanks. And let the receiver stand up and permit.”**  
*-Swami Vivekananda*



### Executive Corner



**Srikanth Gundavarapu, President, Sewa International; Sridhar Vembu, Founder and CSO, Zoho Corporation; and Venkat Subramanyam, VP - Finance (from left), during discussions in Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu, India**

## From Vision to Execution: Sewa Organizes MOS Workshop in Hyderabad, India



**Prem Pusuloori, Vice President, Programs, and Venkatesh Murthy, Sewa Advisor (front row, fifth and sixth from left); Arun Kankani, Executive Vice President; Kiran D.M., CEO, Sewa Bridge; and Sandeep Khadkekar, Vice President, Organization (third row from bottom, eighth, tenth, and twelfth from left), pictured in a group photograph with participants at the MOS workshop in Bhagyanagar (Hyderabad), India**

The three-day Sewa MOS (Mission Oriented Staff) workshop, held in Bhagyanagar (Hyderabad), India, from December 18 to 20, commenced with an inaugural address by Shyam Parande, Member of Sewa International's Board of Advisors. In his opening remarks, Parande described *sewa* as *Adhyatma* in action—spirituality expressed through selfless service and fulfillment of one's *kartavya* (duty).

Drawing from the Bhagavad Gita and examples of Shri Krishna and King Janaka, Parande emphasized duty performed with focus, dignity, and compassion. Tracing Sewa International's origins to disaster response in the 1990s, he outlined its dharma-based vision, global impact, and guiding principle of *Sevit* (beneficiary) to *Sevak* (volunteer), urging participants to experience *sewa* firsthand.

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## Purpose-Driven Innovation Shows How Technology and Humanity Advance Together

Namaste all,

On January 2, Venkat Subramanyam, Vice President – Finance, and I had the privilege of spending time with Sridhar Vembu, Founder and Chief Scientific Officer of Zoho Corporation, in Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu. I returned from this visit deeply inspired. Zoho is a global technology company that confidently competes with industry giants such as Microsoft and Google. Yet, what stood out even more was the organization's generosity of spirit. At Sewa International USA, we are grateful beneficiaries of Zoho's longstanding support for nonprofits and are successfully leveraging Zoho One across our organization.

Sridhar's personal journey is nothing short of remarkable. Six years ago, he chose to return to a small rural village in Tenkasi to build a future grounded in opportunity and dignity. There, he trains high-school students in mathematics, English, and coding, provides them with a meaningful stipend for two years, and then integrates many of them into Zoho—where they contribute to mission-critical software used worldwide.

Beyond this, he runs a free school that currently serves 230 students, with plans underway for a new campus that will educate nearly 2,000 children. He has also adopted several orphaned children and is in the process of adopting nearly 100 more, offering not just shelter, but family, stability, and hope. His vision extends seamlessly into sustainability. A serene campus includes a dairy farm with 150 cows that supplies milk for schoolchildren and employees, while nearby farms cultivate rice and gooseberries—nourishing both people and purpose.

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## From Vision to Execution: Sewa MOS Varga Workshop 2025 Held in Hyderabad, India

In his remarks, Srikanth Gundavarupu, President, Sewa International, outlined Sewa International's vision to be a leading Hindu, faith-based service organization in the U.S., rooted in *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*—the world as one family. He emphasized shifting from self-centeredness to service, guided by equal vision, compassion, and selfless action as taught in the Bhagavad Gita, a foundational scripture of Hinduism.

Arun Kankani, Executive Vice President, emphasized that while effective execution is vital, clarity of purpose and strategic alignment are even more critical. He introduced the Bhagavad Gita-inspired 4K framework—karya (goal or purpose), karyakarta (people), karyapaddhati (methods and systems), and karyakrama (programs and activities)—as the foundation for impactful execution.

Venkatesh Murthy, Sewa's Advisor, spoke on Sewa Bhāva, professionalism, and ways to enhance individual and collective energy. Kiran DM, CEO of Sewa Bridge, shared insights into why Sewa Bridge exists and the journey that led to its creation. Prem Pusuloori, Vice President, Programs, outlined how Sewa works across its programs.

Sandeep Khadkekar, Vice President – Organization, discussed how OKRs bring clarity of purpose and alignment across Sewa. Jinesh Lal, Executive Director, SIB, spoke on Sewa's vision and mission, and Manali Khide, Senior Manager – Operations, highlighted efforts to strengthen the MOS team and the overall back-office operations.



**Shyam Parande, Sewa Advisor; Srikanth Gundavarupu, President, Sewa International; Manali Khide, Senior Manager – Operations; Arun Kankani, Executive Vice President; and Prem Pusuloori, Vice President, Programs (top-left corner, from left), along with participants at the MOS workshop in Bhagyanagar (Hyderabad), India**

In the concluding event on the last day of the workshop, Saumitra Gokhale, Member, Sewa's Board of Advisors, reflected on Sewa International as both an organization and part of a much larger global Sewa movement. He welcomed the growing participation at the workshop, emphasizing that what matters is not when one joined Sewa, but that each person contributes meaningfully at present. He highlighted the deep fulfillment that comes when service becomes one's *ikigai*—a convergence of purpose, passion, and action.

Srikanth Gundavarupu thanked participants for their commitment, noting that the three-day workshop strengthened their connection to the Sewa family. He emphasized that Sewa is a volunteer-driven movement, not a corporate, rooted in personal conviction and Hindu values. Calling volunteers Sewa's greatest strength, he reaffirmed that seva is a way of life guided by the Bhagavad Gita and urged collective effort to strengthen the global movement.

The workshop featured focused sessions on global vision, mission, strategic roadmap, organizational history, and program impact, with strong emphasis on alignment through goals, the Sewa Bridge framework, back-office impact, and the role of MOS.

Days 2 and 3 deepened leadership and execution through sessions on Sewa Bhava, professionalism, the Sewa ecosystem and social transformation, energy management, human resources, effective execution, organizational structure, departmental alignment, MBTI-based team dynamics, and reflection on long-term vision and a century-long journey of service and impact.



**Saumitra Gokhale, Sewa Advisor (top left) and participants at the MOS workshop in Bhagyanagar (Hyderabad), India**

## H.E.L.P. Gala Advances Service and Partnership



**Sugar Land Mayor Carol McCutcheon (second from left) presented multiple proclamations to the team, received by senior volunteer Madan Luthra and Houston President Dr. Pranav Loyalka (first & third, far left), as keynote speaker Arjun Sen (far right) addressed the H.E.L.P. Gala in Houston, TX**

Five hundred guests, over 60 youth volunteers, 62 families, and a dozen elected officials gathered for the H.E.L.P. (Help Every Life Prosper) 2025 Gala in Houston on December 13, highlighting education, health, disaster recovery, and family programs. Chapter president Pranav Loyalka outlined program outcomes and shared a long-term vision. "A vision for a Sewa Community Center: a hub for education, service, compassion, and unity. A home where our mission, selfless service, can flourish every single day, not only when we find space for it." Keynote speaker Arjun Sen spoke about resilience and "Not Quitting," sharing clips from the movie "I Want to Talk". Video remarks from Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher praised Sewa's humanitarian work. Entertainment, dinner, and proclamations underscored collaboration. Funds supported initiatives operating on an annual budget exceeding \$1 million.

## Holiday Burrito Drive Delivers Warm Meals and Builds Connections



**Holiday burrito drive brought volunteers together in Manteca, CA**

Over 20 Sewa volunteers prepared and delivered burritos to families and a shelter during the second December effort, hosted at a home-based holiday food drive in Manteca, CA on December 20. Preparation began the previous evening, when volunteers assembled beans, rice, and vegetables for the next day. Despite cold conditions, volunteers worked outdoors to roll burritos with speed and coordination. Several first-time volunteers joined in both preparation and last-mile delivery, expanding participation and strengthening outreach. Meals reached St. Mary's, where recipients expressed gratitude and shared smiles with the delivery team. Hosts Tanuja and Prashant, joined by their daughter Ananya, opened their home for the event and provided space and supplies. Core volunteers Samarth and Mishka led operations, while Jyotsna Prasad, Director, LEAD Program, and Guru Prasad, Director, West Region, supported logistics and coordination throughout the weekend.

## Volunteers Serve at Sri Krishna Balaram Mandir Goshala, Fremont, CA



**Sewa volunteers fed cows and cleaned grounds at Sri Krishna Balaram Mandir Goshala, Fremont, CA**

Service and teamwork brightened the day at the Sri Krishna Balaram Mandir Goshala in Fremont on December 13. Ten Sewa volunteers cleaned the grounds, fed cows, organized inventory, and repaired lighting, marking the first collaboration between Sewa International Bay Area and the Goshala. "It was truly heartwarming to witness such teamwork and commitment," organizers said. The initiative reflects ongoing efforts to engage youth and families in meaningful service, with plans for monthly volunteer events to strengthen the partnership and continue supporting the Goshala's operations.

## Relief Supplies Reach Hurricane Survivors across the Caribbean



**Relief pails arrived for hurricane survivors in Jamaica**

Sewa Atlanta's one thousand relief pails reached survivors in Jamaica, an island country in the Caribbean, on December 5. The supplies supported families affected by Category 5 Hurricane Melissa, which devastated Jamaica, Haiti, and Cuba in late October, 2025. Sewa's delivery aimed to stabilize daily needs while longer-term recovery planning advanced across the region.

The relief delivery followed widespread devastation across the region, including at least 50 deaths. In Jamaica and Haiti 19 and 31 people lost their lives and 735,000 people were evacuated in Cuba. The storm tore through coastal towns, destroyed homes, and disrupted essential services like power and water.

## Dresden Park Reopening Advances Youth Outreach in Chamblee, GA



**Sewa AmeriCorps volunteers helped the city officials at Dresden Park reopening in Chamblee, GA**

Sewa AmeriCorps team participated in the Grand Park Reopening Ceremony in Chamblee and helped city officials in engaging the local residents, and enrolling new students on December 14. with one mayor and several city council members in attendance. Mayor Brian K. Mock joined council members and city staff, signaling civic support for youth-focused programs. Team members shared program information, answered questions, and completed on-site enrollments. The event strengthened visibility, built local partnerships, and expanded access to educational services that support long-term student success.

## Volunteers Cultivate Green Spaces at Tree Planting Event in San Jose, CA



**Bay Area volunteers planted 22 trees at Tree Planting Event in San Jose, CA**

Environmental action flourished at the Day of Service Tree Planting Event in San Jose on December 13. Over 15 volunteers planted 22 trees in collaboration with Canopy, joined by participants from multiple organizations. The planting fostered greener spaces and strengthened local partnerships. "The collective effort and enthusiasm of all participants made the event impactful and memorable," organizers noted. Volunteers also connected with new partners, reinforcing ongoing environmental stewardship and service initiatives in the Bay Area.

## Giving Tree Ornaments Turn Wishes into Action in Collegeville, PA



**Giving Tree ornaments connected donors with children's wishes in Collegeville, PA**

Handmade ornaments helped match donors with children's holiday wishes during a Giving Tree drive organized by the local Sewa chapter at the Kiddie Academy in Collegeville on December 7. It supported 18 children, 18 ornaments, and one academy location.

The drive invited children to share wishes that LEAD participants wrote on tags attached to the ornaments. The ornaments hung on the academy's Giving Tree, allowing families to select and fulfill specific requests. Organizer Ruchi sponsored the effort through the academy, while a parent volunteer made a 60-mile trip to deliver the ornaments. The project combined creativity with direct giving, delivering clear, personalized support to children during the holidays.

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## Purpose-Driven Innovation Shows How Technology and Humanity Advance Together



**The staff of Zoho Corporation, a global technology company, in a small village in Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu, India**

What moved me most was the simplicity of his life: simple living, high thinking, and an unwavering belief that world-class technology can—and should—emerge from rural India. As I return to the U.S., I carry with me deep inspiration from witnessing a business leader who demonstrates that profit and purpose can grow together, and that transformative change begins with investing deeply in people. I wish Sridhar and the entire Zoho family continued success in this extraordinary journey.

Sincerely,

**Srikanth Gundavarapu**  
President

## Handmade Cards Brighten a Senior Care Home in Old Bridge, NJ



**Holiday cards brought smiles to seniors in Old Bridge, NJ**

Volunteers delivered handmade holiday cards to residents at a card drop-off event in Old Bridge on December 19. The effort included dozens of cards created by youth leaders and reached more than 150 seniors living at the care center. Participants from the LEAD (Leadership, Education, and Development) program designed, assembled, and delivered the cards during a Friday afternoon visit.

Residents responded with visible appreciation, and staff noted the positive effect on morale. Volunteers joined the drop-off to share greetings and ensure every resident received a card. The project highlighted youth leadership in service and showed how small, creative acts bring comfort and connection during the holiday season.

## Phoenix Chapter Shares Its Achievements and Plans at the Donors Meet



**Sewa Donors attended appreciation lunch in Phoenix, AZ**

Gratitude and partnership shaped the appreciation lunch at the Sewa gathering in Phoenix, AZ on December 21. The event brought together donors and supporters, featured two organizational leaders, and included one detailed presentation outlining past achievements and plans. President Dilip Karandikar and Vice President Trupti Pandit addressed attendees and highlighted progress across service programs and priorities ahead.

The local team supported the session and shared updates that connected impact to sustained giving. Attendees engaged in open discussion and networking over lunch. The gathering reinforced the importance of donor engagement in strengthening service delivery and advancing long-term goals. Organizers thanked participants for their continued encouragement and commitment.

## Year-End Service and Winter Coat Drive Deliver Warmth to Families in Boston, MA

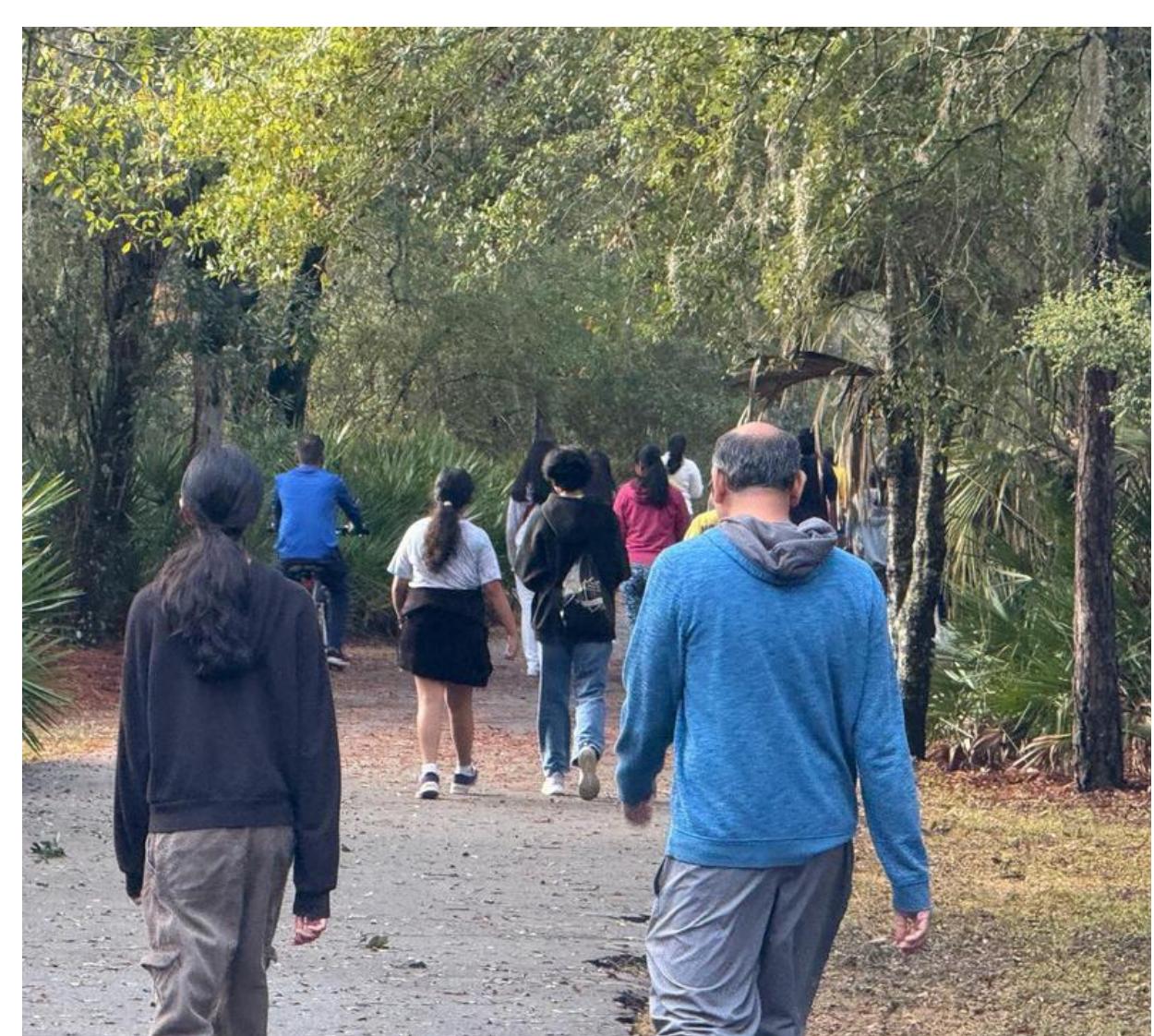


**Youth planned year-end events (first three photos) and Winter coats distribution (last two photos) in Boston, MA**

On December 15, youth participants gathered for a year-end celebration that featured multiple games, a review of one year of activities, and planning for 2026 goals. Participants reflected on milestones, shared ideas, and built momentum for the year ahead. Organizers highlighted teamwork, creativity, and sustained engagement, and extended an open invitation for new youth to join future activities.

In another event in Boston, Sewa volunteers wrapped up a winter coat drive that delivered seasonal relief at the distribution event in Boston on December 27. The effort included the collection and distribution of coats, hats, and gloves for families facing cold weather. Donations came from individuals and Sewa's partner organization Legacy Hopkinton, whose support expanded the reach. Volunteers sorted and handed out essentials, meeting urgent winter needs and closing the year with tangible impact.

## Charity Walk Powers Support for Children at Flatwoods Park, FL



**Charity walk unites families and youth at Flatwoods Park, FL**

Momentum built as walkers gathered at the charity walk in Tampa on December 7. The event drew 65 participants ranging in age from 10 to 75 and raised over 1,240 dollars surpassing the \$1,001 goal, to support Sewa's education program, Sponsor A Child (SAC). Families, youth, and adults walked together through a high-energy route, turning shared effort into direct support for children's education and well-being.

Organizers credited strong teamwork and steady participation for the outcome. Funds raised support SAC, a program that provides education to children. The walk showed how simple actions—steps taken together—can produce measurable results.

## Gala and LEAD Inauguration Showcase Service and Leadership in Denver



### Successful Gala dinner and LEAD inauguration marked Sewa's Growth in Denver, CO

Supporters and families gathered for a fundraising gala dinner celebrating service and youth leadership in Denver, CO, on December 14. The evening featured six programs, recognized seven core leaders, showcased three cultural performances, and drew several of attendees. The fundraiser supported Sponsor a Child, Family Services, Women Empowerment, SERVE (a program to serve food), LEAD (Leadership, Education, and Development), and Design to Lead (DTL) Initiatives. Student hosts from LEAD led logistics with confidence, reflecting skills built through structured leadership development.

In another event in Denver on December 6, students, families, and volunteers launched the year at the inauguration of the leadership program. The gathering welcomed returning students and new participants, presented certificates to the previous cohort, and introduced upcoming projects. Speakers shared updates on the Gala Dinner and the Adopt-a-Child program, linking student engagement to real-world impact. The event closed with student reflections and enthusiasm for the year ahead.

## Sewa-Trained Lincoln Elementary Students Shine at Annual Spelling Bee in Bay Area, CA



### Students achieved 100% participation in Scripps Spelling Bee at Lincoln Elementary, in Bay Area, CA

The Sewa ASPIRE (Achieving Students Progress, Instilling Resilience, and Excellence) team conducted the Scripps Spelling Bee for the second consecutive year at Lincoln Elementary School in the San Francisco Bay Area, CA, on December 15, fostering academic enthusiasm. The participating students completed 10 competitive rounds, and the champion correctly spelled the winning word "Parliamentary." Volunteers and ASPIRE instructors guided students through months of preparation, organizing spelling challenges, word games, and carnival-style activities. "Their commitment helped students build confidence, vocabulary, and a love for language," instructor Victor Fisher said. Lincoln Elementary remains the only school in the Newark Unified School District participating in the Scripps Spelling Bee, setting an example of school-wide engagement and academic enthusiasm.

## Volunteers Aided Recovery as Floodwaters Swamp Snohomish Valley, WA



### Sewa Seattle volunteers supported evacuations and rescues, cleared debris, and stabilized homes across Snohomish Valley, WA

Sewa volunteers and Emergency teams supported evacuations, rescues, and cleanup for hundreds of flooded properties as historic river levels displaced residents and damaged farms and infrastructure during a coordinated relief response in Snohomish Valley on December 6, affecting 100,000 people at risk of evacuation, dozens rescued, floodwaters up to 15 feet deep, and record crests on at least four rivers.

Seattle-based volunteers worked daily alongside the National Tribal Emergency Management Council, Farmer Frog, and the United States Volunteers Joint Services Command. Crews assisted families, cleared debris, and stabilized homes near the Snohomish River. In Burlington and Sumas communities. Fast-moving water forced hurried evacuations and helicopter rescues and officials warned flooding would persist for days along the Skagit and Cedar rivers. Coordinated action accelerated recovery and restored access where roads and utilities failed.



**Dr. Kiran Patil, a board-certified neurologist from Butler, PA, (second from right in the first photo) with Sewa Suriname volunteers and members of the Doctors for Sewa team**

There was a quiet excitement and anticipation in me before coming to Suriname this time—excitement to meet our Sewa volunteers here, and anticipation stirred by familiar memories from my visit to Nickerie in July 2023.

I landed on Saturday night at the Paramaribo airport and was warmly greeted by Sewa Suriname volunteers Aswin ji Charoe and Abhinay. The next morning, I travelled to Nickerie by taxi. Conversations with my co-passengers made the long drive more thoughtful and enjoyable.

My stay was arranged by Mungra Medical Center in the physicians' residence—an individual house with everything one needs for comfortable living. The experience was made even more pleasant by the delicious meals provided by MMC. I had carried a few essentials for the mornings—milk, eggs, and some snacks.

The house was surrounded by residences of physicians from the Netherlands. Though I didn't find enough time for an informal dinner with them—perhaps next time—I did speak with several of them about cases and local challenges. One of them, to my surprise, was the great-grandson of the legendary Dr. Snellen, who introduced the Snellen chart used globally for visual acuity. Life has a subtle, beautiful way of connecting past and present.

Each day began with 7:30 a.m. sign-outs from the overnight staff, followed by rounds to see the admitted patients and then outpatient clinic. I saw many interesting and challenging cases, made more complex by resource limitations—restricted medication availability, lack of MRI scanners, and the geographical gap between Nickerie and Paramaribo. Despite this, the volunteer physicians from the Netherlands have been holding the system together remarkably well.

What deeply touched me was the joy on the faces of Hindustani patients. One 83-year-old gentleman said, with tears in his eyes, that he was so happy someone from his grandfather's country had come to treat him. I felt that warmth and connectedness to his roots, and it stayed with me. Overall, this journey has been inspiring, joyous, and humbling. We live in a global village, and the health and well-being of people in Suriname is a responsibility I share. Building and nurturing these connections is essential. As the sewa motto reminds us: "Together we serve better."

Bridges built with compassion, beyond all differences, can transform the wellbeing of communities—of the whole planet. Carrying all these wonderful memories, I depart with a small ache—a sense of unfinished care. And maybe that is what will bring me back again.

*Dr. Kiran Patil is a board-certified neurologist at Independence Health System in Butler, PA, and a core member of the Doctors for Sewa team. He is currently volunteering in Suriname, where 20–25% of the population is of Indian origin. A patient interaction in Surinamese Hindi, reflecting shared ancestral roots, left a lasting impact on him. Based in Pittsburgh, he comes from a family involved in social work and actively supports Sewa work with his wife and two children.*

## Upcoming Events

- January 19–30, 2026: Therapeutic Yoga for Arthritis | Virtual
- January 31, 2026: Sewa for Seniors | Vernon Township Community Center, Buffalo Grove, IL
- January 31, 2026: Sewa Annual Musical Event | Alston Ridge Middle School, Cary, NC
- January 31, 2026: Sewa Seattle Kala Mahotsav 2026 | Seattle, WA
- February 7–8, 2026: Sewa Phoenix Volleyball Tournament 2026 | Chandler, AZ

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