

Sewa International is a Non Government Organization (NGO) bridging the gap between the privileged and the under-served.

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Monthly Newsletter From Sewa International August - 2016



Highlights:

The Sewa International team had a very successful visit to Varanasi (also known as Benares or Kashi) to promote the welfare of the weavers who produce the famous Benares silk and other products.

As always, the health, education and environment for these weavers were well researched and help provided.

Eighty players participated in the 'Cricket for Sewa Aug 20th/21st and 28^t' by the Pennsylvania-Delaware Sewa chapter. A total of 13 teams raised \$1170 for the "Toilets for the Girl Child and Hygiene project" by SevaKirana in Bangalore, India. A big Aum to the PA-DE Sewa team!

A very successful 'Summer Internship' by medical students from USA was concluded in August. The three students gave a summary of their work and recommendations for improvement at a wrap up meeting organized at Rangadore Memorial Hospital, Bangalore. Their presentation was well received by the management.

Another high light was participation in 'Beautiful Bengaluru' program.

Surakshe Sanitary Napkins Production training by Mr.Kannan from Jayashree Industries

It's been few months since the start of production of the 99.6% bio-degradable sanitary napkins at ArunaChethana(school for differently abled people) in Bangalore. We have distributed several hundrednapkins in rural areas, government schools and slums of Bangalore along with several programs to create awareness about implementing healthy habit of safe usage of napkins during menstruation.

Since its one of the taboo subjects in India, it was difficult to break the barrier and educate them, we are glad we have reached out to more women and girls than we hoped for

despite all the superstitions crowding menstrual cycle.



Volunteering for Annual flower show at LalBhag – “Beautiful Bengaluru”

Seva kirana has always taken great efforts in social awareness activities by bringing the adults together, encouraging youth and leading by example for children. This August we celebrated our Independence Day by educating people not to litter. We, along with volunteers of Beautiful Bengaluru, spent the day requesting the stall owners to keep a dustbin every 10 meters and emptying it at regular intervals, asking the crowd to use the dustbins and assisting the cleaners by gathering the littered garbage.



Recent Floods at Varanasi our visit to Kashi (Benaras)

Sewa International (Seva Kirana) saw nature's fury manifest itself recently in Banaras (Varanasi), UP, India. There were severe floods everywhere in this holiest of all cities in India.

We landed on August 18/2016 for six days work in spite of the floods.



The torrential monsoon rains had caused many roads to be closed. Cows and buffalos were cooling themselves from the 90% plus humidity in humungous potholes on the highways making the roads impassable.

Our journey from the Varanasi airport to the Ramnagar village took 4 ½ hours to cover a distance of 35 kilometers, with our heads bumping along and our spines misaligning themselves every 10-15 seconds!

About 150 villages along the Ganges were under water. We witnessed people crossing the river while carrying their meager belongings on a jute cot all the time gauging the depth of the rising water. It was a pitiable sight. Many had been bitten by snakes and the death toll was rising each and every single day during our team's stay at Varanasi. What was amazing was there was absolutely no coverage by the media or any other political party or disaster relief organizations.

In spite of these conditions, we forged ahead with our work. We saw the educational centers (kendras) we established in April/16, visited with the families and also spoke to the teachers about the progress of the children.



We conducted a medical camp on 8/21 covering villages around Ramnagar in Varanasi district.

Our team met with Banaras Hindu University medical department on August 19 to work out the logistics of the medical camp. They were very enthusiastic, willing to work with us. Seva Kirana provided Rs. 50,000 worth of medicines. About 150 people, doctors, interns, pharmaceutical research students, nurses, ayurvedic and homeopathic specialists and the heads of departments were present. We saw over 450 patients.

The camp went picture perfect with the weather holding on till 5:00P.M. The majority of the cases related to back and knee pains, as they walk a long way to collect fire wood, carry them over their heads and walk to Banaras to sell them. The next highest problem was inadequate nutrition. Every patient needed vitaminsupplements which we provided.



Women were taught self-breast examination, menstrual hygiene, proper pregnancy consultation, and hand washing techniques.

The awareness on tobacco chewing and cancer was well received by the public. We also tried teaching people about garbage disposal and spread of disease, which didn't go as well as we anticipated. As anyone aptly knows Kashi is our holiest city and yet it is extremely polluted and filthy. We hope further health camps will bring some changes in the community.



Besides fighting the rain, our team visited a government school in Mirzapur district, completely run by 'RashtriyaSwayamSevak ' (RSS) employees (karyakarthas) for grades 1-8. They are in acute need of toilets, drinking water and lights. We donated some personal money. The kids were adorable ; they wereextremely underserved. We plan to include this school in our Kashi project, phase 2.

Workshop for the Weavers about Indian Standards Institute (ISI) Silk Mark and Handloom Mark

For the first time with help of Govindji and his team, we were able to conduct a workshop in educating weavers about the government scheme of ISI silk mark and Handloom mark for the silk products woven in handlooms. Mr. Ramesh Chandra, Deputy Director from Ministry of Textiles, Govt of India educated the weavers about different types of silk, how to identify them and how to test the quality of the silk they purchase, to distinguish between real silk and polyester mix duplicate silk.



Mr. Brijesh Shukla, Quality Assurance officer, Ministry of Textiles, Govt of India educated the weavers about applying for Handloom Mark for their handlooms, application process and advantages of having a handloom mark for the products weavers produce.

We were happy to be part of such an elaborate informative session.

Cricket for Sewa Tournament Aug 20-21/28, West Chester, PA, USA

PA-DE Sewa chapter successfully conducted their first Cricket for Sewa Tournament on Aug 20th, 21st and 28th in Boot Road Park, West Chester, PA.

Winners : Super-Kings (SAP team)

Runners-up : Elam team (Sri Lanka team)

Cause : **GIRLS' TOILET AND HYGIENE PROJECT (SevaKirana, Bangalore)**

Teams participated : 13 (6 to 7 people per team total players 80)

Tournament moderators : Swarun Buddineniji and Ramesh Radha Krishna ji.

Total # of Volunteers : 25

Donation : \$90/team

Syam Kosigi, the organizer said:

We have planned this event on Aug 20th and 21st, but on 21st due to heavy rains we could not conduct Semi finals and finals. We had to postpone this event to 28th. We have collected **\$1170** for **GIRLS' TOILET AND HYGIENE PROJECT (SevaKirana, Bangalore)**, more than that Sewa team has done very good campaign about all Sewa projects and activities. Many new volunteers have joined Sewa on this event.

Many young volunteers have participated in this event as volunteers and helped us a lot. We have given certificates to young volunteers.

Sri. Mukund Kuteji has participated in trophy distribution function.

A big Aum to PA-DE Sewa Chapter!!



Successful Conclusion of Summer Internship by Medical students from USA in August

Following summary by Prasann, one of the interns aptly summarizes the interns' experiences:

"I was posted in three different units in Rangadore Memorial Hospital, Bangalore, over the course of the past six weeks:

a general medical/surgical unit, the Neonatal Intensive Care unit (NICU), and the Operation Theatre (OT). At each unit, I learned a great deal about their cases and procedures to help me in my personal learning and also in my purpose at Rangadore."



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