

JOURNEY

Journey of the Soul



Q&A WITH BHARAT AND NISHA, ORGANIZERS OF THE YA CULTURAL PROGRAM



What was your inspiration for SaiCappella/the shadow play?

Bharat: I am heavily involved in a cappella and Swami always helps me find a way to use my talents to help serve Him. I was so excited to be able to use my experience with a cappella to help engage and inspire the YAs of Region 3.

Nisha: We did a shadow play at our center for Swami's birthday last year, so we decided to do a version 2.0 for the retreat. Last year, we just used a lamp as our light source, but I wanted to improve that this year, so we decided to use a projector, which brought out a whole new dimension to the play.

What's one thing from the retreat that really stood out to you and that you will cherish for a long time?

Bharat: The jam session that we all had after our amazing performance! Being able to stay up all night with Sai company and then after a superb musical and spiritual night, being able to go to Subrabhatham and the Morning Bhajan Walk, is a memory that I will never forget.

Nisha: What I loved about this retreat was seeing all the YAs bond together. It touches me so much that there is so much love within this group even though we all only met a few weeks ago. It's all Swami's grace indeed!



What did you enjoy the most from this experience?

Bharat: How much we all bonded through this experience. We all struggled through the music together, as well as enjoyed the beautiful interactions we had throughout the weekend!

Nisha: It's the entire journey that was most enjoyable – the people you get to work with, the challenges you face and the creativity that sparks from within. When you're doing a puzzle, yes, you experience joy once you've finished it, but it's about the journey that you went through to complete it and the memories that you make along the way that matter.

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From I to We:

Becoming an Inclusive Sai Family at the Region 3 Retreat

The Region 3 Retreat, held from September 4-7, 2015 at the scenic Unicoi Lodge in Helen, GA, united YAs from across the region. The YA program began on Friday evening with practice sessions for the cultural programs: SaiCappella, a medley of songs sung in a cappella style, and a shadow play on Swami's life and message. On Saturday, after an energetic morning bhajan session and uplifting talks by Dr. Harvey and Krishna Prayaga, preparation continued for the evening's cultural programs. YAs learned the importance of teamwork while welcoming new members and practicing all together.

On Sunday, the YAs met for a creative ice breaker session that served as a valuable bonding experience. YAs discovered commonalities as they shared fears and sources of happiness and learned interesting tidbits about one another by forming pairs and rotating to answer questions on a variety of topics that ranged from choosing a spirit animal to discussing which human value is the most important. The YAs reconvened in the afternoon for a nature walk and breathing exercises to enjoy the tranquil surroundings. When the long weekend inevitably came to a close, all could find solace in having gained a collaborative, loving family.

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Did you face any challenges while implementing your idea?

Bharat: As we came closer to the performance time, I felt that we weren't completely prepared for the showcase. However, I left it up to Swami. I was so happy to be able to include people who hadn't even practiced beforehand and just showed up at the retreat wanting to contribute. At first, this was nerve-racking, but these people contributed so greatly to the performance to the point that they were crucial to our success!

Nisha: Implementing this whole shadow play was like doing a big jigsaw puzzle - you know what you want the end product to look like but it's a matter of finding the right pieces to go in the right places. There were many challenges that occurred throughout the process, but with Swami's grace, everything all came perfectly together like a puzzle at the end.

What was your favorite scene from the shadow play?

Nisha: The darshan scene at the end. There was just so much energy built up, the audience was clapping along to Love is My Form, and Swami was standing right there enjoying the bhajan. It really brought a huge smile to my face.

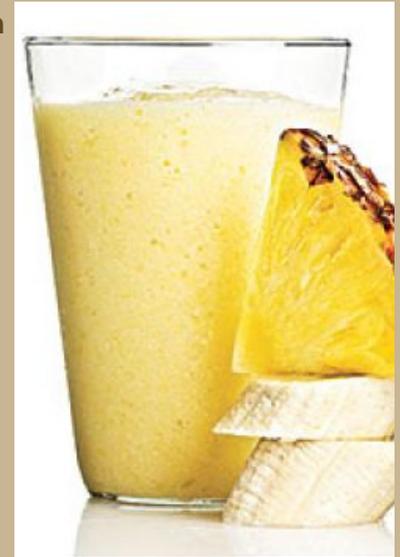


Journey on a Healthy Path

Pineapple Piña Colada

203 CALORIES

- 1/2 medium banana
- 1/4 cup light coconut milk
- 1 cup chopped fresh pineapple
- 1/4 cup chilled pineapple juice
- 1/2 cup crushed ice



- Step 1: Gather all your ingredients
- Step 2: Chant Gayatri as you prepare your smoothie by blending the ingredients together.
- Step 3: Say the Food Prayer and Enjoy!

Save the Date- October 31, 2015

YA Retreat and Podiatry Camp



The Vibrate Create n Radiate group is another inspirational group where YAs can share their creative talents such as hand-drawn artwork, digital art, and creative writing. One of the projects planned in the near future is a collection of the creative work from the regional YAs. For more information about contributing to this group, please contact Manasa Kanithi (kmk12345@gmail.com)

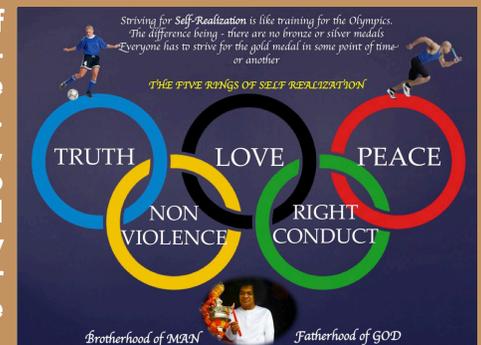
The Regional Retreat spawned a number of YA initiatives that brought together many like-minded YAs towards a collective effort. YAs use social forums to collaborate and share ideas. Examples of such groups include Sai Olympians, Vibrate Create n Radiate, and a Bhajan app project. The Sai Olympians group is a social forum where YAs inspire each other to stay healthy physically, mentally, and spiritually. For more information about participating, please contact Sira Garib (sira_garib@yahoo.com).



The Bhajan app project aims to build a comprehensive bhajan app for all major platforms like Android, iOS, Windows, and also computer browsers. Many YAs have volunteered to contribute their skills and time to this project. The project requires people with User Interface skills (for design and look), Software Developers (for database and app developers) and Bhajan Data Moderators (for entering Bhajan lyrics, finding audio links, specifying Raaga, etc.). We are looking for as many volunteers as possible for making this project, especially Bhajan Data Moderators, since the collection of Bhajans will be huge. Please contact Hemanth Koralla (hemanth.koralla@gmail.com) or Aparajith Sairam (aparajithsairam@gmail.com) to get involved in this project.

Our Journey Together

Current initiatives and upcoming events



Journey Inward: Creative Corner

The Peacock

Submitted by Namrata Buxani from Atlanta, GA

Before unity, there must be love. My inspiration for this drawing comes solely from my unchanging love for the playful Lord Krishna. The peacock feathers in his crown represent the divine love from Krishna that enters our hearts, filling us with ecstasy. As the hymns of Krishna's flute resound inside of me, I am always reminded of selfless love that Krishna showers on all. This is the first step to invoking the divine God within us: To Love All.

The Peacock is the embodiment of benevolence, patience, kindness, compassion. When I visualize a peacock, I imagine it opening its feathers, all together, representing wholeness. Also, notice a peacock's feathers. The intricate patterns are all unique to each peacock, with no two peacocks having the exact same pattern. Just like humans, we all are unique in our own ways, and we all come from very different backgrounds. But at the same time, are we not all the same? Why, yes, yes we are. We are all one. We are all God.



New Region 3 Female YA Rep- Shivani Aggarwal

It is a great privilege to introduce our new Region 3 YA Rep, sister Shivani Aggarwal from Greensboro Sai Center. Shivani was blessed to come into the Sai fold at age 7. She went to Swami's school in Delhi before moving to His school in Puttaparthi for the last 3 years of her high school. Since moving to the United States in 2007, she has been an active member of numerous Sai Centers in NE, MN, SC, and NC. In Rochester, MN, she had the opportunity to take EHV classes and coordinate service activities with the interfaith community for the center. She also served as the local YA Rep for Greensboro center from 2014 to 2015.

New Region 3 YA Advisor- Dr. Priya Mehta

Dr. Mehta attended Swami's College for Women in Anantapur and just completed her term as the Regional SSE Coordinator. She is a mother of an SSE and a YA child, and an active member of the Greenville, SC Center.

Spotlight: Ft. Lauderdale

The YAs of the Fort Lauderdale Sai Center try to meet once a month for jam sessions, where we practice bhajans. We also practice

different songs and multi faith prayers. Usually we will go out after these jam sessions to get some food and just talk and get to know each YA a little better.

