



May 25th - 28th, 2018

radiosai

2018 ANNUAL REGION 3 RETREAT

Annual SSE Report

Miles College, Alabama

Duty, Discipline, and Devotion



SSE CARNIVAL

A football field. Many games. Hot Sun. Lots of fun. The first ever SSE Carnival Day. p. 02

SSE PRESENTATION

A humble offering at the divine Lotus Feet of our Bhagawan from the SSE Region 3 Team. p. 02

SSE EXHIBITION

An interactive and exciting day where the SSE children meet the regional members. p. 03

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND WORKSHOPS

by Dr. Joe Phanuef, Dr. Sunam Gyamtso, and More

Talks and interactive sessions that occurred throughout the retreat. Inspiring anecdotes from Sai Alumni. Short stories with profound lessons. Tips from musical maestros. Spiritual growth and unlimited fun.

FIND OUT MORE ON P. 03





CARNIVAL DAY!!!

Pictured to the left

Swami has showered so much divine grace on us during this retreat. We planned lots of indoor and outdoor activities with different venues, keeping the children in mind. However, we forgot about the weather. When the team pointed out that it may rain during the retreat, everyone's stomach grew knots and became twisted. Despite the horrible news, our faith in Swami made us continue with our plan and ultimately Swami helped us and rewarded us with colors in the sky during a sunny day. As we were setting up all of the activities across the football field, it began to shape up similar to an actual carnival, on a smaller scale. It was very nice to see how excited all the children were when they first came onto the field and saw all of these different activities. As the children began rotating through a particular station called the Wet Sponge Relay Race, we could see that the children really enjoyed the games. In fact, at the end, even the adult and YA volunteers joined in to play the games! Many of the children wanted to play the game over and over again. Other popular activities included the tug-a-war and the arts and crafts stations. After a couple hours of a lot of fun, everyone became tired quickly due to the heat and the activities had to end early. However, other than that, everyone really enjoyed the carnival since it was different, engaging for the kids, and also a fun activity for everyone to take part in.

SSE PRESENTATION OFFERING

Pictured below

The SSE presentation was titled "Duty, Discipline, and Devotion", which explored the magnitude of the divine mission of Swami and how it was carried out. A small discussion of Swami's childhood between students, motivated by curiosity, revealed many important lessons along the way. This presentation was adapted from the book titled "His Story" and the Radiosai Program titled "Sathya to Sai." One thing that everyone enjoyed this year was that it was not another skit or play but rather a presentation. The format of a simple discussion between the students was new and intriguing, since the questions raised were genuine and also relatable to the audience. Incorporating the musical program into this discussion and using the genuine curiosity of the children to explore and answer many important questions was something that was unique and engaging to the audience members as well. On a more technical note, it seemed as though the audio and video background was not in perfect synch with the performance, but it was still complementary to the whole offering. Overall, the unique presentation style was both insightful and engaging to the audience as well as the children.



WORKSHOPS & GUEST SPEAKERS

Our Keynote Speakers Dr. Joe and Dr. Sunam spent their precious time with the children and had heart to heart conversations. The content reflected in every child's actions throughout the retreat.

First, Dr. Joe gave a musical presentation on "Surrendering." He talked about how Swami is in everyone and how we can feel Swami's love by loving everyone else. He also talked about how that love brings a smile on our face. Furthermore, Dr. Sunam spoke about music, sadhana (practice), and how to render music to God. It was very nice for the children as Dr. Sunam sat with all of them one on one and taught them valuable musical lessons using the harmonium. He also mentioned how important it is to tell stories. Our SSE children also shared their stories with him. Moreover, Arthi Gobinathan's workshop was innovative in bringing other cultures, specifically Native American culture, into the Sai lessons that we all learn. Incorporating music of the two worlds was very interesting, especially considering the retreat was at Miles College, a very historical place. Many popular Sanskrit bhajans were sung in English to bridge the cultural divide, which was very novel. Brother Balu Karnam, a student of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, gave a speech about Swami and his pets to Groups 1 and 2. The way he expressed his experiences of Swami's Life brought smiles to everyone's faces. Sister Anuradha Venkateswaran, a Balvikas alumni and former student of SSSIHL, focused her speech on developing devotion and love for Bhagawan. She shared experiences from Swami's life to illustrate his Omnipresence, Omnipotence, and Omniscience. Her interactive presentation was peppered with several personal experiences from her days as a Sai student. The children actively participated and grasped that Swami can indeed be their best friend and closest confidant. All of these workshops helped all the children in different aspects, which blended together very nicely over the course of the retreat.

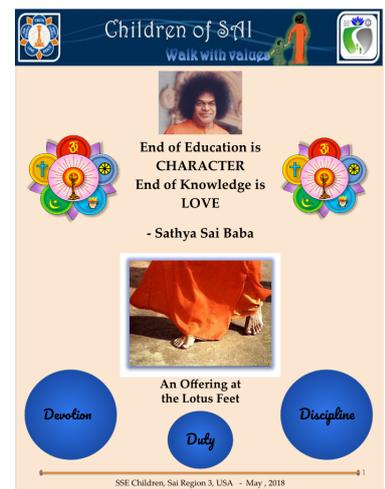


SSE EXHIBITION & REGIONAL JOURNAL

Pictured to the left

The SSE Exhibition occurred on the very last day. It is a fun activity where children in Groups 1 to 4 shared what they learned throughout the year. In this way, the bridge between the SSE and Regional members was connected through a learning experience. Featured parts of the display were the national initiative "One with Sai" and the regional journal "Children of Sai." Having seen this exhibit for the past couple of years, it's always a very fun time for both the children who are presenting and the audience members, who explore the exhibit. It's a creative outlet to share all the annual activities with the entire Region 3 Sai Family. This

year, the only thing that might have been helpful would be to direct the audience members through a natural flow of the exhibit with signs perhaps. Since the exhibit happened during break time as well, the number of people grew a little bit crowded in the hallways and may have been alleviated with more direction of flow. However, other than that logistical nuance, the exhibit was very interactive and fun. The second part was the journal full of articles from the SSE children titled "Children of Sai." This was a very nice addition. All of the children, parents, and adults in general were very pleased. The journal was a representation of whatever was dear to the children across the region in a way where the children could present it in any way they chose. Compiling everyone's work together as a small offering to Swami was a very wholesome way to end the year at the retreat, which brought smiles to everyone's faces.



Thoughts Corner

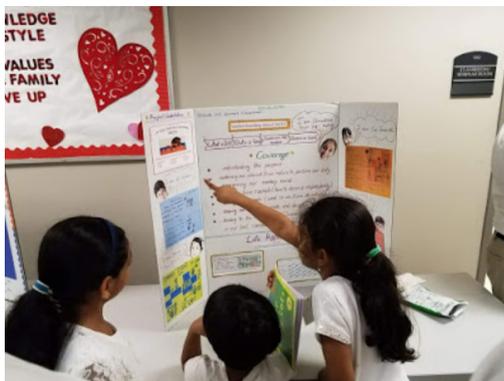


The retreat was really fun this year. One of the things I really liked about it was the carnival. The carnival had so many games and activities.
- Anonymous

My favorite part of the SSE retreat was Anu Aunty's workshop. It was fun hearing all the pranks Swami used to do.

Also, I liked Arthi Aunty's workshop because I learned more about Native Americans and a song about them.

- Amrita Nayak; Fort Lauderdale Sai Center



I enjoyed the SSE Exhibits. However, I didn't get enough time to explore other exhibits after my presentation. I liked Anu Aunty's talk with the SSE kids. I also liked Sunam Uncle's session with the SSE kids.

- Sruthi Swaminathan; Fort Lauderdale Sai Center

What do you think about outdoor activities such as the SSE Carnival?



I think they are very beneficial. We learn to work together in team activities, and build our stamina, all in a Sai environment.

- Lasya Ambatiputi; Atlanta Sai Center

It is definitely a great idea, but it would be better if it were done at a time during which no other programs were taking place.

- Shrimayi Karanam; Birmingham Sai Center



It is a great idea to be outdoors rather than inside, and it is very fun as well.

- Subbu Uncle; Charlotte Sai Center



Thank you Swami... For an inspirational, fun-filled, and memorable annual 2018 Sai Region 3 Retreat!

What was your favorite part of the retreat?

The SSE Carnival.
- Kushal Hegneshwar; Anderson Sai Center

The SSE Presentation was a great experience. Usually, we explore what Swami's life was like, but this time we put ourselves in Swami's shoes! It was a truly eye-opening experience.

- Bhaveshsai Reddy; West Palm Beach Sai Center

Getting to meet people from across the region and participating in devotional singing.

- Saisri; Tampa Bay Sai Center



How do you feel about SSE performances?

It is fun to be able to work with SSE Students from across the region to create one offering from all the centers in Region 3.

- Varun Narayan; Charlotte Sai Center