



Cultural Inclusion and Expansion Initiatives in Region 7

During Center officers orientation, the regional officers team introduced the Cultural Inclusion and Expansion (CIE) initiative via a skit and it was well received. During the Devotion wing breakout session, the concept of CIE was discussed in detail and the devotional coordinators felt that it is time we implemented this initiative as it would benefit the current and new center members. Study circles were conducted in all 21 centers and groups across the region. This report covers few activities exemplifying CIE in action.

The Sathya Sai Center (SSC) of Santa Rosa conducted a study circle on the CIE modules to understand the need for expansion and reaching out to the community, not only to bring Sai's teachings to everyone, but also for our own transformation.

There was a shift in thinking while planning future events to be mindful of inclusion to ensure the needs of all attendees are considered. Multifaith prayers were re-introduced in the center. The altar is now designed very simple, with one picture of Sathya Sai Baba, some candles and flowers.

In March 2019, a unique service project was planned where the local communities were invited for the first time. Contact was made to different communities with fliers and e mails. This day included hands-on demo of making items used for service projects. These items include ponchos, beanies, scarves, greeting cards, bracelets, decorative candles, toiletry kits, toys and beds for animal shelter, etc. Each station for making the above items was served by a Sai volunteer. These items that take a year to make by volunteers were completed in a day! Items made during the day were donated to the local community. This opportunity provided a platform for people to come together to volunteer in a service project, learn a new skill and meet people who have similar interest. This project was very well received by center membership and as everyone experienced a lot of joy in serving along with the members of local communities.



Pic: 1 Spoon and Egg Race



Pic: 2 Passing the parcel

This year the Easter celebration was planned outdoors for the first time, around mid-morning in the backyard of a devotee's home. There was Easter egg hunt and games for all ages, tactfully designed with Sai Baba's quotes and teachings. Pastel colored posters with the Human Values and sub-values were hung as decorations in the backyard. Easter songs were sung followed by a picnic lunch. This was a well-planned informal meeting, where much laughter and fun was shared.



SSC of Central San Jose, the largest center in the region, has been very receptive to this initiative. Over the past few years, the Center has been serving low income Hispanic/Latino families in Morgan Hill by tutoring the children. In April this year, the SSE children of the Central San Jose Center hosted “Sai Chat”, a human values based fun afternoon filled with games and music. As part of this, the center invited and hosted the children and parents of the Morgan Hill community. The universality of human values was experienced by all the attendees.



Pic: 3 "Sai Chat" Participants



Pic: 4 Discussion during Snack Time

As part of the “Service Talks: Love in Action” program featuring the national service coordinator, Alex Grana, partners from the organization served by SSC of Central San Jose were invited. This included Voices Academy (local bilingual charter school), Willow Glen Convalescent Center, and Sunnyvale Homeless Shelter. The guests listened to presentations about the center, its approach to service, based on Sathya Sai’s teachings, the variety of service activities, etc. The centers expressed gratitude to them for allowing Sai volunteers an opportunity to serve. The partners in turn shared their gratitude and experience of working with Sai volunteers, the benefits of service, their continuing needs and request for continued partnership in serving the needy.

Region 7 centers have been very receptive to this initiative and continue to strive for more opportunities to experience cultural inclusion and expansion.

More information about CIE initiative is available at www.sathyasai.us/cie.