

Love in Action

Newsletter for the Sathya Sai Organization of USA -
Region 3



Summer 2008
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Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, US Virgin Islands

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Uniting Our Region

Sai Ram. Welcome to the first issue of the newsletter for the devotees of The Sathya Sai Organization of the USA – Southeast, Region 3. With Swami’s Grace, this first issue has been able to come to fruition.

Our beloved Swami emphasizes the importance of Unity. Let us pray that this vehicle for communication will contribute to further uniting our region towards our efforts for self-transformation.

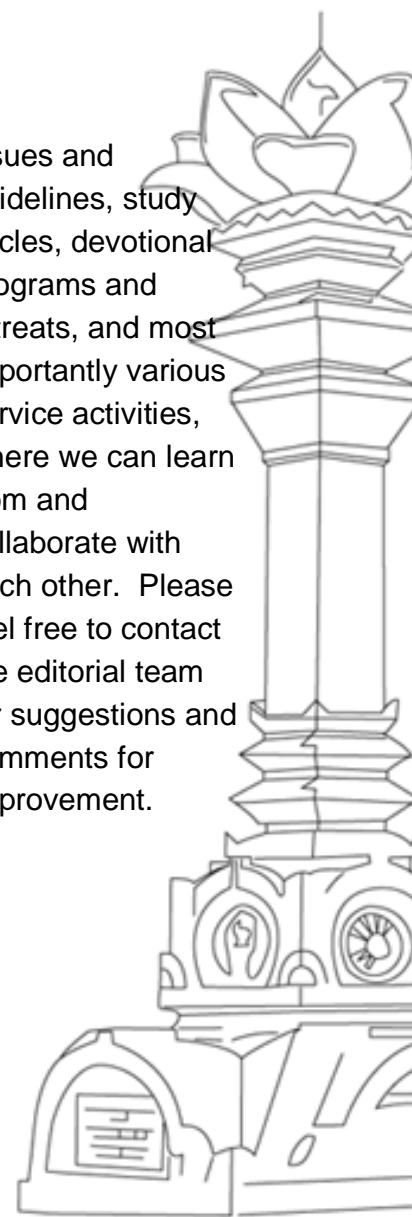
This newsletter’s purpose will be on

presenting articles with a practical focus to help educate, inspire, and unify our region.

This first issue contains a list of centers in our region with their meeting times. (Please contact your center president if contact information is needed.) Each issue will feature a “Center Spotlight”, where we can learn about the centers in our region.

In future issues we will have sections devoted to center

issues and guidelines, study circles, devotional programs and retreats, and most importantly various service activities, where we can learn from and collaborate with each other. Please feel free to contact the editorial team for suggestions and comments for improvement.





“Selfless service should be regarded as the purpose for which man is given life”

Sathya Sai Baba

SELFLESS SERVICE

Sai Ram, Sai Brothers and Sisters:

Before we engage in selfless service it is important for us to know the answers to the following fundamental questions on service. It is also important to understand how service delivered under the banner of the Sathya Sai Organization is different from other organizations.

Why do Service?

Swami says, “**Selfless service should be regarded as the purpose for which man is given life.**” By engaging in selfless service, we fulfill the very purpose for which we have taken birth. Swami says, “**We are born to learn not to be born again.**” If this is our ultimate goal, we have to immerse ourselves in selfless service. Therefore, the manner in which we do service should not be taken lightly. The very act of serving another is a serious matter that

should be viewed as a blessing and not merely a chore.

How to serve?

Service begins with reading and understanding Swami's teachings. Swami has provided us the true meaning of service. Each day should be filled with time that is set aside for service. This practice will increase our awareness of service until it becomes a continuous offering devoid of ego. Ultimately, true service begins when the doer is no longer looking for the fruit of the action.

Where to serve?

Service begins in the home. Start by serving mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters. Then, we can go outside the home to serve others. Swami says “**Let there be no pomp, pageantry, and exhibition. The Lord cares for**

the feeling behind the act and not for the fanfare and fuss.”

Who to serve?

Swami says that man alone is capable of service and that service is man's special glory and unique skill. Given that we are born as man, let us not waste the precious time that God has bestowed upon us. We must make use of every resource available to help the helpless, sick, and needy.

What Service does to us?

Service reshapes and reforms us. We are the beneficiaries of the service and not the people who are recipients of the service. The joy and bliss that we receive by engaging in service is beyond description.

*Geetha Kamath
Regional Service
Coordinator*

“You must always be prepared to dedicate your life to serve society. That is the real service. “

Sathya Sai Baba



Call for Volunteers

3

With Swami's Grace, a region wide service project will take place on Saturday, September 27, 2008 in Clearwater, Florida. This will be the sixth medical camp in our region. We anticipate approximately one thousand visitors to attend and therefore we need to be ready with at least two hundred

volunteers from throughout our region, including those with and without medical backgrounds. Also, any centers wishing to host future medical camps are requested to send members to participate and take part and gain experience. Further details regarding

specific assignments, location, and further needs will be forthcoming. Please contact: Service Coordinator, Tampa Bay Center, Sunita Bouri at sbouri@earthlink.net or Regional Service Coordinator, Geetha Kamath MD at gjkamath@gmail.com if any questions arise."

Why have a Medical Camp?

A medical camp is a wonderful center wide and often region wide service project. This service project provides the benefit of uniting the devotees together to serve their fellow man. Both health care and non health care volunteers are able to contribute. Swami emphasizes that a healthy body is a prerequisite for optimal spiritual growth. Many in this country have concerns regarding their health and do not have access to

adequate healthcare. The goal of these medical camps is to provide education, comfort and screening. The visitors are not patients since medical treatment is not provided. We provide visitors a loving environment in which they spend quality time with physicians and nurses who help with education and screening. Proper referral to free/subsidized clinics, state and county assistance

programs via social workers is a critical part of the camp so that follow-up and treatment can be set up. Our main goal is to show the attendees that we care about them, and that we are concerned with health and well being. Our efforts are at providing a venue in which the exchange of love between the volunteers and visitors spiritually helps transform both.

SOUTHEAST REGION CENTERS

STATE	CENTER	MEETING TIME
AL	Huntsville	Sun 4-6PM
FL	Cocoa	Sat 10AM-Noon
	Ft Walton Beach	Sun 11AM - Noon
	Jacksonville	Thu 7-9PM
	Miami	Thu 8PM
	Miami Central	Sun 9-11:15AM
	Miami South	Sun 6:20PM
	Orlando	Sun 5-7:30PM
	Palm Bay	Sun 4PM -6:15PM
	Tallahassee	Sun 5PM
	Tampa Bay	Sun 10AM-Noon
	West Palm Beach	Sun 5PM
GA	Atlanta	Sun 4-6PM, SSE 3-4PM
NC	Ashville	Sun 3:30PM – 5:30PM (1 st and 3 rd Sundays)
	Cary	Thu 7-9PM
	Charlotte	Sun 10AM-Noon
	Greensboro	Sun 10AM-12:15PM (First Sun 3:30-5:30PM)
	Raleigh	Sun 4-6PM
SC	Anderson	Sun 2-4PM, (second Sun 1-3PM)
US Virgin Islands	St. Thomas	Thu 7-8PM



To be an SSE teacher is to also be a dedicated student of Sai Baba's teachings.

Sai Spiritual Education - SSE

Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) is the seed of Sathya Sai Educare. SSE in other countries, as well as the SSEHV (Sathya Sai Education in Human Values) program, has evolved out of the early success of the Bal Vikas program in India. All of Sai Baba's teachings are contained in the SSE curriculum. To be an SSE teacher is to also be a dedicated student of Sai Baba's teachings. The foundation of Sai Baba's teachings is the Five Human Values. The pillars are Love, Truth, Right Action, Peace, and Non-Violence. The SSE teacher, as exemplar, is drawing out these values from the children; "fertilizing" the tender minds of the children with His teachings.

In July, 2002 I was

in Prasanthi Nilayam during the seva conference. As part of that conference, I attended an exhibit at the Hillview Stadium. Each country's Sai devotees had a booth depicting Sai's service projects around the world. One of the exhibits was of the grama (village) seva (service) projects that are being conducted in villages in India. When I cautiously put my head into the door of the grama seva exhibit and looked around, a young and very enthusiastic girl of about 20 hurried over to me. With obvious joy, she showed me around the exhibit. At that time, I had arrived in India in kind of a dark place. It was not too long after September 11, and I, like many

Americans, was concerned about the problems I saw in my country. This enthusiastic young adult Sai devotee pointed out all of the problems in the villages in India that Swami's students were addressing. She then turned to me and said "All of these problems that we are having here; these are all correctible problems." And then, with great earnestness, she continued, "And the problems that you are having in your country; those are different problems, but those are correctible problems, too!" I knew that was Swami speaking to me through that young girl. The young Sai devotees, in India and in the United States, have a special role to play in Baba's mission. With their enthusiasm and

SSE Corner



.... we should at least practice just one or two of His teachings wholeheartedly.

SSE (Continued)

devotion, “their lives are His message”.

In our southeast region we have 185 Sai Spiritual Education students (Swami’s saplings) at 14 Sai centers with SSE programs. In 2007, the national education coordinator, Bernice Mead, came to our region to do an SSE workshop for the SSE teachers on “Life Application”. Life application is that part of the SSE lesson plan where the students are given some activity to do during the week to put into practice the Five Human Values. Recently, the Jacksonville Sai Center hosted a wonderful children’s day retreat with an emphasis on life application. The theme of the retreat was “Practicing the Five Human Values”. All the SSE students that

participated in the retreat put on inspiring presentations. The Sai magician, Prashant Bavaraju, also put on a fun and uplifting magic performance on practicing the Five Human Values. We were all reminded of how important it is to put Swami’s teachings into practice in our daily lives. **“The teacher should not try to rule through the easier means of fear, for that is full of dangerous consequences to the pupils. Try rather the path of Love. Teachers should themselves take to the discipline of meditation and prayer; this will give them the inner quiet they sorely need. They should create an atmosphere of plain living and high thinking, for pupils will unconsciously accept them as**

heroes and begin imitating them. They should hand over to the next generation the riches that past generations have amassed such as spiritual disciplines and practices.”

Sathya Sai Baba, Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (compiled by Loraine Burrows), page 127.

Swami has said that, if we can not practice all of His teachings, we should at least practice just one or two of His teachings wholeheartedly. By practicing Sai Baba’s teachings we can overcome all problems in this world.

*Robin Gellner
Regional Education
Coordinator*

“Life is
Love,
Live in
Love”



“Always
Be
Happy”

YA Regional Retreat – Atlanta, GA – February 9 '08

With the grace and inspiration of our dearest Swami, the YA's of our region participated in a one day retreat in Atlanta, GA on February 9, 2008. The theme was “Ideal Sai Youth: Messengers of Sai Love: Reliving the WYC experience”. The purpose of the retreat was to continue our journey in the relentless pursuit of becoming an Ideal Sai Youth and to discuss post World Youth Conference initiatives.

There were workshops in the morning session on human values-based activities to be used for various EHV workshops and WYC Jeopardy with questions relating to different events that went on during the World Youth Conference.

The YA's had an opportunity to express Swami's love in the form of mural paintings and to fill them with many divine messages like “Life is Love, Live in Love”, and “Always Be Happy”. The murals were donated to Sunrise Senior Homes in Atlanta.

The next part of the retreat was called “WYC Experience”. The YA speakers, through their presentation, took everyone on a journey to Parthi, reliving the WYC events, and the love that was shared by Swami to all of the delegates. The YA's own personal experiences were inspiring to people who were not able to make it physically to

Parthi. Another very well received activity during the retreat was a team-building workshop led by brothers and sisters from Raleigh. An overview of the SSEHV program and some of the projects under this program was given by Mrs. Robin Gellner, the SSE coordinator of the region.

The Miami YA's presented a wonderful skit on the 11-second meditation that was prescribed by Swami during the WYC. The take-home message was that the 11-second meditation is more about the way of life. After the skit, the YA's surrendered one of their bad qualities in a letter to Swami.

*Sai Krishna Mudulodu
(Regional YA rep) and
Kushal Sheth*

Center Spotlight: Greensboro



Where is Greensboro?

Greensboro is located in the north central part of North Carolina, midway between Raleigh and Charlotte. It is a part of the Piedmont triad, which consists of Winston Salem, Greensboro and High Point. The popular resort areas of the Blue Ridge and Smokey mountains are about one hour away and 3 hours away, respectively. Devotees from our center come from this large draw area. Some families drive up to one and a half hours regularly to attend our center meetings.

What is the history of the center?

Activities were started by Elaine Henderson when she moved to Greensboro in 1986 from the Miami Area. She had been oriented by Bettina

Interview with center president, Deepak Deshpande

Biggart, (who has been instrumental in helping start most of the centers in our region). An official Sai Center was formed with Swami's blessing in 1990. Meetings were conducted in devotees' homes and the primary focus was on study circles and service. Then in the early 1990's several Indian families moved into the area, including Jaya Krishnaswami, who brought wonderful bhajan singing into the center. Several members attended the 1991 SE regional retreat in Atlanta, where they learned and were inspired by fellow devotees, especially guest speaker Dr. Sam Sandweiss. GL Ramanand (a former Swami student) served as center president, followed by Ramesh (another Swami student). Swami had sent these devoted individuals

to help us develop as a center and learn from those who had first hand learned at the feet of Swami. Many of the original devotees have moved out of the area. For years the center consisted of 6-8 members, until the past 2-3 years, when we grew to over 40 members. On average, 25 members come at a regular meeting. We are blessed to have many long time devoted Sai families to help us continue to grow.

What are your service activities?

We make service a high priority at our center. There are three ongoing year round projects. The first is visiting an assisted living facility the 1st Sunday of the month. At least 30 residents take part regularly. The SSE children are able join together in singing songs, playing games and spending time with the residents. On the 2nd or 3rd Sunday

we provide the feeding for the local shelter, where about 30 people reside. The third ongoing project is the Pillow making, which we have been doing for the past 8 years. We design and make homemade pillows for patients to use after radiation therapy to help avoid arm friction. We help supply four regional cancer hospitals in the area, making about 250 pillows per year. We give about 50 at a time. One design is for arm support and another for neck support. In addition to these three ongoing projects we will have additional projects for special occasions like Swami's birthday or Christmas, where we take up food collection and toy collection for the shelter. For the past 2 years, we have provided a sanitary kit for new mothers through the Easwamma Trust program in India. They consist of a homemade blanket for the baby, home

“We are truly like a happy family”



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Please forward your comments and suggestions for future issues. We welcome your feedback

Om Sai Ram

NEXT ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

- IMPORTANCE OF STUDY CIRCLE
- CENTER GUIDELINES

Interview with center president, Deepak Deshpande (Continued)

stitched clothing and cap for the baby, and a reusable diaper. These kits are assembled yearly. 50-60 were brought to India as part of the Regional Pilgrimage in 2006. 45 were sent the year before. Also, last year we assembled a relief packet (70 packets distributed) with clothing, slippers, toiletry and food for refugees in Sri Lanka.

Tell us about your other Center

programs: We meet every Sunday, rotating each week at one of four devotee homes. The meetings start with devotional singing for the first hour. The past 2 years we have been trying to incorporate more English bhajans into our program. The second hour the children have their Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) classes and the adults rotate each week with study circle, bhajan learning session, or the Pillow Service Project. We

have about 15 people participate with our once a month study circle. The YA's at our center are very strong in helping with the service program. We have 11 kids participate in the SSE program. We have 4 trained teachers and over the past 3 years, under the direction of our SSE coordinator, KrishnaPriya Varanasi, have been blessed with a wonderful, well attended program. Until 3 years ago we only had 2 kids!

What are the challenges facing your center?

Finding a common place for meeting since now our group is larger. We also hope to incorporate a sound system into our program now that we are larger and growing. Traveling distance is an issue for many devotees. This is one reason we conduct all of our activities on Sundays, rather than different

days of the week. The combining of many events into one day greatly increases our participation in service projects and study circles.

What are you most proud about the Greensboro Sai Center? People are very cooperative and there is center unity. We are truly like a happy family.