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Sewa International

Service to Humanity is Service to the Divine

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Sewa International’s 16th National Conference: Integrated Approach to Service Brings Inner Joy

Washington, DC (May 14, 2022): In the backdrop of monumental relief work done during the COVID-19 pandemic in the US, and its second wave in India in 2020-2021, Sewa International volunteers gathered for Sewa’s 16th Annual National Conference in Washington, DC.

Meeting after two virtual conferences in 2020 and 2021, nearly 100 Sewa volunteers, including Sewa’s board members, advisors, and the executive team, met on May 7 and 8 in the nation’s capital. Volunteers from Sewa’s 19 chapters participated in the conference.

As the air filled with the excitement of meeting each other after a long gap, Sewa teams discussed and debated strategies to keep the growth and the momentum generated last year by its volunteers’ brave and timely work. Sewa International raised over \$45 million from various corporations, foundations, and individuals for its pandemic relief efforts in 2021, and catapulted to the tenth place from its 375th spot last year on Benevity’s list of “Top Ten Charitable Causes Supported by Companies”.

Ramakant Rambhatla, Vice President and Chief Engineer of Invacare Corporation, a US oxygen concentrator manufacturer was felicitated for helping Sewa procure the much-needed oxygen concentrators to help India deal with the second wave of the pandemic. Invacare dramatically scaled up its production to help Sewa serve people in need. “We wanted to help and got a call from Sewa. We had a conference call on a Saturday morning at which our top Invacare officials participated. On Sunday, our production facilities geared up to meet the demand,” Rambhatla told the appreciative Sewa audience.

Sewa International also felicitated organization’s Honorary Board Member Prof. Radheshyam Dwivedi at the conference. Portraying Prof. Dwivedi’s decades long service to the community and his unwavering commitment to Sewa’s vision, mission and work, Prof. Yashwant Pathak, member, Sewa’s board of advisors said Prof. Dwivedi personified an ideal Sewa volunteer. Sewa’s President Arun Kankani, former President Prof. Sree Sreenath and members of the executive team felicitated Prof. Dwivedi.

Integrated Approach

“Human greed and a western belief that humans run everything has caused a grave imbalance in the world causing man-made catastrophes. In 1950 the world population was 2.5 billion, and within 70 years the human population has exploded to eight billion. Only an integrated approach to life as espoused by Hindu philosophy can save us from a disaster,” Suresh Jain, member, Sewa’s board of directors, said in his key note address at the inaugural session.

“Time is now ripe for Sewa to frame a Hindu faith-based service concept that promotes a holistic and symbiotic relationship with mother earth, culture, society, and family. Guided by dharma, this approach to life can create balance and effectively control deforestation, global warming, and other such destructive phenomena.”

“Many of today’s service organizations are religious in nature, and they play a critical role in policy making in the West. They raise funds and resources through their congregations but mixing service with congregational goals can be problematic. Sewa should build a global narrative where the happiness of all and considering the whole world as one family are the principles guiding our outreach to communities and to those in need,” Suresh Jain said.

Emphasizing the extended family-like atmosphere that inspires and binds Sewa volunteers, President Arun Kankani asked Sewa chapters to share their experiences and resources to build sustainable teams. “What got us here may not take us to the next level. To sustain growth and promote volunteering in the community, we need to organize more events that connect us with each other at a deeper level,” he said.



Participants of the Sewa International’s 16th National Conference posing for a photo at the conference venue in Washington DC.

Sewa for Inner Joy

In his concluding remarks, Saumitra Gokhale, Global Coordinator for the Hindu Swayamasevak Sangh, said Sewa is now at an inflection point. “The organization achieved phenomenal growth while serving during the pandemic. We all want to serve as much as we can as it increases our inner joy. Compartmentalizing life into different activities is an often recommended western technique but it results in more stress. The Sewa way is to integrate our family, work, and service to live with joy,” he said.

“The great Indian epic Mahabharata clearly says that the divine forces always align with the well deliberated, thought-through, and boldly implemented good actions. Volunteers and donors are Sewa’s great strength and caring and appreciating them will help Sewa scale greater heights,” Gokhale said.



Sewa International felicitated Sewa’s Honorary Board Member Prof. Radheshyam Dwivedi (seated) at the 16th National Conference. Sewa’s Vice President, Organization, Ashwani Garg, Sewa’s Board Member Dr. Suresh Jain, Sewa’s Washington Chapter’s President Vishal Khera,

Sewa's President Arun Kankani, Sewa's Board Member Sridhar Talanki, Sewa's former President Prof. Sree Sreenath and Sewa's Vice President Venkat Subramanyam (left to right) were present on the occasion.

About Sewa International

Sewa International (www.sewausea.org) is a 501 (c)(3) Hindu faith-based charitable nonprofit that works in the areas of disaster recovery, education, and development. Sewa has 43 Chapters across the USA and serves regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin.