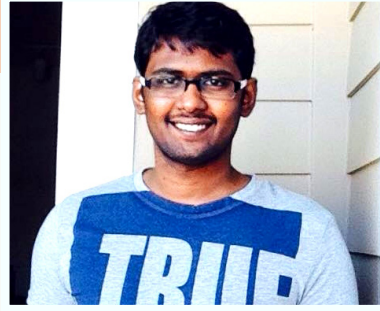


VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Praveen Kumar hails from Eluru, a town of about 217,000 people in the West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. Eluru has a prominent place in the history of India and Andhra Pradesh as Vengi, near Eluru, was the capital of the Salankayanas, the Vishnukudinas, and the Eastern Chalukyas from the 2nd century CE to the 12th century CE.



Praveen came to the US in July 2010 and currently works for Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina in Durham, NC. He joined Sewa International's Raleigh (RTP) Chapter two years ago, and says he is amazed how much better we can serve communities when we work as a team. Coordinating projects with his fellow team members, he says the chapter has addressed important issues and contributed to projects involving children, the homeless, food banks, and offering health and fitness workshops.

Praveen is one of the very active members of the Sewa RTP team which coordinates its efforts with local non-profits and large NGOs like Habitat for Humanity. Committed to "Together We Serve Better" motto, Praveen is involved with "Spike for Sewa" -- the annual volleyball tournament for charity, and a variety of activities of Sewa in the Chapter.

"What else do we need other than the satisfaction we get serving others?" he says, and is firm in his belief that we not only serve the local community but support various programs globally as Sewa International volunteers. "It is a great honor to be associated with Sewa International," he proudly proclaims.



Sewa achieves GuideStar Platinum profile level - the highest level of recognition offered by GuideStar, the world's largest source of information about nonprofit organizations. The Platinum level indicates the organizations commitment to transparency and focus on measuring its progress and results. The status elevates Sewa International to the select group of nonprofits to have achieved this honor.



Upcoming Events

- Aug 01 : San Jose, CA – East Bay and South Bay LEAD community Service Project.
- Aug 05 : Cleveland OH – Yoga as Medicine (AMA Category 1, 3.5 CME Credits)
- Aug 05 : Houston, TX – Managing Diabetes through Yoga
- Aug 06 : Montville, NJ – Blood donation drive
- Aug 12 : Roswell, GA – *Run for Sewa* – a 5K run fundraising event
- Aug 18-27 : Fremont, CA – Stop Diabetes through Yoga – A ten-day Yoga workshop
- Aug 20 : Cary, NC – *Pancharatna Samarpanam* - a musical and dance tribute to the musical saint Tyagaraja
- Aug 26 : Cary, NC – *Spike for Sewa* – a fundraising volleyball tournament to support children's projects
- Aug 26 : Schaumburg, IL – Workshop on "Health Care Proxy and Living Will Preparation"

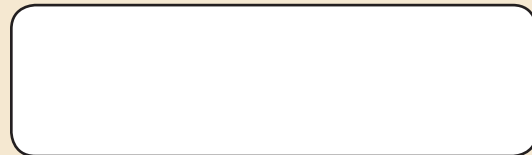
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Gujarat Flood Relief: On the Ground Report

The floods in Gujarat, due to heavy rains and depression in the southeast, have played havoc with two million people directly affected. As of the last count 129 people have died; 800 villages have been inundated; 200 villages were without power; 17,000 were rescued; 20,000 were treated medically; 70,000 moved to safer ground; 112,000 evacuated to safety; and five national highways, 20 state highways, and 945 roads were closed to vehicular traffic. Rain continued to pummel the state.



Rains collapsed a building in Ahmedabad



IAF personnel to the rescue



A man pushing his bicycle in flood waters

The rains have paralyzed infrastructure. Tens of thousands of cotton and millet farmers have been affected. Ahmedabad International Airport had to divert many flights due to flooded runways. More

than 10,000 people were rescued in Ahmedabad alone. The rains have brought the life in Surat, Ahmedabad, Idar, and Valsad to a virtual halt.

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Executive's Corner

Dear Sewa Supporters:

I would like to share with you my thoughts on the significance of Sewa -- selfless service -- in one's life, and how its practice can help us realize our true "self", and who we really are. Many of us are already experiencing the joy of sharing and giving. I invite all of you to experiment and experience that joy in your own surrounding and environment. Sewa is performed with *tan* (physical effort), *man* (mental faculties), and *dhan* (financial resources). The basic substance -- you can call it *Reality*, or *Atman*, or *Soul*, -- the core or the kernel of everything in this universe is the same. We are all expressions of the same divinity. Sewa is a medium for us to realize that connection we all have with that *Reality*. While performing Sewa with an attitude that the person I am serving (*savya*) and I (*sewak*) have the same ancestry --

that is, we are both expressions of the same divinity -- then that Sewa becomes divine action and helps us expand our consciousness. It brings both meaning to our actions and tremendous joy to the one served, and the one serving.

Sewa International, through its 40 chapters in USA, has many projects like feeding the hungry, tutoring underserved children, and serving needy people through the family services program. I invite you to participate this summer in any of these or any other project that you may be aware of and experience the divinity inside you and the *true joy* of serving.

Ashwani Garg

Ashwani Garg
VP Admin



Going the extra mile

What do you do when you are one of the many urban poor in America, and are stuck in the suburbs with few transportation options for getting to jobs and healthcare?

This was the situation that Tim found himself not so long ago. Tim used to live in a trailer home in the suburbs of Cleveland. A kind, genial man in his early 60's, a good part of his adult life was spent taking care of his ailing, disabled mother. He chose not to go to college, get a full time job, or get married and raise a family. His mother owned an ancient 1991 Honda with a lot of miles on it. Their life was full of struggles, but they were happy as a family.

It all changed when Tim's mother suddenly passed away. With his mother's social security gone, and with only \$200 as his monthly earnings, he was in dire straits. Tim was able to find work, but the biggest hurdle was to find reliable transportation to work. His mother's car was dying, and with the harsh Cleveland winter just around the corner, he started reaching out to the community to get help.

Sewa International heard about Tim's need. We accept vehicle donations, and instead of selling these cars we offer these vehicles to deserving individuals. Vijay Khosla donated his car to Sewa, and Sewa volunteers helped in doing the title transfer, first to Sewa, and then to Tim, who did not have to bear any costs for the title transfer, emission testing, etc.

In 2016 Sewa International distributed 18 vehicles to those in need. One of those was a divorced mother



Paru Narahari handing over the car keys to the car to Tim. She and her husband Sunil are the Sewa Cleveland coordinators for the Car Donation Program

who had lost all hope, and getting a car meant she could go back to school and get re-skilled. Sewa has also donated to other community organizations like the Catholic Charities, South Sudanese Refugee Community Center, and the Jewish Community Center. Sewa International's car donation program is based on the belief that there is a strong relationship between social mobility, transportation, and poverty, and hopes that more in the community will step up and donate vehicles to help Sewa International volunteers go that extra mile in this great initiative of enabling those in need.

Sewa North Jersey Chapter Adopts Stretch of Route 46

The Sewa Chapter of North Jersey, led by Hari Samanthula, has adopted a one-mile stretch of Route 46 in Parsippany, NJ.

Cleaning both sides of the road means that it is indeed two miles of cleaning – removing litter, bagging the litter in trash bags, etc.

This is typically a state and local town-supported program, and so rules about how an adoption agency has to work and what their responsibilities are depends on state regulations. As the work involved depends on the nature of the highway/road to be maintained, the number of hours a volunteer



...continued from page 1

Gujarat floods

Over 250 Sewa International volunteers are engaged in more than 70 villages in relief operations in Banaskantha and Patan districts of North Gujarat, large parts of which continues to reel under floods. Sewa volunteers are working on the ground. They have --

- Distributed 160,000 food packets, medicine and water bottles to 15,000 affected people
- Started relief help centers in Radhanpur and Deesa (in Banaskantha)
- Alerted people living in low-lying areas affected by the release of excess water from Sipu and Dantiwada dams – enabling them to move to safer ground with their valuables and cattle.

- Provided shelter to thousands of people in private hospitals and temples.

Sewa has released \$10,000 for immediate relief, distributed fund-raising appeals in India and the US, and is planning on the how and where of rehabilitation of people in the flood affected areas. Sewa International President, Prof. Sree Sreenath, said "We commit to complete financial transparency in Sewa International. We ensure efficient use of your donations to be used for beneficiaries of Gujarat floods with the lowest overheads among all our peers in the industry". He urged everyone to donate generously. He reminded donors that many American corporations and businesses contribute matching funds and to avail of that facility in this cause.



Volunteers serving food to the flood victims in Radhanpur, Banaskantha district, North Gujarat.



Donors can go online to the following site -- www.sewausea.org/donate -- and select "2017 Gujarat and Rajasthan Floods" in the drop-down menu.

group commits itself to varies.

For this road, Sewa volunteers, about five of them, have to spend two to three hours cleaning the one-mile stretch of the road, one way, and therefore about 4-6 hours for cleaning both sides of the road. Cleaning supplies and trash bags are provided by the state.

Safety training is also provided by the state government staff to the volunteers. While it is mostly common sense based tips, one has to keep in mind

the hazards of fast-moving traffic, wearing the safety-reflective gear, be mindful of fellow volunteers and their whereabouts, as well as paying attention to the surroundings.

Sewa, New Jersey, has contracted to clean the one-mile stretch of Route 46 four times a year for two years. Besides, the Chapter is also planning to "adopt a park" to do the cleaning of trails and pruning and cutting tree growth on the park trails.