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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

**CONTACT:**

**Name:** Vidya Tontalapur

**Phone:** 1-720-526-9939

**Email:** [media@sewausea.org](mailto:media@sewausea.org)

**Web:** [www.sewausea.org](http://www.sewausea.org)

## Sewa International's Houston Chapter Distributes 100,000 Pounds of Food to the Needy



**Sewa volunteers distributed food kits at Catalina Apartments in Houston, TX.**

*Houston, (June 23, 2020):* Entering the second phase of the COVID-19 relief efforts, Sewa International's Houston Chapter has distributed more than 100,000 pounds of food in the Greater Houston area partnering closely with 15 community organizations.

"Sewa organized 15 food drives in the past seven weeks in Houston's various low-income neighborhoods and served more than 3,400 families by giving them food kits containing 30 pounds or

more food. We are conducting our food drives in the apartment complexes where the most vulnerable communities live,” said Gitesh Desai, Sewa’s Houston Chapter President.

“Sewa is planning to have these drives every weekend for the next six weeks. On Saturday, June 27, food, and mask distributions are planned from 10 to 11 AM in Govindaji Gaudiya Matha on Kieth Harrow Blvd, Arrowood Apartments on South Course Drive, and Villa Adora Apartments on Beechnut St in Houston,” Mr. Desai said.



**Sewa volunteers distributing food kits to families in an apartment complex in Houston, TX.**

### **Phenomenal Support**

“The kind of support we are getting from other Indian American community organizations for the food drive is phenomenal. Reflecting the age-old Hindu tradition of “Anna Daan” (providing food to the needy), many Hindu Temples, religious and cultural organizations and altruistic individuals from the community have joined hands with us to serve the underserved,” Mr. Desai said.

“Nationally, Sewa has distributed more than 635,000 masks and other protective materials to physicians, healthcare staff and to the first responders such as police officers and firefighters in the last 12 weeks. As hunger spreads through the communities due to the economic impact of the pandemic, we are moving into the next stage to ensure that people do not go hungry,” Mr. Desai said.

Sewa conducted the biggest drive at Catalina Apartments in association with Shree Nathji's Haveli VPSS, International Management District, and Brighter Bites on Saturday, June 21 and distributed 400 food kits containing beans, pasta, sauce, rice, sugar, etc. Hubert Vo, Member, House District 149, Texas House of Representatives, and Houston Council Member Tiffany D. Thomas (District F) participated in the drive.

### **16,500 Pounds Food Distributed**

In the drive held at the Sanatan Shiv Shakti Mandir, 250 families received food kits. At the Sri Meenakshi Temple event, 250 food kits were distributed, and India's Consul General in Houston, Aseem Mahajan, and Texas House Member, Ed Thompson, participated. In Richmond, TX food drives in four apartment complexes were conducted by Sewa and Katy Youth Cricket. Fort Bend County Judge, KP George, visited these complexes and motivated residents.

Gujrati Samaj, Shree Nathji's Haveli VPSS, Chinmaya Mission, and Vadtal Dham Shree Swaminarayan Hindu Temple joined hands with Sewa to distribute 16,500 pounds of food in three apartment complexes in a drive-through event. In all of these drives people received several hundred pounds of vegetables and fruits and hundreds of gallons of milk and masks.

Many organizations from Houston -- Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Shree Nathji's Haveli VPSS, Sri Meenakshi Temple, Sanatan Shiv Shakti Mandir, Chinmaya Mission, Vedanta Society, Vadtal Dham Shree Swaminarayan Hindu Temple, Hindu Worship Society, Gujarati Samaj, Katy Youth Cricket, Brighter Bites, Hindus for America, Maheshwari Mahasabha of North America (MMNA), Sant Nirankari Mission, Sneha Hastham, Alice Lee of Southwest District, Telica Sugar Land, Umang Mehta of Deep Foods, Pankaj Maheshwari & Rupali Dhoot Maheshwari, Mrugesh & Pallavi Parikh – helped and worked closely with Sewa International to conduct these food drives.

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### **About Sewa International**

Sewa International, a leading Hindu faith based, Indian American nonprofit organization, has extensive experience in disaster rescue, relief, and rehabilitation operations having responded to 24 disasters in the US and abroad. In 2017, after Hurricane Harvey struck the Houston area, Sewa volunteers helped in the rescue of nearly 700 people, and have served thousands of affected families since then through their case management service. Sewa raised over \$3 million for Hurricane Harvey recovery, Sewa continues to rebuild houses, and, greenhouses that serve as a means of livelihood. Sewa International has also rendered relief in the wake of hurricane Maria in 2018 and Hurricane Imelda in 2019. Sewa teams in the San Francisco Bay Area continue to build and donate tiny homes for those rendered homeless in California Camp Fire of November 2018.

Among its other accolades, Sewa International has been recognized by Charity Navigator – the premier nonprofit rating agency – as the number five among the “10 Highly Rated Charities Relying on Private Contributions.” Sewa has for the last three years continuously scored the topmost-rated 4-star from Charity Navigator, and has earned perfect scores for its Financial Health and Accountability & Transparency.

For more information on Sewa International and its activities, please visit <http://www.sewausea.org>.  
For more information on Sewa International's efforts to support communities nationwide during the COVID-19 crisis, please visit <https://sewausea.org/covid-19>.

