

Sewa International Deploys 800 Volunteers for Harvey Relief



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At least 800 volunteers are engaged in Harvey relief efforts under the aegis of Sewa International USA. More than 500 volunteers are active on the ground in Houston.

As of Sept. 3, Sewa has raised \$250,000 and the target is \$1 million, according to Gitesh Desai, president of Sewa International USA, Houston.

The organization's target is to help clean up and fix 1000 flooded houses.

Local Houston stores were running out of cleanup and construction supplies.

San Antonio Sewa International volunteers drove down a truck full of safety gear and cleanup supplies for Houston and distributed to volunteer clean-up crews around the Houston Metro region.

Sewa is working to develop a livelihood support project for families who need support in getting back on their feet.

Sewa will offer continued at University of Houston with food medicine, apartment clean-up and guidance. Working jointly with other Indo-American organizations Sewa will send supplies for Indian students at University of Lamar in Beaumont.

Priority is given to elderly, housebound and single parent individuals.

Sewa is operating active neighbourhood teams in Katy, Sugar Land, and Cypress Pearland, Humble, Clear Lake and downtown areas.

"We have created storage facilities for construction and cleaning supplies for house clean up in every neighborhood we are operating, in order to keep our volunteers supplied with all required personal safety equipment, implements and supplies," Desai said.

Social media is playing a critical role in matching the person in need to the help and Sewa International is leading the charge with its large social media and relief team.

A single mother of one-year old and a school teacher sent up a flare through 'Nextdoor' app asking for help with food, water and supplies.

Sewa International team immediately reached her home and arrange for all the help through its neighborhood team.

This is one of many heroic stories of rescue and relief being played out in Houston every singlehour.



Above, Sewa International Volunteers helping people with boats in Katy on Aug.29.

Visit sewahouston.org for current information about all Sewa's activities.

"I cannot emphasize enough that needs in the disaster relief and rehabilitation is immense and immediate, both for donations and volunteerism. Much more is needed to support this massive relief operation for weeks to come. It will be six months before most families can

get back to their normal life. Sewa volunteers are serving 24x7 without caring for their personal needs, rest and comfort,” Desai said.

Geetha Ravula was featured in a #Harvey Recovery true story covered by KPRC Channel 2 (NBC).

Ravula writes:

“When I met a lady affected by Hurricane Harvey who did not eat a meal for a while and helpless about her hunger, I felt humbled and short of words. She was lost and was embarrassed for a moment when I asked her what she had for lunch. They don’t know to ask, whom to ask and their pain is conveniently being ignored.

“Ashirwad A Blessing with support from Indian and Hindu community is humbled to serve the Greater Houston community.

“Deeply Appreciate Indian and Hindu community of Greater Houston, VTSEVA (Ashta Lakshmi Temple), SEWA International, Shiv Shakti Mandir, iEducate, ISKCON Houston (Govinda’s Restaurant), ITSERVE, Desi Friends WhatsApp group, Pearland Group, Riverstone Neighbors, Voice of Sanatan Hinduism Radio, Ashirwad A BLESSING family and EVERY volunteer for working with us to serve Hot meals, sandwiches, canned food, snacks, cereals, muffins, brownies, raising funds and buying supplies. For little service we could render, we are receiving enormous genuine blessings wherever we go. May we all have the inner strength to keep doing Seva(Service) to many more .”

Below, volunteers move from house to house to help in the clean-up operation.

