



# Sewa International

Service to Humanity is Service to Divinity

P R E S S   R E L E A S E

## For Immediate Release

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### **Sewa International Prepares To Offer Carolina Residents Help As Hurricane Florence Threatens The Mid-Atlantic States**

Atlanta, GA (September 11, 2018) -- As Hurricane Florence approaches the East Coast of the United States, the governors of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia have issued mandatory evacuation orders affecting more than one million residents in the coastal areas.

The Carolinas have not seen a category 3 hurricane in 22 years. The three affected states have a large Indian-American population, some of whom would be facing their first major hurricane ever. Sewa International's Director of Disaster Relief, Swadesh Katoch says that "Stores have already run out of essential supplies like water, bread, and bananas. Generators, storm radios, and sand bags are also difficult to find. Most gas stations in the coastal areas are running out of gas, and those who still have gas are jacking up the price."

Katoch says last year's response to Hurricanes Harvey and Maria taught his team how to better respond to future events. He is rolling out the full disaster preparedness plan – including a remote operations center, teams on the ground in all major cities, and lining up logistics to haul in supplies after the storm, if needed. Kiran Krishna, the chapter President of Sewa Raleigh, and Venugopal Reddy, the chapter President of Sewa Charlotte are networking with government officials to keep the Indian community informed and prepared.

Sewa International has set up a hot line -- 413-648-SEWA (7392) -- for use by Indian Americans in particular, and US residents in general. Anyone can call the hot line and ask for help. Sewa International has been using social media to post regular alerts and updates about the hurricane. Local Sewa teams in

the Carolinas, Virginia, and Maryland are working with local temples and Indian organizations to keep the community together and be prepared to help each other. Sewa Teams in Atlanta and Boston are organizing to host evacuees.

"We are especially concerned about the vulnerable population such as people who are home bound, sick, or have very young children. We are circulating WhatsApp messages with helpful information on how to prepare and tide over Hurricane Florence and its aftermath. While our hotline number is available all the time, the best way to stay updated with us is to like our Facebook page - Sewa International," said Prof. Sreenath, President of Sewa International.

"We are urging people in the optional evacuation areas to not wait for the last minute. If you think you may have to evacuate, leave now," said Kiran Krishna, President of the Raleigh Chapter of Sewa International.

Sewa International, the leading Indian American nonprofit has extensive experience in disaster rescue, and relief and rehabilitation, having served in 23 disasters in the US and abroad. Last year during Hurricane Harvey they helped rescue nearly 700 people, and have served thousands of affected families since then. Sewa raised \$2 Million for Harvey recovery, including a grant of \$400,000 from the Houston Mayor's fund, and a \$500,000 grant from American Red Cross. Sewa continues to rebuild houses and provide case management to affected families more than one year after Hurricane Harvey struck Texas.