



February 2012 Edition

Quote

The ascent to manhood has been made possible for you all; but this high status among the animals is to be deserved by merging at last in the Divine, that is the goal which the pilgrimage of evolution has in view, since life began on earth as the amoeba on the waters. Faith in that goal and steady march towards it are the signs of one's being aware of the responsibility of being a man. The Call of the Divine echoes in every heart; it provokes the reaction of awe, reverence, affection, love and sacrifice --- all ingredients of bhakthi. It translates itself into acts of worship, of praise, of adoration and of rituals and symbolising the majesty of God. Thus the mind gets saturated with Divine thoughts, it is recast in the Divine Mould, until the flow of Aanandha is unabated.

~ Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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Editorial

Dear Love & Light Readers,
Loving Sai Ram to you!

It gives me great pleasure in presenting myself as the new National Chair Person for UK Central Council having taken over from Shitu Chudasama. I take this appointment as a great blessing and unique privilege to serve Sathya Sai Baba and His Organisation.

As is customary, the new UK Central Council was announced on the 14th January. This date is very significant since it was on 14th January 1981 that Baba granted the Charter for the Sathya Sai Organisation, to inspire and guide members in their spiritual quest.

The UKCC has designated 2012 as the year of 'illumination'. You may re-collect that 2011 was designated as the year of 'Re-Connect', a re-focus back on Baba - The Master, His Mission and Message. Why or how this theme was chosen is just beyond anyone's comprehension. Little did we realise that 24th April 2011 will go down in history to mark the departure of Sathya Sai Baba away from His physical mortal. The focus after the *Maha Samadhi* very quickly shifted to that of 'Reflection' - What did Baba mean for me? What was my relationship with Him? How will I now continue to Live the life that He has shown? What is my role in His Mission etc ? Having reflected, each one of us have now got an answer to our enquiry - thus, the year of 'illumination'!

His very last words for UK spoken on 15th January 2011 are so very poignant and still rings in my ears, "Tell them, start work immediately. Work, work, work....".

Baba's entire life was dedicated towards service of humanity. In spite of He being the omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent Lord, He indicated to us the kinship that He felt for fellow beings at a human level and what we could do in areas of education, medicare, socio-care etc. This was a clear illustration of what His Mission was all about, namely 'Brotherhood of Man'

Sathyajeet, who was blessed to serve Baba till the very end recently narrated an incident. Baba had stopped giving morning *Darshans*. He prayed to Baba to come out in the mornings, to give *Darshans* at least twice a week since devotees were coming from far and waiting. Baba's response was "Do you know how much work this body has done? I have gone from village to village. Now this body is weak". At this point, Sathyajeet broke down and prayed to Baba to rest and that he and others would do His work.

Brothers and Sisters!

Baba has touched our lives. They can't be ordinary lives any more. His work is important. Let us join hands to further His Mission.

Dr. Kiran Patel
National Chairperson

Education Wing - "Education for Transformation"

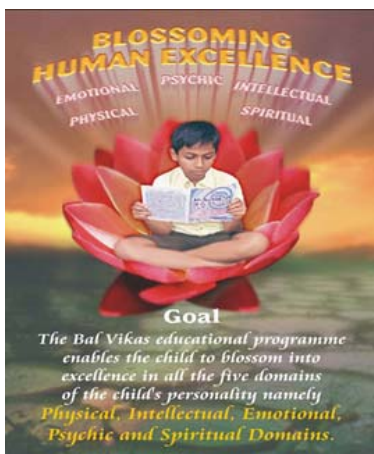
The SSE wing vision for 2012 is to continue to be inspired by Bhagawan's teachings whilst we innovate as gurus to adapt to the modern scenarios so as to enable a silent transformation in our children to become exemplary citizens of the world.

To enable us to realize this we have to First Be: as teachers and parents we need to connect to our source, to our Beloved Swami's Life and Message through study forums, study days and study circles within our centres and regions.

Then Do: Teacher training days within regions will continue to be held with a focus on new approaches to Group 3. Basic Level Master Trainer's training programme will also be held to support regions with their own pool of SSE Basic trainers.

And Tell: The children, teachers, parents and supporters of SSE will unite as a nation to celebrate National Eswaramma Day on 5th May 2012, a day that our Beloved Swami dedicated as Children's Day to celebrate the 'Glory of Motherhood'. Our beloved Swami has often told us that we should love, honour and respect our parents. Our gratitude is to be shown not just to our mother who has given birth to us (dehamaatha), but also to mother nature who encompasses all living beings (gomaatha), mother earth (bhoomaatha), our motherland (deshamaatha) or country and our holy scriptures (vedamaatha). The day will honour 'The Five Mothers' through prayer, group devotional singing, interactive activities, talks, children's performances to name but a few.

In addition there will be a number of activities that our children, teachers and parents will be involved in that takes place at centre and regional level throughout the year. As the Olympic fever reaches a crescendo this summer, our very own regional Sai Family Olympics will be getting ready to unite to celebrate team spirit, perseverance, skill, discipline, cooperation and offer it as a token of our love to our Bhagawan. We offer our sincere and loving prayers to our Beloved Bhagawan to guide us at every step in this journey of inner transformation that we are making.



Vidyulatha Narayan
National SSE Coordinator

National Orientation and Welcome Day 2012



As the sun rose, casting a warm pink and golden glow on the skies above, hundreds of Sai devotees were already eagerly making their way to Hatfield to attend the National Orientation and Welcome Day, hosted by Region 3. This was the first gathering of Office Bearers and Active Workers since the Maha Samadhi of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba; not surprisingly, there was a feeling of apprehension but excitement on the direction and vision that the SSSSO, UK was taking in 2012 and beyond. Around 300 delegates were present.

Sister Anila Modi was the compere for the morning session who welcomed the congregation.



Welcome address: Shitu Chudasama

Brother Shitu reflected on the events of 2011 which was a significant year with our beloved Swami leaving His physical tenure. The outpouring expressed by devotees in UK had no bounds. The UK Central Council (UKCC) responsible for managing the affairs of the SSSSO, UK rose to the needs of the devotees. With the support of the Sri Sathya Sai Charitable Trust (UK), a record 9 National events were organised which brought together thousands of devotees from throughout the UK to share and draw strength from each other. In addition, several events were held at regional and centre level.

He took the opportunity to introduce the new UK Central Council for 2012 detailed below:

National Chair Person - Dr Kiran Patel
 National Vice Chair - Jamie Raju
 National Secretary - Gayatree Bikoo
 Region 1 Chair - Yoges Yogendran
 Region 2 Chair - Bhadra Patel
 Region 3 Chair - S. Yoganathan
 Region 4 Chair - Ketan Gokani
 Region 5 Chair - Kailash Venkat
 Region 6 Chair - Nadia Eley
 Region 7 Chair - Dr Kumi Pillay
 Region 8 Chair - Dr Ram Bhaskar
 National Wing Coordinator (Spiritual) - Dr Veeru Mudigonda
 National Wing Coordinator (Youth) - Shyam Jamnadas
 National Wing Coordinator (SSE) - Vidyulata Narayan
 National Wing Coordinator (Service) - Mukund Patel

The outgoing UKCC members were thanked for their contributions:

Mel Griffin - (National Vice Chair)
 Harish Thampy - (Region 5 Chair)
 Nirmala Pisavadia - (Region 7 Chair)

He concluded by stating how the day's gathering was a historical event. With Swami there was no coincidence, we all came together through the special bond of Swami. The opportunity to offer ourselves selflessly to Swami was a result of our good deeds in past lives. We now have the chance to learn and grow in this life and become closer to God. From this day we should walk together as one team.

Brother Shitu thanked everyone for their support before handing over to the new National Chairperson, Dr Kiran Patel.

Divine Vision and Mission: Dr Kiran Patel

Dr. Kiran Patel, an alumnus from the first cohort of Sai Students at the Brindavan College, former lecturer in Chemistry at the Sri Sathya Sai Institutes in both Brindavan and Prashanthi Nilayam and former National Secretary, started his inaugural speech by clarifying the significance of the Orientation Day. He said, 'To orientate is to refocus our minds on our Master'. He introduced the theme of the year: 'Illumination'. We started last year with the theme of 'Re-Connect' which reminded us of our heritage, the ideals and principles that Bhagawan had given. After Swami left His mortal coil, we all started to 'reflect' on our relationship with Swami and our role. Now we have had time to do this and have got answers to our query - thus the 'year of illumination'.

With regard to leadership, we have to recognise that we are not the doers. Swami owns everything, He is the giver. Before becoming Leaders, we should be Pleaders - work with attitude of a Servant as Swami says.

What makes the SSSSO unique from any other service organisation?

Brother Kiran stated clearly that we are born at a time when God walked the planet, how fortunate we were to have known and experienced His Divinity! Only a handful of people have had this experience, and of those, only a handful has the opportunity to serve on this Mission. We are special because Swami has touched our hearts. Now that we have experienced his Divinity we have the chance to share our experiences and serve the community, and serve the God in

every person. That is the essence of the Sai Organisation. This is what makes THIS Organisation unique. It is the SPIRIT with which we serve that is unique.

Importance of Centres

Dr John Hislop once indicated to Swami in his discussions that there were a number of problems that some of the centres in US were creating and that, these perhaps should be closed. Swami's response was that Centres should never be closed. They were doing very good work!

Centres were created for our growth. How are Centres there for us to grow? This brought Brother Kiran's speech onto the purpose of the SSSSO and the importance of each Centre. He started his explanation with examples of how Swami created kinship with humanity at a human level. Swami developed the youth through education provided at the Institutes of Higher Learning, His colleges and Schools so that they turned out as individuals of character and Self Confidence. He established hospitals which provided free healthcare, catering to those who couldn't afford; and undertook socio-care projects such as the water project which benefited millions. Swami at a physical level felt and experienced kinship with fellow beings. Thus His Mission, 'Brotherhood of Man'.

So what is the role of the Organisation in this Mission? To an ardent devotee in early 70's, Swami clearly indicated that the Organisation didn't have a role in His Mission. The purpose of the Organisation was for you, our development, Swami had pointed. So the centre provides us with a platform to spiritually grow, thereby to experience the Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God.

Emphasis on Work

Swami has laid lot of importance to work. Indeed whole of His life was spent in serving Humanity. What is Swami's work? Work that creates an impact upon us, as individuals, our spiritual growth and that which creates an impact upon the wider community.

To a student who had indicated to Swami that he would give up his life for Him, Swami lovingly said to him that he didn't want him to die for Him but to Live for Him!

Another moving incident was narrated to remind us how swami had sacrificed His Life for Humanity: During the later years of Swami's life, when Swami had stopped giving Darshan in the morning, Swami's beloved personal caregiver, Sathyajit, prayed to Swami to come out and give Darshan to devotees who were eagerly waiting for Him. Swami responded to Sathyajit 'Do you know how much work this body has done? I have gone from village to village. This body is now weak.' To that, Sathyajit then breaks down praying to Swami to take rest and they will do the work!

He then recalled the message which Swami gave to the UKCC last year, 'Start work immediately' and to 'WORK, WORK, WORK.....'.

Goals for 2012

1. Continue to serve Prashanthi Nilayam

This is the abode of our Master. Infact, it is our Spiritual Birth Place. Our Master's body resides here.

- National Annual Pilgrimage
- Hospital rota under the guidance of the new National Healthcare Coordinating Committee (NHCCC)
- Service at the Chaitanya Jyoti Museum, canteens and all other services and places in Prashanthi Nilayam.

2. Establish a National Headquarter for the SSSSO, UK

A light house for the UK, it will represent our association with our Master, Sathya Sai Baba and His Mission. It should be a place where all can feel welcome, from all parts of society. A place where people can draw solace and strength.

3. Systems and Best Practices

We should further strengthen the SSSSO, UK and make it more effective to reflect Swami's Glory who was perfection itself. Few areas for consideration but not limited to these:

- Review of Organisation Manual in collaboration with Prashanthi Council.
- Continue on-going work performed in areas of healthcare and socio-care, but with a cohesive and coordinated approach under the guidance of the new National Healthcare Coordinating Committee (NHCCC) and the National Socio-care Coordinating Committee (NSCCC).
- Office Bearers and their Awareness Programmes.

Who should be chosen as Office Bearers?

Swami's quotation was read from 'Guideline to Active Workers of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation': 'Choose men and women who have unshaken faith in this present Avatar, with this Name and this Form. That will save the units from many complications later on, arising from loyalties which may detract or deviate energies of the office-bearers. The leaders of these units lead, because they have the vision and yearning, not because they have the votes or the purse.'

Brother Kiran Patel ended his inaugural speech as National Chair with these inspiring words 'Swami has touched our lives. We are not ordinary anymore. Let us join hands to further Swami's Mission'.

Divine Love: Video and Life of Bhagawan Baba

Brother Saiganesh Ketheeswaran prepared a soul stirring compilation of famous images and rarely seen gems of Swami's Incarnation to the much loved tune 'Sai Naath Tere Hazaron Haath'. Modern day images glorifying Swami as God, were also shown to the emotive song 'Tujhe Mein Rab Dikhta Hai' (I see God in You).

Nation on it's Wings



Each National Wing Coordinator came forward to present the vision for 2012 - Details provided later.

National SSE Wing (Vidyulata Narayan): Education is for Transformation. This year will be to silently transform our children by being innovative and meeting the challenges of the modern day scenarios that our children are faced with.

National Youth Wing (Shyam Jamnadas): The youth are the future of the Organisation and society. The aim is to unite youth across the UK to focus on making HIS life OUR message and to serve the wider community.

National Service Wing (Mukund Patel): This year will see a continuation with serving the community and environment. To have service training days, to develop Organisational structures for the smooth planning and execution of all service events, and to efficiently provide emergency relief during times of disaster.

Spiritual Wing (Veeru Rao): The aim is to enhance the spiritual ambiance at Centre level. The Centre is the spiritual hub for devotees, to elevate the human to the Divine, and to broaden our love by following the 9 point code of conduct. There will be a Study Circle Team, a Music Team and an Interfaith Committee at Regional and National Level. These will provide support to all at Centre level. The National Web Team and the National Youth Wing should be at the forefront of this initiative.



Echoes from the Regions

Photos and videos were shown which celebrated the wonderful, inspiring and meaningful events from across each region, as well as images from the 9 National events held. It was amazing to see how active, enthusiastic and innovative centres, regions and we as a nation have been, and continue to be.



Story of Inspiration from Region 3

Brother Anish from the Sathya Sai Centre of Milton Keynes spoke about the experience their Centre had to serve, but when Swami presented an opportunity, it involved the serving of food which was not considered to be Sathwic. This first

challenge raised a question of 'how should we serve?' It was a lesson that our beliefs should not be an obstacle to serving, as the real meaning of serving is to realise the Divinity in others. This should be the higher vision and spirit we should hold when serving.

The second opportunity to serve was at the HM Prison, Woodhill. This presented the second challenge as there were criminals who were imprisoned for murder and sexual offenses, and this made it very difficult to serve with the vision that they were Divine beings. Swami was providing the opportunity to learn that service should be given without discrimination, and with the feeling of respect and love. Love all, Serve all.

The final activity involved the annual Akhand Bhajans, which enabled Sathya Sai Centres of Milton Keynes and Luton to work together with the community to create multi-faith relationships. Important personalities such as the Lord Mayor and others were invited and programme covered in the local radio. The whole venture successfully brought so many people together and enabled Swami's message of Love to spread.

Story of Inspiration from Region 5

Brother Kailash Venkant from Newcastle upon Tyne centre, a small centre consisting of seven families, shared a wonderful experience with asylum seekers and refugees to whom the Sai Centre would serve food. However, the centre started to question relevance of this service and whether they could further stretch it. From serving food, the Sai Centre started to provide heaters, crockery and clothes; they also completely furnished four homes of those asylum seekers who had got permanent residency. Whilst providing this service, they always had the conviction that Swami was the giver and that they were simply sharing what Swami had provided.

Over time, a rapport and relationship was developed, especially with those people who had got residency. The Centre members started to give careers advice, help with job searching, developing CVs and giving help with interview preparation. Through these efforts, 18 people, who started in this country as asylum seekers, had now secured jobs, making themselves and their families self-sustaining.

The Lord Mayor asked Brother Kailash how this kind of service was different to what the local councils and Job Centre Plus provided. Brother Kailash very clearly said that those people that go to the Job Centre already have the willingness to work, they are already on their way to getting a job. However, large number of unemployed people tend to lose impetus and drive and Self-confidence which are essential to actively search for work.

Brother Kailash said to one person who had not worked for 8 years, 'You can Love yourself more if you serve your community'. This stirred something within that person, and they have now got a permanent job after almost a decade of unemployment. To develop this energy and feeling is an internal activity; it is an inward journey of inspiration and that is what Swami provides. That is what makes a Sai Centre unique and special when comparing with other organisations.

He ended with the quotation to summarise how helping someone to change their attitude, thoughts and daily actions, can change their destiny:

Sow a thought, reap an action
Sow an action, reap a tendency
Sow a habit, reap a character
Sow a character, reap a destiny
You are verily the maker of your own destiny. You can do it and undo it.

Sai's Trust: Dr. Upadhyay



Dr. Upadhyay, well known for his life changing medical camps, spoke about the Sri Sathya Sai Charitable Trust, UK and its work. He recalled that the Trust was the first one which Swami founded outside of India, in 1979. When asked by the Prashanthi Council what the objective of the Trust was, the then president of the Trust, Mr. Puri, replied, 'Love'.

Dr Upadhyay assured everyone that the Trust is entrusted to spend funds wisely. It covers areas of Education, Medical, Disaster relief and others.

Dr. Upadhyay spoke about how we should serve, and gave an example of how the cow gives milk but does not drink milk. We should also have that spirit of selfless service. He also explained that leaders should have Self-confidence to make

decisions and resolve problems. We should know that all the leaders are chosen Instruments, and that Swami is working through us.



Heart to Heart - Workshops on Self-development



Interactive workshops were conducted to give all office bearers and active workers the opportunity to reflect on shared experiences of challenges which we face and to identify tools to overcome these challenges and ensure success.

Scenarios were given to provoke thought and reflection on how we each act and behave as leaders and members of Swami's Organisation.

The practical tool for transformational leadership is 'WATCH'.

Words - Speak lovingly, honestly, and without malice or intention to hurt.

Actions - Act without attachment to the action or result. Act selflessly and with joy and love.

Thoughts - Peace of mind means absence of desires. Thoughts should be positive.

Character - Self-discipline, selflessness, loyalty, readiness to accept responsibility, willingness to admit mistakes, willingness to sacrifice when needed, faith in God- these constitute Character.

Heart - Compassion, love and tolerance

Following the simple message of WATCH will promote internal reflection and self-analysis which will lead to spiritual and self-development.

The conclusion of the workshop was that, as leaders, we should each ensure that:

- Our intentions are pure
- Our actions are free from judgement and envy
- We act without a selfish or personal motive or desire
- We should always do what is for the best of all members of the Organisation and community.
- We should serve in our roles without the need of reward or recognition.
- We should empower others to take action, be involved and grow.
- We should always correct ourselves and be the change we want to see.

The afternoon session was compered by Pradeeb Srikanthan.

Sai Inspires - Panel Discussion



Q1. What should we do if there is no one to take on the role of Centre Chair (or any other role)?

Answer: There should be a shadow or a team of shadows who can work together to continue the role until someone

permanent comes forward. Efforts should be made to ensure people are groomed for continuity.

Q2. Is it okay that we give our service to animals, not just humans?

Answer: Yes! Service should be given where there is a need. This is why we also do activities such as tree planting, which serves the environment. There is divinity in all of nature and all inanimate objects, so we should not discriminate, we should just serve. These are only means towards our own growth.

Q3. How can we involve youth at regional and national level and encourage them to lead?

Answer: Youth should always be given opportunities and encouraged to participate. They should be mentored and given guidance by other youth and elders. Youth should also participate with other wings of the Organisation.

Q4. Has the Institute of Sathya Sai Education (ISSE) Diploma been launched?

Answer: A diploma course is being developed, based on the guidelines and framework of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation and International Education Committee. Please visit the SSSSO UK website for more information on ISSE.

Q5. Will there be a study programme to work with the Sai Awareness Programme?

Answer: Yes, across the regions, Sathya Sai Speaks volumes 1-8 are being recorded to create an audio resource. This will be completed by February/March and will be an invaluable study material for all our centres, as it is our Lord's Voice.

Q6. What is the right way to use idols/symbols in our Sai Centres? What is the approach to changing this?

Answer: We should first understand why we attend our Sai Centres. It is to reflect on Bhagawan's message of Love. Love is what is most important. Idols and symbols are pointers to Divinity. We should think about their significance, meaning and what they symbolise. We should think about the Ideals and Messages that image, idols or symbols convey. At all times we should reflect on Swami's message of universal Love which is the essence of everything we do.

Q7. What is the Organisation's relationship with the Sri Sathya Sai School UK?

Answer: Our Organisation's key objective is service. Our devotees tend to provide this to a plan. We provide other support to the School as requested.

Q8. If we celebrate religious festivals such as Christmas and Iftar (breaking of fast for Muslims) as National events, then can we celebrate the other religious festivals?

Answer: We will try and celebrate as many as we can, and learn from them. There will be constraints of time and cost which will be taken into consideration when organising National celebrations, but all are welcome to celebrate any festival at regional and centre levels since Sai and His Love are Universal. This will be supported and encouraged from the National Committee.



Across the Oceans - Video Conference with Dr. Narendranath Reddy, USA



Dr Narendranath Reddy is the Chairman of the Prashanthi Council, the administrative body of the Sri Sathya Sai International Organisation and serves as a Director in the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation. He also serves as the President of the Sri Sathya Sai Society of America and the Chairman of the Sri sathya Sai International Medical Committee.

Dr Reddy gave words of guidance and wisdom on being Leaders in the Sai Organisation, and being devotees of Sai.

He said that Swami was preparing us for lifetimes to serve Him and do His work. When the ego reduces, His work begins. However, simply being a devotee alone, and getting a glimpse of His form (Darshan), His Divine Touch (Sparshan) and

listening to His Words (Sambashan) was a rare gift given to us.

His gems of wisdom that he shared:

- A reminder, irrespective of our positions, we were still His devotees.
- Swami is still with us; this is amply demonstrated by his materialisations happening around the world, how He has been protecting His devotees etc.
- Should give attention to details and quality when undertaking Swami's work.
- Greatest service is the realisation that we are Divine.
- How to pay our gratitude to Swami - follow His instructions.
- We should never let anything distract us from His Name or Form.
- We should not try to understand Swami, we should just be open to experience His love.
- We should know that Swami is our eternal companion and He is guiding us all of the time. We should have that faith and conviction.
- Ego and attachment are the greatest obstacles to leadership. Remember that everything belongs to God.

He recalled a story of a man who had received a ring from Swami which had three diamonds. One of the diamonds fell out and the man informed Swami. Swami reassured Him that there will be plenty of time to replace the diamond in the future. When Swami then left His body in April, the man realised that the ring would not be fixed now. Recently whilst sitting in the Sai Kulwant Hall in Prashanthi, he looked at his ring and found that the diamond had been replaced!

From this account we should know that Swami is very much still with us all. We should have that faith and conviction in God. Likewise, His work is very much continuing and all activities in Prashanthi are very much ongoing. People still come from far and wide to present programmes in Prashanthi.

He continued to urge us to serve the Sai School. He told how he was there next to Swami when Swami gave blessings for the Sai School in Leicester to go ahead, and that we should do everything we can to support the School. Swami said, 'Wherever My glory is sung, I am there. Wherever My work is done, I am there'.

In keeping with the third objective of 2012, as presented by our National Chair, Dr. Reddy said that we should aim for perfection. Perfection is achieved by analysing and paying attention to every little action and thought and making sure that it is pure and with love. How can we perform every action with love? First, by having constant integrated awareness (CIA) of Sai; and second, by always finding our own faults only... that is love.

The day ended with songs dedicated to Swami, prepared by the youth, followed by Aarthi.

We departed with much energy and inspiration. Let the work begin!

Nishal Govindji
Region 5 Youth Coordinator

Region 1 - YAP: "My Sai and I"

In His mercy, the Lord has divided the endless stream of Time into days, weeks, months and years, so that we may greet each one with renewed commitment to the spiritual journey we have chosen to undertake. The birth of 2012 is just one such opportunity - a chance for us all to look back at an extraordinary year gone by, and look forward to the limitless potential of a new one!

Thus, with much optimism and energy, the Youth of Region 1 met on Friday 20th January at the Sai Mandir, as part of their monthly YAP (Young Adults Programme).

The topic for January's session, 'My Sai and I', was introduced by Region 1 Youth Co-ordinator, Aberamy Gnaneswaran. This was shortly followed by a talk by Saiganesh Ketheeswaran, who declared that, as young adult, he felt supremely blessed to be a Sai Youth and to be able to dedicate his time to Swami's work. Saiganesh expressed his belief that all youth must first have self-confidence, since nothing is impossible, while we have the Lord and Master by our side.

A video clip showing excerpts from several Divine Discourses was then played, allowing the gathered youth to hear, from the Lord himself, His expectations of His Youth.

Following this, Reena Jamnadas spoke movingly about many beautiful incidents she had experienced whilst on group trips to Prashanti, highlighting that it is the journey and learning we go on that is important.

After watching a short but beautiful video compilation, recapping the youth activities of the past year in Region 1, the youth were asked to consider how the Regional Youth Wing could move forward in 2012. Dividing up into four groups, we discussed several topics, such as how we thought the organisation could cater for our individual needs, and what activities we most enjoyed taking part in.

Listening to the various opinions and suggestions given, National Youth Co-ordinator, Shyam Jamnadas promised that he would work towards ensuring that 2012 was a year of action. He then shared with the group several poignant incidents from his own life and journey as a youth, explaining that Swami is the do-er and we are the instruments of His Divine

work.



The evening ended with a motivational video of several talks by the actor Will Smith, speaking about the importance of belief, faith, willpower and self-confidence, pointing out that nothing is impossible if one has these traits.

All the youth left the Sai Mandir feeling energised and determined to make 2012 a worthy offering at the Divine Lotus Feet.

"Oh Lord, does your Divine hand not ache from holding aloft that bright light that guides us through the dark forest of this Samsara? Do we, who have so often chosen to turn our heads, still deserve a place of shade under the Divine Kalpa Vrksa? Do not be deaf to our prayers, Oh Lord, Anyatha Sharanam Nasthi, Twameva Sharanam Mamaam!"

Jai Sai Ram
Sairaj Puvinathan, Merton Sai Centre

Region 2 - New Years Eve Prayers

On Saturday 31st December 2011, Sai devotees from all over Region 2 gathered to celebrate the coming of the New Year. Oxhey Wood School rang with the vibrations of numerous bhajans, as members of all the centres in the Region were invited to a two-hour open session to sing their prayers and pleas to our dearest Bhagawan. Light filled the hallways as angels in disguise worked and served tirelessly - serving the refreshments, managing the PA, decorating the beautiful altar and so much more. Swami graced us with beautiful connections throughout the whole bhajan session, after which the clock struck twelve, and a minute's silence was followed by Aums and Vedic Chanting.

We welcomed the New Year with Ganesh, Guru and Maa bhajans before offering the Aarathi to Swami - a silent thank you for all that he has done for us in the past year of physical, mental and spiritual trials. After chanting the Kshama Prarthana, the evening concluded with a few selected readings from Swami's discourses. The evening drew our Sai family together with a beautiful send-off to 2011 & warm welcome to 2012, and the promise of a better year to come.

Thank you Swami, for blessing us with such a wonderful start to the year.



Article submitted by Sister Brintha Premachandra (Centre Chair of Sai Centre Harrow West)

Region 3 - Ilford Sai Centre: Sankranti Celebration

14th January 2012

Sankranti celebration started with a study circle chaired by sister Sutopa Region 3 ladies wing convenor. The topic was 'Loving God'. Devotees were enlightened with an interactive discussion and honoured to listen to many experiences which took place in Swami's presence.

This was followed by multifaith prayers, Vedam chanting and sweet devotional songs by the Ilford centre musicians and devotees. A wonderful power point presentation of the bhajans and energising holy scriptures accompanied the sweet sounds in the mandir which proved to be the food of love.

The programme continued with an uplifting and beautiful talk on Sankranti from sister Sutopa.



Devotees were enthralled by her personal experiences. Sankranti gifts were presented to all the SSE children.

The evening continued with vibrant music and unisons Bhajans followed by Aarty and 'Thought of the day'.

The congregation felt totally energised and experienced by a very moving evening which touched hearts and souls of everyone present and left a loving smile on everyone's face.

Ilford Sai centre will be celebrating Shivaratri in February at the same venue.

Submitted by Sheila Ring
Spiritual Convenor, Ilford Sai Centre

Region 4 - Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Birthday Celebrations in Leicester

More than 600 ardent devotees from all over Leicester gathered on this auspicious day at the superb venue of 'The Venue', which provided the perfect scene for celebrating the historic advent of our Divine Lord.



Swami's chair was placed on the wonderfully laid out alter to enable our Lord to physically see the program unfold - starting with universal prayers, vedam chanting and then thrilling scintillating bhajans which uplifted all of us back to Prashanti Nilayam.

The SSE children then presented their loving thoughts and feelings on what Swami meant to them in their everyday lives; this truly was a very touching experience arising from the young hearts. A large handmade 3D birthday card decorated with origami flowers along with sugar candy and cloves was placed at the Divine Lotus feet by the children in line with what students traditionally offered to Swami on His birthday.



Mr Selva Kumar, an ardent devotee of Bhagawan was our guest speaker who reflected upon 'What was next' for us. He has held several positions in the Organisation in the past i.e. Centre Chair, Regional and National Spiritual coordinator.

He elaborated upon implementing the 5 values - Truth, Non Violence, Right Conduct, Love and Peace into our everyday lives and to remember that Bhagawan was omnipresent. He shared his personal experiences to demonstrate that Baba sees, hears and knows everything. The talk was very well received by devotees.

At close of the programme, the SSE children sang a moving finale song as their offering to Bhagawan called 'I've found them all in you', its essence being that all religions were one God having many names. The SSE boys dressed as prophets and saints representing the different faiths stood on the stage together, next to Bhagawan to illustrate Unity in the apparent Diversity.



Whilst the girls showered petals on the congregation who were engaged in the song which went into an upbeat multi-faith bhajan; 'Ishu pitha prabhu Allah bolo' and finished with 'O Sai Natha! Sathya Sai Natha!' The highlight was the very emotional cake ceremony with 'Happy Birthday to you Sai Rama' sung by all present in the background. This was followed by Aarti by the SSE children.

The main message of the evening was a reminder of our role in Swami's mission and importance of living the 5 values in everyday life as true messengers of our beloved SAI. This would be a fitting birthday present to offer our Lord, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Lianne Bruce and Aarti Mistry
Assistant Spiritual Coordinator and SSE Coordinator

Region 5 - Working with the Refugees & Asylum Seekers in Newcastle upon Tyne

Newcastle Sai centre started spending quality time with the refugees and asylum seekers, sharing food, around 5 years ago at the West Gate Baptist Church, Newcastle upon Tyne. This soon became popular amongst the group and a typical curry and rice session had around 75 people enjoying the food in the church. Spending time with them helped us to delve into their world and build strong relationships with them over a period of time. Furthermore, it helped us in understanding their needs and requirements better. We then started getting other utilities like crockeries, toiletries, heating equipment etc. for them. By Swami's grace, we were able to furnish the houses of 4 families who received the "status to remain" in the UK permanently with furniture, bed, electrical items etc.

A couple of years later we realised that the permanent solution for all their problems will be to help them find jobs or start up small businesses. This took us into a whole new set of tasks involving CV building, job search, preparing them for interviews and most importantly helping them find inspiration from inside them to work through Swami's teachings. What we realised in the process was the fact that the government can help in showing the "list of vacancies" for them but they have to get the inspiration from the God inside them to come out of their existing lives. They got the yearning

to change their life by working hard for their future, with His grace. Some of them have not worked for 8-10 years in a row since entering this country as a refugee. Swami, in His own way, inspired them to work their way out of problems through their own hard work.

By Swami's grace, 18 people have secured jobs in various companies including Nissan, Convergys, Burberry (factory) etc. and 5 of them have started their own businesses like "take-away" and beauty parlours. We have been able to support them in preparing business proposals and also identifying business enterprises who offered them advice from a qualified accountant and a solicitor "free of charge" for the first half an hour. This really helped them give a structure to their dream which would have remained a dream but for Swami.

We have been able to offer simple financial advice and also support their children with advice on education, different education loans for Universities, studentships, courses etc. Since many of these families were from war-inflicted countries like Iraq, Afghanistan and Congo, we found that the behaviour of the some children was not normal like others. So a session with a Child Psychologist was arranged and she identified some issues with certain children through simple games. Since then, the parents have started taking help from NHS for their children.

The work has ensured various associations between our Sai centre and the local Councils, Churches and the Mosques in the area. Newcastle Sai centre has been recognised as the "centre working for peace and harmony in the community" by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle for the last 3 years in succession. Going into the fifth year since starting this initiative, whenever we reflect on this activity, we feel humbled because all that we could see is our Divine Mother always doing the entire work and attributing its success to His children. With Swami's grace, we hope and pray that this initiative continues for the time to come and may we be made His instruments in His work.

Region 6 - i-2-I Self Knowledge Workshop: "Who am I?"

The second session of Region 6 Self Knowledge workshops was held on the 15th January, at the Park Barn Community Centre in Guildford, Surrey; following on from the first session, which was an introduction into the Self Knowledge workshops, exploring Swami's teachings on Consciousness and Awareness.

The workshop was attended pre-dominantly by Sai Youth from Region 6 and was facilitated with great skill and insight by Beverley Kissoon;

This workshop focussed on the question "Who am I?" and the nature of our thoughts.

Swami has always said "Master the senses master the mind, be a Mastermind." In order to gain any mastery over the mind, we must first gain an understanding of how we think, why we think that - verily, the nature of our thoughts.

In the first workshop we were asked to keep a thought diary to record thoughts and reactions. The morning session of the second workshop was taken up by relating our discoveries to see what we have noticed about our own thinking. Some common themes arose, such as realising our thoughts naturally digress to the pre-conceived perception we have of ourselves and is then reinforced by our egotistical tendencies, thoughts are based on the references we have to the past. This led to begin questioning of who we really are - as we realised we must be something more than just thoughts

Later on in the day the youth carried out an exercise where they asked each other "Who Am I?" The usual responses came up, such as "I am a Sai devotee", "I am a youth", "I am caring", "I am humorous", "I am sweet" etc. One member of the group was bold enough to say "I am God" straightaway!! Very much in line with what Swami says about His devotees. Again we realised we must be something other than just these thought labels and concepts. Most importantly we began to question who is this "I" we keep assigning attributes to?

Swami has said, "Who is this "I"? Who am "I"? This "I" is not the body, nor the mind, nor the intellect, I is just I....If you know yourself, then you will also know about the other I's. This is reason why the question "Who am I?" is very important," (p 63 Summer Showers in Brindavan 2000).

Once we had identified this "I" the rest of the day was spent in discovering and seeking further knowledge into who or what this "I" is. This involved exercises and role plays, using a variety of a simple everyday object - cups, to understand the nature of consciousness and its all pervasiveness as the basis of the Universe and Swami's creation.

By the end of the session, we had all gained further understanding into the important question of "Who Am I?", and seek to practice and cogitate upon the teachings Swami has mentioned on this topic.

We look forward with anticipation to the next instalment of our Self Knowledge quest!!

Sai Ram
Ajay Pankhania

Region 7 - Mayor of Bath's Annual Call To Prayer to all Faith Groups

The Sai Baba Group of Bath, has for the past ten years joined representatives from seven major faiths in the City of Bath at an annual event held in the magnificent Guildhall. The event is hosted by the Mayor of Bath and provides a wonderful

opportunity to come together as we remember God by all names and forms.



This year's Call to Prayer was held on the 5th February 2012 and we were all welcomed by The Right Worshipful The Mayor of Bath, Councillor Bryan Chalker who invited the Mayor's Chaplain to preside over proceedings. The Reverend welcomed the audience drawn from Bath and the surrounding region and expressed happy surprise that extra chairs had to be brought in, despite the snow, to seat the large number who had assembled.



The Christian Youth representatives from St Saviour's led the way by summarizing their activities and core values. They welcomed all to visit their church and enjoy their most valued sense of community and love of Christ Jesus.

The Jewish tradition followed with a vibrantly sung prayer drawn from the Torah with a brief explanation.

Ruhi Farmar, a 4th generation Bah'ai then gave a brief history of her faith followed by a heartfelt reading and song.

The Islamic faith group led a question and answer dialogue, and spoke of the traditions that are practiced by the 1200-1500 Muslims who live in Bath.

Mr. Arun Bedi represented the Sikh religion. He explained the potency of the 2 primary symbols of Sikhism and the power of Aum. He finished by chanting and translating a prayer.

Buddhist representatives followed with another question and answer dialogue led by a monk from the Bristol Buddhist Centre, after which the audience was invited to join in with singing the beautiful Liberating Prayer to Buddha Shak Yamuni.

We were then treated to a sweet rendition of the Gayatri mantra and a bhajan led by Mr. Satyen Gadhre and a group of colourfully dressed, young Hindu children who, lit up the proceedings with their devotion and respect.

The Sai Baba group closed proceedings with Universal Prayer, song and quotes from Bhagawan, related to the Universality of all Faiths. Knowing the Mayor's love of song, we wanted to get everyone singing in a spirit of Love and Unity, focussing on the Universality of Swami's message. It was heart-warming to see many in the audience joining in the devotional singing with which we concluded the afternoon of prayer.

Kathryn Crowther provided musical accompaniment on the guitar, as members of the Bath Group sang, Happy are they who in friendship willingly work together ...who in peace united willingly work together.

And to finish, the rousing song Let the Love we're sharing spread its wings, fly across the earth and bring new joy to every soul that is alive...Samasta Loka Sukhino Bhavantu, was sung with great energy and feeling by the gathering.

Afterwards, the Lib. Dem. MP of Bath, the Honourable Don Foster, who had been singing at the top of his voice, told Clare Parfiter (Bath Group Chairperson) that he thought everyone in the UK should be encouraged to sing this song regularly...!

The event aims to bring together all the various faiths so that the promotion of common values and purpose can be shared and felt. To this end much was achieved this year. There was a definite feeling of tolerance, understanding,

mutual co-operation and appreciation of each other's spiritual paths.

The day afforded us a wonderful networking opportunity and we enjoyed interesting conversations with those from other faiths. Representatives from the Islamic, Buddhist and Ba'hai groups have each accepted an invitation to come to our Sunday Study Circle to speak on a chosen theme of their particular faith. This outstretched hand of welcome and kinship is possible only by the Grace of our Beloved Swami.

Roland Pargeter, Bath Sai Group.

Region 8 - Medicare Initiatives from Scotland

With God's grace we have all come to a land of prosperity and settled here in UK. We are fortunate to enjoy our lives in a calm, unpolluted place with good schooling, good housing and good water /electricity facilities. Whilst we are fortunate to enjoy these wonderful facilities, we have fellow beings in the developing countries that are not as fortunate.

Bhagawan Baba always reminds us of our responsibilities to repay back to the society which has nourished us.

We can serve the poor, the Daridra Narayana, as The Lord presents Himself in that form too. Our education would have no value if we cannot put our knowledge gained through society to practice and thereby serve the needy. This in turn will certainly help us, our generation, and our future generations to prosper.

Towards that aim, the region has been engaging medical professionals in the community in lectures to raise their knowledge in variety of medical fields, opportunities to treat medical problems encountered in developing countries and their healthcare solutions.

As a follow up, medical professionals are encouraged to enrol in medical camps so that Medicare activities can be delivered effectively in developing countries. Indeed, a very noble way of living in Love and sharing that Love with everyone around us.

The first phase of medical lectures have been organised; these would be delivered fortnightly by Consultants from various specialities. These include ENT, Psychiatry, Dermatology, CVS, RS, GIT, Renal, CNS, Endocrine, Paediatric, Infectious Diseases, Ophthalmology, Bites, Gynaecology and Surgery.

In fact, the first lecture was delivered at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary on the 28th January 2012 by Dr. Bhaskar Ram, on common ENT DISORDERS seen in the community. He laid out simple treatment plans for these problems. Topics covered included allergy, rhinitis, sinusitis, nose bleeds and nasal trauma.

Several medical professionals attended this session drawn from Anaesthetists, Psychiatrist and Paediatricians.

For those interested in further information, please contact region8@srisathyasai.org.uk.

Dr Bhaskar Ram
Region 8 Chair Person

Service Wing - 2012 Vision

"The Fulfilment of human life consists in the service that man renders without any thought of return, in an attitude of selflessness"

Nationally our service wing undertakes a vast range of activities. These include supporting SSSOHE, hygiene workshops, tree planting, meals on wheels, visiting elderly, soup runs, health awareness clinics and blood & marrow donations. These activities are ongoing and have been sustained for a number of years, serving either individuals or associations outside of the organisation. The wing is also active in national, regional and centre/group programmes all over the UK and last year we participated in the largest number of national programmes.

The progression of the wing over the coming year, in addition to the above will plan to add further activities including regional service training days. The training will include aspects of increasing our understanding of the spiritual significance of serving and also undertake some training related to the processes such as hygiene workshops, project management, catering, disaster relief etc.

A National Socio Care Coordinating Committee will be instigated and will coordinate and investigate avenues for expanding our services to the community at large.

An initial meeting of the National Health Care Coordinating Committee took place at the end of last year. This committee, including specialists from the health care profession, will provide support and guidance to health related activities like health awareness clinics, and will also oversee the international medical camps.

Regarding the operation of the wing, we will look at areas of expertise in project management, catering, disaster relief

and review the skills, resources and inventory we have within the organisation over the coming months.

More information on our journey will follow over the coming months. I look forward to all of us marching forward together towards our goal and what will be an exciting and uplifting experience.

“WORK IS WORSHIP - DUTY IS GOD”

Prema & Jyoti,
In Sai Service,

Mukund Patel
National Service Coordinator

Service Wing - Experiences at Dang Medical Camp: Part 1

17th - 22nd December 2012

Group of 49 volunteers from UK, 1 from Germany and 1 from USA set off to the Dang Medical Camp, in Gujarat, India. This time, my daughter Minal and husband Dinesh were able to attend the camp with Swami's grace. I had heard so much about Dang through my Holistic colleagues in Preston who previously visited the place and I was about to experience it myself.



On this occasion, the group was a big team which consisted of dentists, optometrists, paediatricians, pharmacists, psychiatrists, general practitioners, medical students, nurses, bone specialists, general volunteers, a gynaecologist, ophthalmologist and ENT specialists. The local coordinators were Manav Kalyan Trust from Navasari, translators, kitchen staff (who provided 2 delicious meals a day) and the registration team. The host provided us with recently qualified Art of Living students who helped with registration and translation from Dangi to Gujarati.

We arrived at the Swami Narayan Lodge in Saputara in the late evening darkness and you could feel the chill in the mountains. It was situated on a peaceful spot on top of a hilly area. After an eight hour ride from Mumbai to Saputara, the lodge was a welcome site. The next morning, surrounded by nature, seeing the magnificent sunrise and being able to listen to the morning aarti at the temple was my highlight, during the stay at the lodge.



We travelled to the medical campsite by bus everyday which was approximately a 40 minute drive and enjoyed seeing the beautiful spiritual heritage, Dang scenery and the tribal people getting on with their daily chores.



The medical campsite was acres of empty space about two months previously, but now it was transformed into a huge medical campsite. Brothers Kiran and Ishver from the UK team, headed to Dang earlier to begin the pre-camp planning and publicity and worked alongside the host team - they did an amazing job with all the logistics and setting-up. They transformed the area into a colourful, beautiful and comfortable campsite for all.

Each specialist team were shown their rooms/facilities to set-up. The team worked to set-up a complete pharmacy with tables, chairs for patients out of what was an open area of dry land couple of days ago. GPs were allocated their areas, registration area was set-up, mobile dental van came from Mumbai and all other areas were set-up. It was truly a sight to behold!



The general volunteers were assigned duties along with the local volunteers, whose numbers steadily increased, motivated by what they saw. I was assigned to work with Dr Janki (Gynaecology) from Mumbai on the first day, by next day I was working with Dr Sivaswami and Dr Renuka (GP/Psychiatrist). All the doctors spoke Hindi/English and not Gujarati. Main duties involved translation, assisting the patients to other areas of the camp and any priority patients with severe cases to be seen to. I also had a volunteer from Art of Living, doing the translation from Dangi to Gujarati. Over the next 6 days, people from all surrounding areas of Dang came in trucks and many by foot. Just under 4,500 patients had been seen by the last day.

To ease their burden, all the patients were fed a full meal and checked for medical concerns. All patients were welcomed and treated with affection and love. Just by holding their hands, simple smile and comforting and listening took the pain away.

The team was presented with numerous physical conditions and those assessed as being serious and in need of urgent treatment were referred to hospitals for further investigation (this was arranged by the host). In addition, we had patients suffering from stress, anxiety, depression, abject poverty, hardship, abuse, mental health problems and emotional pain. For many people, the heaviest burden they wanted to release was emotional pain. This included regrets from the past, anger and unresolved conflicts, memories of abuse or neglect, and any other emotional upset. Some had physical problem with chest pains, aches, asthma and thyroid. Dr Sivaswami gave me the opportunity to teach them Pranayam, breath control to some patients and show them Sun Salutation (Surya Namaskar). They performed these exercises with me during the treatment and were able to take away something special which will help to overcome some of the problems they have. One elderly lady who had suffered scalp pain for 10 years, was given Indian Head Massage, whilst waiting for the doctor and found it very soothing and relaxing.

New woollen knitted blankets, clothes for children and new saris for women were distributed to the needy. Over 138 rucksacks and stationery were distributed to the school children, who studied at the school (visual impairment). The school was located on the campsite and we saw the children every day and the bond of closeness grew each day. On one particular occasion some children were standing outside and I came out and taught them how to do the laughing yoga. They all joined in and brought laughter to their sweet faces as they jumped up and down.



The days were long and busy but full of satisfaction and immensely rewarding when we consider it changed a good few lives for the better. Most important thing was the follow-ups with serious cases and all medical records were given to the host team and all operations were to be free of charge.

I also had an opportunity to work in the optometry for couple of hours. One day, a very elderly gentleman came in his 80s and walked in without a walking stick and sat down. I showed him the card and asked him if he could see the pictures and words clearly on each row. We went through them all and he said, " I can see them all very clearly" so the whole team started laughing and we said, " you don't need glasses". He said, " but I do", so we gave him glasses and this brought a huge smile to his face. I asked him whether he needed to go to the GP, he replied 'no, I am very well, I only came for the glasses' and he walked all the way back to his village with a big smile on his face...bless him.

Jaishri D Mistry

Service Wing - Experiences at Dang Medical Camp: Part 2

17 to 22 December 2011

The Medical camp to Dang was a truly life changing experience. From the moment we landed in Mumbai airport and were welcomed by warm smiling faces, I knew that this was going to be one of the best weeks of my life. The pre camp preparations proved to be a slow start to the health education project that I was part of, but once topics were assigned, things picked up very quickly. Researching topics such as malaria prevention, water safety and basic hygiene really opened my eyes to how important preventative medicine is. It was very useful and interesting to put the health and prevention knowledge from my Geography syllabus into practical posters. I thoroughly enjoyed revisiting my childhood memories with drawing out things that were simple but had a deeper underlying message. For me, the greatest impact was the support and love from every single member of the camp. I truly felt like I was part of this very compassionate family. When running from doctor to doctor chasing up forms or distributing pre packs, I was asked if I had drunk at least half a bottle and if not, I would have to drink before I could leave. The love from everyone was truly amazing. Everything went so smoothly from the comfortable accommodation to the delicious food. The group bhajan sessions on the bus in the morning, was like a spiritual awakening and a great start to the hard work of the day ahead. This camp was carried out during my final year at school with the intention of studying Medicine at university.



It just happened that this camp followed with medical interview where I was specifically asked about my role in health education and everything I learnt from going to Gujarat. With a passion to study medicine, I already had done work experience in local hospitals and rural clinics. What I was exposed to in Dang was on a completely different level and was so interesting to see. Conditions which I had read in my Biology course were suddenly right in front of me. The doctors were very helpful with questions I had about particular cases or with their life as a doctor. I definitely expanded my knowledge but also gained appreciation for the variety of specialities and how they had to adapt to the surrounding resources available. For me, being able to see a cyst being removed in the mouth of a little girl really opened my eyes to how helpful and life changing this camp was. The medical aspect of the camp was a major part of this camp, but the management and organisation for successful running of it was another. I had never seen such an organised system with referral forms and sections of individual departments and patient history. I learnt more about the importance of continuity of care and how these documents were crucial to ensure successful follow up. On a personal level, this camp really changed the way I look at things in my day to day life. On a spiritual level, I learnt so much from all the experiences everyone had been through. Before the camp, getting the right balance was very difficult, particularly with things like peer pressure. Speaking to all these people, many who had been through what I am going through really

made me realise how to deal with them and always keep God by my side. Since then, I have learnt the importance of surrender and seen the benefits in my day to day life. Overall, I am truly lucky to have been provided with such a great opportunity which exposed me to so many medical conditions but also life lessons. I am thankful to all the support I was given and the love from every member of the team.

Sai Sreenidhi Ram
Region 8

Service Wing - Experiences at Dang Medical Camp: Part 3

17 to 22 December 2011
Pharmacy Team Experience

It began, lasted and ended in love

From the moment we prepared to volunteer for the medical camp in Dangs, Gujarat from 17 to 22nd December 2011, Swami looked after our every need, through travelling to take His blessings at the divine abode, to meeting the camp until we finally stepped back onto UK soil. He had sent His nearest and dearest angels from unexpected corners to help us when we were stuck, ultimately allowing us to turn the dream of serving Him in His ancient sacred homeland into reality. We were so grateful. As demonstrated with the humble manifestation of the medical camp itself, Swami had showed us personally that when all seems lost but you nevertheless persevere, He will step in and rescue you. The blind/partially blind school children of Dangs were shining examples of such true wealth: never giving up, showing pure love to all and living contently in simplicity. It was infectious! And despite our backgrounds and way of life being at seemingly polar opposites, we became immediately at one with them, ready to Love all, Serve all, Live simply and Live in love. In a surreal sense, I felt we had come 'home'.



Setting up the pharmacy from scratch was such fun and the team-work was remarkable; we simply would not have met demand without the students and volunteers who helped us pre-pack and dispense, the translators who connected us with the patients, the medical suppliers, runners and doctors who paid us visits. Our make-shift pharmacy itself was diligently constructed over ample space, shielded from the elements and complete with ceiling fans, lighting and water-tanks for drinking water, created a cooler, welcoming space for patients and volunteers alike (!) to rest. The team had worked under pressure to arrange 'symbol' dispensing labels, general medical equipment and pre-order large volumes of the finalised formulary from regional suppliers for timely deliveries to the camp, based within Dang's outer-reaches. Interesting and unexpected drug combinations crossed our dispensing tables, from ampicillin / dicloxacillin capsules, potassium / penicillin G tablets and chlorpheniramine-based cough mixture (!) to all-purpose antifungal / antibiotic / steroid / antihistamine cream and gentamycin / neomycin / naphazoline / steroid eye / ear drops. Even anti-snake venom appeared on the formulary! (Though, thankfully it was not used). All were designed to hit more severe disease progression harder. It was an exceptional eye opener. As time allowed, we took the unparalleled opportunity to see other departments in action, witness diagnoses of severe / complicated disease / afflictions and screen patients for malaria via on-site blood testing in pharmacy - all rarely seen/done at home.



Despite the unyielding pressure morning until evening, I found a little time to admire how much time team members devoted to keeping one another's spirits lifted, one another's health in check and to even teaching the more 'alien' members of the team (i.e. me!) some Gujarati! Equally, no care or attention was spared for any patient in need, and those most vulnerable might have found that a sari, biscuits/chocolate, hair combs, pens, stickers, hair bands or a de-worming tablet were given to them alongside their prescription medicines. Many of the children and villagers

touched our hearts. I will personally never forget the tiny little girl with learning difficulties, kicking and screaming so thunderously in fear in the prelude before I took her malaria blood test. After a few moments she suddenly transformed, breaking into a smile through little dimpled cheeks. Much to her mother's surprise, she gave me a little hug. The affection was so unexpected. I had cleaned her face of mud and dust with a cooling wipe and given her a chocolate bar and a few colourful hair bands. She was so happy. But I felt that it was me who was actually transformed. We had done/given simple things but with a lot of love and it had made so much difference.

If we searched, we found many lessons for us to learn. One evening when I wondered whether we were supplying worthwhile amounts of medicine to those with long-term requirements for chronic conditions, I was quickly reminded that we were not just giving medicines; we were giving love, bringing smiles and laughter and that was much more powerful than any drug you could name.

Giving love was providing a unique 'therapy'. To continue the treatment, all we need do is recollect the memories of treasured times and getting this simple 'booster course' will instantly help us smile and feel better.

Thank You all for gracing us with your company and love,

Thank You Swami,

Pharmacy Team
Brinda Jugessur

Spiritual Wing - Sai Centres for Spiritual Unity

'The sole object of Sathya Sai Centres, the very breath on which they thrive, is the consciousness of unity of all as one. But the politics of proliferation attacks the Centres too, and ten people develop into eleven institutions! Such tactics and tendencies will not fit in with Associations of aspirants towards the goal of spiritual unity. Sathya Sai Centres are built on love, they thrive on love, they spread love. No other emotion or attitude has any place therein. Divinity is the magnet, humanity is the iron, and love or Bhakti is the force that brings them together. The Ashanti (peacelessness) from which human beings suffer today should disappear; they should attain Prashanti (inner deep-rooted peace). This is the aim of these institutions initiated by Me. Serve Me, serve yourself by being true, loving, and active; and so be examples of truth, love and service to others.'

-SSS Speaks Vol.6, p 248

Bhagawan Baba says that the Sathya Sai Centre is a key unit, in fact the heart, of the Sathya Sai Organisation. All our individual experiences too testify this statement. We often find that the 'spiritual' (God-centred) energy of the Centre helps to sustain us, and propel us in our journey as aspirants of Truth; whilst at times, when we choose to divert our focus from this God-centredness, we find ourselves in the Centres facing innumerable challenges on this journey. Thus, the principal focus of the Spiritual Wing activities 2012 will be towards enhancing the 'God-centred' energy in all our Centres across the country.

Prayerful chanting of the Divine Name of the Lord with love and sincerity-irrespective of the name, form, language or the tune used for the chanting - has an instantaneous and salutary effect in calming the mind and illumining our inner self with ineffable joy and peace. Group and community prayers especially have an amplifying effect that fill the environment with this illumination, thus resonating joy and peace in all lives and in all hearts. Bhagawan Baba has said that unity of faiths is the main plank of Sai Organisations and the cardinal principle on which they work. Thus the Spiritual Wing in all Centres will work with devotees and wings in organising '**Community Prayer Sessions**' on a regular basis, with the involvement of interested participants from different faiths in their communities. The National Interfaith Committee and the National Music Team, along with the counterpart Regional Interfaith and Music Teams, will support the Centres as necessary in all their efforts to enhance the 'God-centred' (spiritual) energy.

The sincere and devoted study of Sai Literature illumines our intellects, educates our minds and fills our hearts with joy, love and peace. The Supreme Lord has chosen to incarnate amidst us, and chosen a few like us to be the recipients of His Divine Love and Wisdom. He chose to write and speak to us in volumes of Sathya Sai Speaks, 15 volumes of Vahinis, and 14 volumes of Summer Showers. Through His Writings He chose to give us the essence of all scriptures and texts- Gita, Bible, Koran, etc- so as to enable us to speed up on our journey of lifetimes towards the goal of realising our Divine Truth. Now it's our turn to choose: To study His Writings in all reverence and humility, and not miss this sacred opportunity. Thus continuing from last year, the Spiritual Wing will be aiming to conduct **Sai Literature Study Circles and Study Days** based on Sathya Sai Speaks (Volumes 1-16) in all Centres across the UK. The National Study Group along with the Regional Study Teams will provide necessary support such as audiobooks, summary sheets, presentations, facilitators, etc.

Since Bhagawan Baba's Mahasamadhi in April 2011, when the Cosmic Consciousness broke through the shackles It imposed on Itself, the paradigm shift Upwards in human consciousness has been palpable to each one of us within. All of us should be able to utilise this opportune moment to progress Onwards steadily, of course, but also rapidly. Having decided already to lead our lives as spiritual aspirants, we may as well resolve now to tread the path with renewed vigour and determination to reach our goal Godwards. Let us illumine ourselves and share it with those around us.

*Sahana Vavathu Sahanau Bhunakthu Saha Veeryam Karavaavahai
Tejaswi Naa Va Dheethamasthu Maa Vidhvishaavahai
Om Shantih Shantih Shantihi*

May He (Brahman) protect us together; may He nourish us together. May we work jointly with great energy; may our study be vigorous and effective. May we not dispute (or hate any). Let there be peace, peace, peace.

Dr. Veeru Mudigonda
National Spiritual Coordinator

Youth Wing - National Youth Meeting

21st January 2012

The New Year started with great hope and anticipation for the Nation's Youth. Youth across the UK gathered at the first National Youth meeting of 2012 with the purpose of sharing their ideas and thoughts on the Youth Wing.

The day began with emotionally charged group devotional singing, enabling us to focus our minds on Swami and this set the tone for the important day ahead. This was followed by an inspiring video presentation of a compilation of Divine Discourses given by Bhagawan about the importance of Self-Confidence and Faith.

Our National Chair, Dr. Kiran Patel then addressed the youth. He explained how the youth are the future of the Organisation and society and that it is very important that we start work immediately in serving the community.

National Youth Co-ordinator, Shyam Jamnadas welcomed the youth and explained the importance of sharing ideas and experiences so that the vision for the Youth Wing in 2012 has maximum contribution from the entire Nation's youth.

The youth then divided up into workshops, to explore four fundamental questions, and after much deliberation, honest and sincere thoughts were shared:

1. When do you see the Youth most engaged/involved with the Organisation? What disengages the youth?
 - Youth feel most engaged when they are involved and given responsibility - with Regional/National events and Youth Satsangs. The diversity of youth across the UK also came through as many youth enjoy different types of activities (spiritual/service/SSE).
 - Youth feel disengaged when trying to balance work/study commitments with centre, regional and national activities and also when they do not feel unity or support.
2. How can we, as a National Youth Wing serve the youth on their spiritual journey and grow their connection with Swami?
 - Working with the other wings and seeking support from Sai Students came up as a key theme as well as momentum of activities to keep youth interested and inspired.
3. What challenges are facing youth today? How can we as leaders support them?
 - Many ideas were born with the third question but the key theme was about momentum. Keeping activities regular in order to generate inspiration. This again touched upon balancing everything, which started a debate that work/life commitments and spirituality should not be seen as separate, but as one.
 - In terms of support, a mentoring scheme was suggested, with elders sharing experiences and answering questions that youth may have on challenges they are facing.
4. How can we, as a National Youth Wing, serve the community in which we live?
 - The fourth question was interesting as it became clear that the service needs of each Region were different. Each centre and region should serve where there is a need as regularly as they can manage.
 - These questions were further explored in an open group discussion amongst the youth with questions being answered by Dr. Kiran Patel (National Chair), Jamie Raju (Vice National Chair) and Ketan Gokani (Region 4 Chair).

The group discussion and output from the workshops were summarised and used to finalise this year's vision for the Youth Wing. This was presented at the National Orientation and Welcome Day.

The youth left with the understanding that there is much work to be done, but with an intense feeling of love and inspiration. It is important that the youth from each Region share ideas, communicate and collaborate closely over the coming months to have greatest impact on any activity we undertake. Together we will work with unity to make the

vision of the Youth Wing a reality.

We sincerely thank Swami for bringing youth from across the country together and look forward to an exciting year ahead.

Shyam Jamnadas
National Youth Co-ordinator

Youth Wing - Youth Wing - 2012 Vision

Swami has placed great emphasis on the youth saying "The future of the country depends on the skill and the sincerity of the youth. Therefore, the necessary enthusiasm and encouragement must be generated among the youth. All my hopes are based on the students, the youth. They are very dear to me"

With this in mind, in order to bring unity and generate this enthusiasm, the vision for the youth wing is to:

1. Unite the youth across the UK, focused on one goal: To make OUR lives HIS Message
And use our energy and inspiration to
2. Serve the wider community, following Swami's message of Service to Man is Service to God

There are 3 key objectives for the youth wing for 2012:

1. A National Youth Satsang to unite youth across the UK
- Focusing on our role as youth in serving Swami's mission
2. A regular themed Regional youth event encouraging the aims and aspirations of youth in each Region
- To develop momentum in growing as youth and understand Swami's mission.
3. A regular Regional/Centre service activity serving the wider community, integrating with other wings of the Organisation
- To use our energy and inspiration to reach out and serve the wider community with unity.

We pray that Swami works through us and guides us in serving His mission, together with you all

Jai Sai Ram

Shyam Jamnadas
National Youth Co-ordinator

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