

LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

SSE MAGAZINE 2016

SOUTH HOUSTON SAI CENTER



An Offering to
BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

BALVIKAS | May 2016

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Good education is that which teaches the method of achieving world peace; that which destroys narrow-mindedness and promotes unity, equality, and peaceful co-existence among human beings.

— Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Children's minds are innocent and pure. Each child is a white marble for the teacher and the parents to mould into an image of God, a bud to be helped to blossom in all its Divine glory so that it becomes a worthy offering to God.

— Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Baba's Message

"Run a Bala Vihar for young children where they will listen to stories from the Scriptures, the Epics, and the Lives of Saints belonging to all religions. Children must also be trained to sing Bhajans, enact small plays with themes selected from the classics. They must be taught to cultivate habits of discipline, for these alone can ensure happiness: both individual and social."

"The ideal of the Bal Vikas is to raise a generation of boys and girls who have a clean and clear conscience. Bal Vikas is the primary basis of the great movement to restore Dharma in the world. The young minds of children are not polluted and hence they can be led into good ways of living, simplicity, humility and discipline."

"Guide the children in the spiritual path, through simple and moral living; install in the young minds, the importance of duty, devotion and discipline; help them understand the five human values, so that they can practice these in their daily lives; guide them to Love all and Serve all. In short help them grow into worthy citizens to serve the world; identifying the divinity present in all. Education must aim at providing the child not livelihood, but, a life worth living. The promotion of human values must become an integral part of the educational process."

"The actual syllabus is not so important as the creation of an atmosphere wherein noble habits and ideals can grow and fructify."



South Houston Sai Center President's Message

Loving Sairams to All –

Let me offer my most reverential and loving salutations at the Divine lotus feet of our beloved Sadguru, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

This would be an opportune time to extend our profuse gratitude to Bhagawan for bringing the SSE magazine to fruition through his Divine grace and will. Only he is capable of doing so in his own inimitable way - inspiring our SSE children, parents and teachers alike to chronicle their poems, artistic sketches, nostalgic memories and experiences of him in such short order.

Bhagawan says "Teaching is the noblest of profession. It is also the holiest sadhana for self-realisation. For, it involves the cultivation of self-less Love and the showering and sharing of that Love". On behalf of our entire center, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all our SSE teachers who verily exemplify the above ideals proffered by Bhagawan.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the SAI parenting coordinators for their tenacious and concerted effort in contriving the curriculum and diligently conducting the workshop every week. This allows parents a much needed forum to discuss, grapple with and tackle common parenting issues confronting them in an expedient yet spiritual manner.

Dear children – May Bhagawan bless you with the strength to soar high and free on the wings of "faith" and "devotion" as each one of you continue your "educare" in this supremely spiritually gratifying SSE program.

May Bhagawan shower his benedictions on all.

Loving Sairams,
Ranji Raghavan



South Houston SSE Coordinator's Message

My dear Children, Parents and Teachers,

I offer my heartfelt gratitude to Swami for giving me such a beautiful gift in this life - His divine presence and the loving company of all of you!

Swami has said "Do not underestimate the power of values" and I have stood witness to this. Over and over again, the teachers and I have been awed by how young personalities have blossomed through the simple inculcation of the 5 human values. The world will praise these children for their academic accomplishments, but it is their character and their "right conduct" that makes me want to bow down to them. **Dearest children**, this whole education program is focused on you, but through you, all of us experience Swami's Divine Love.

While the children have all the latent values, it is the teachers that polish and guide them. We could use all the lands as paper and all the seas as ink and still be unable to express adequate gratitude for the **Sai Spiritual Education teachers**. They are noble souls and their wisdom, heart and dedication are the pillars of the SSE program.

In the fast-paced world that we have created for ourselves, parenting is one of the most challenging tasks! **To our SSE parents**, who are striving to serve this whole humanity by offering up precious gems of creation – thank you for sharing your beautiful children with us. Their innocence and purity touch our souls.

Beloved Swami, we offer the first publication of our SSE magazine into your Divine Hands. Thank you for giving us such stellar instruments like Chaya Satish and Pavithra Krishnan who coordinated the effort between the children, parents and teachers. Thank you to Deepika Satish for diligently working countless hours on formatting articles and designing the Magazine.

Loving Sairams,

Madhu Kumar

Please allow us, Swami, to always practice Your Message:

"Cultivate noble qualities. I am prepared to give everything to those who cultivate noble qualities and to those who teach them. Not only that, I am ready to give even my life for their sake. In fact, I am living only for their sake. I am ready to sacrifice anything to put you on the virtuous path. I do not seek anything in return. Lead a noble life and earn a good name. This is what I expect from you."

— Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Discourse Jan 15, 2004



Children's corner- Premamayi

Students have to imbibe the nine important qualities, which are as precious as nine gems. These are: spirit of sacrifice, humility, the spirit of selfless service to society, friendliness, discipline, commitment to integrity, truth, love, nonviolence, and faith in God.

— Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Loving Seva

I like seva. I like to help people. The people we help are very happy when we give them food, jackets and play bingo with them. All the children from SSE make pretty cards for the people we help. Seva is good because we can give things to people who need it. Baba says hands that help is better than lips that pray!!!



Advaita Ramlal
Pre-Balvikas



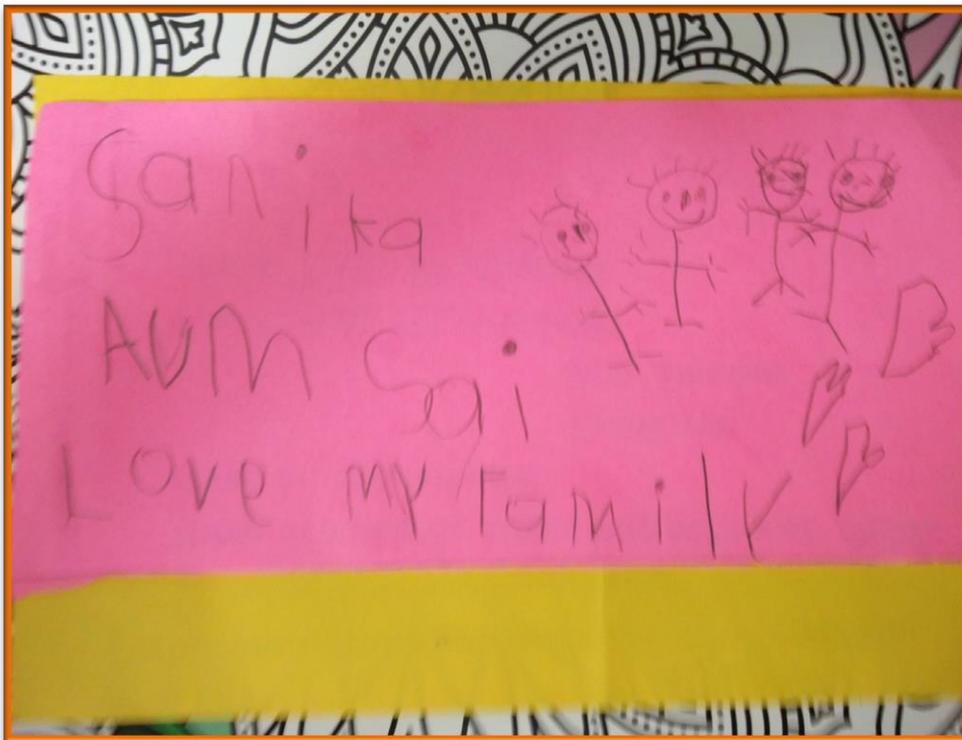
Guru Brahma Guru Vishnu
Guru Devo Maheshwara
Guru Sakshat Param Brahma
Tasmai Shri Gurave Namah

Meaning:Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Lord Maheshwara. Guru is verily the supreme reality. Sublime prostrations to Him.

**Anshika Indurthy
Pre-Balvikas**



Alisha Chandramani
Pre-Balvikas



Sanika Bellare
Pre-Balvikas

I Love all of my
friends they Love me.



Niveditha

Niveditha Narayanan
Pre-Balvikas

Niveditha



faith

I have
faith in
the love of
my family to
save me from
the huge waves

Love

Niveditha Narayanan
Pre-Balvikas

SATHYASAI BABA



March 30 Avi Sabhnani

Avi Sabhnani
Group 1 Year 1

Saty Sai Baba



By: Harshini

Harshini Pemmaraju

Group 1 Year 1



Ishan Chandiramani
Group 1 Year 1



Vakratunda Mahakaya,
Surya Koti Sama Prabha,
Nirvighnam Kurume Deva,
Sarva Kaaryeshu Sarvada.

JAYAN

Jayan Vachhani
Group 1 Year 1



Satya White
Group 1 Year 1

Dear Swami,
My humble pranams to you.
This is for you.

① Acrostic poem

Sai
A
I
B
A
B
A

Inspiring

Brave

Always loving

Blessing

Always helping

② Sai Garden

I had a Sai Garden on Sunday March
12. I named it Dharma/Right conduct. I help it by
praying to it everyday.

It helps me by giving me food.

③ Love

Everyday I try to love everybody.

I also try to practice love everyday.

**LOVE ALL SERVE ALL
HELP EVER HURT NEVER**

Sachith

Sachith Nemmara
Group 1 Year 1



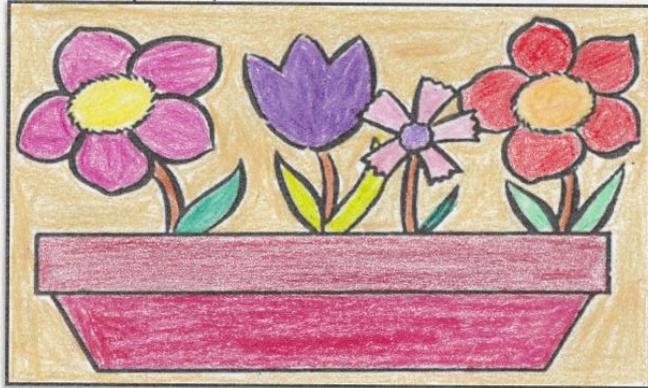
Sriram Akella
Group 1 Year 1



Rahul Swaminathan
Group 1 Year 1

S.S.E.

When you plant a seed of Love,



It is "YOU" that blossom

Group-1, Year-1 & 2.



Muraari Civunigunta
Group 1 Year 2



And reaped the flower of
'Love'



I planted the seed of
'Care'

Murari



Gautami Ballingam
Group 1 Year 2



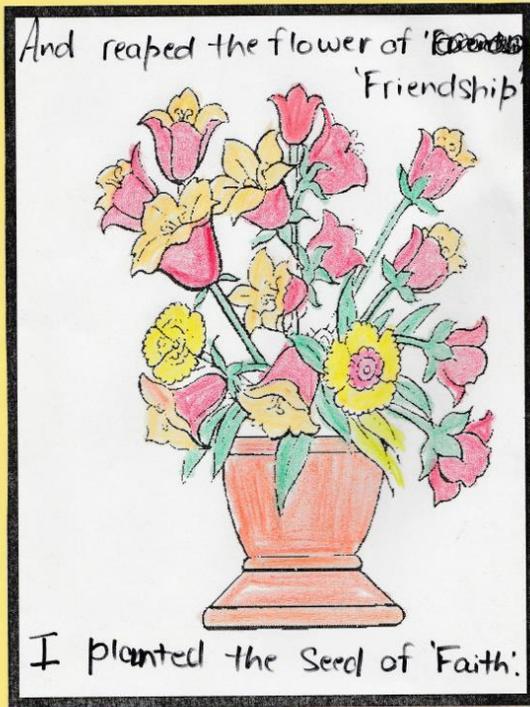
Aryan Patel

Aryan Patel
Group 2 Year 1



Gautami

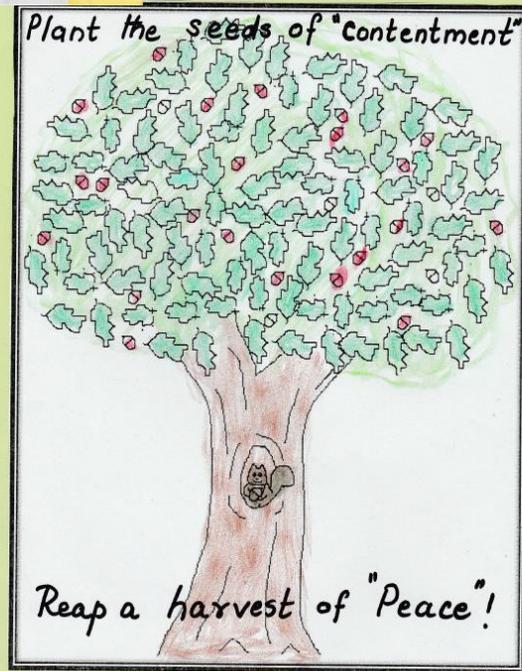




Kavin Krishna
Group 1 Year 2

Jayden

Jaiden White
Group 2 Year 1

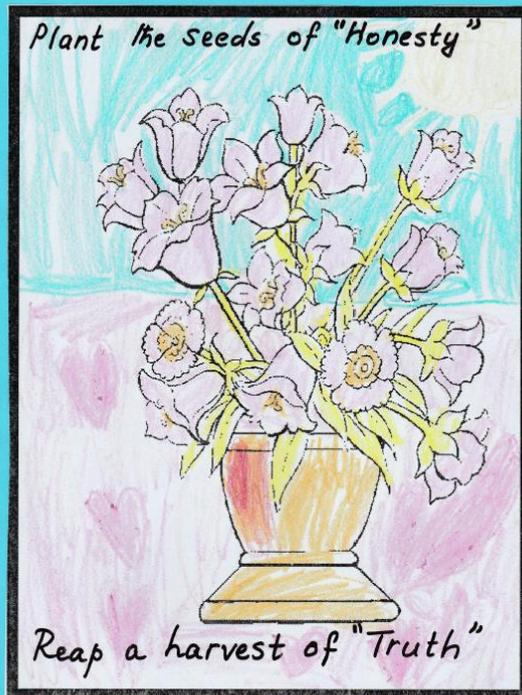


Kavin





Lahiri Ladi
Group 2 Year 1



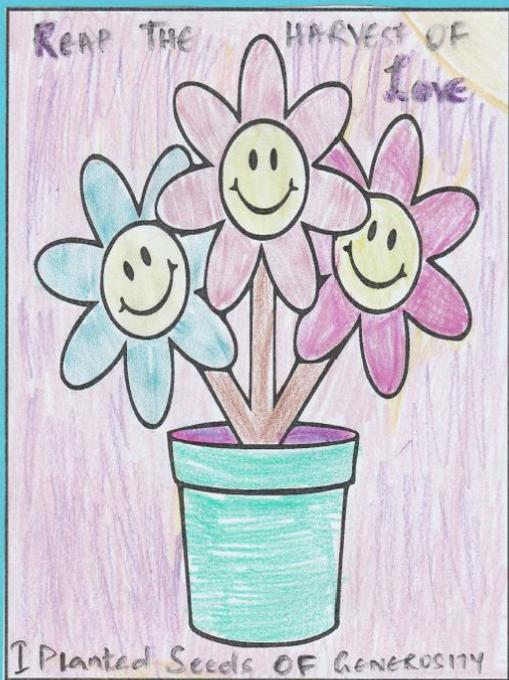
Priyanka

Priyanka Nayar
Group 1 Year 2



Lahari





Sritha

Sritha Indhurty
Group 1 Year 2



Skandha Krishnan
Group 2 Year 1



Skandha

LOVE ALL
SERVE ALL



Gautami

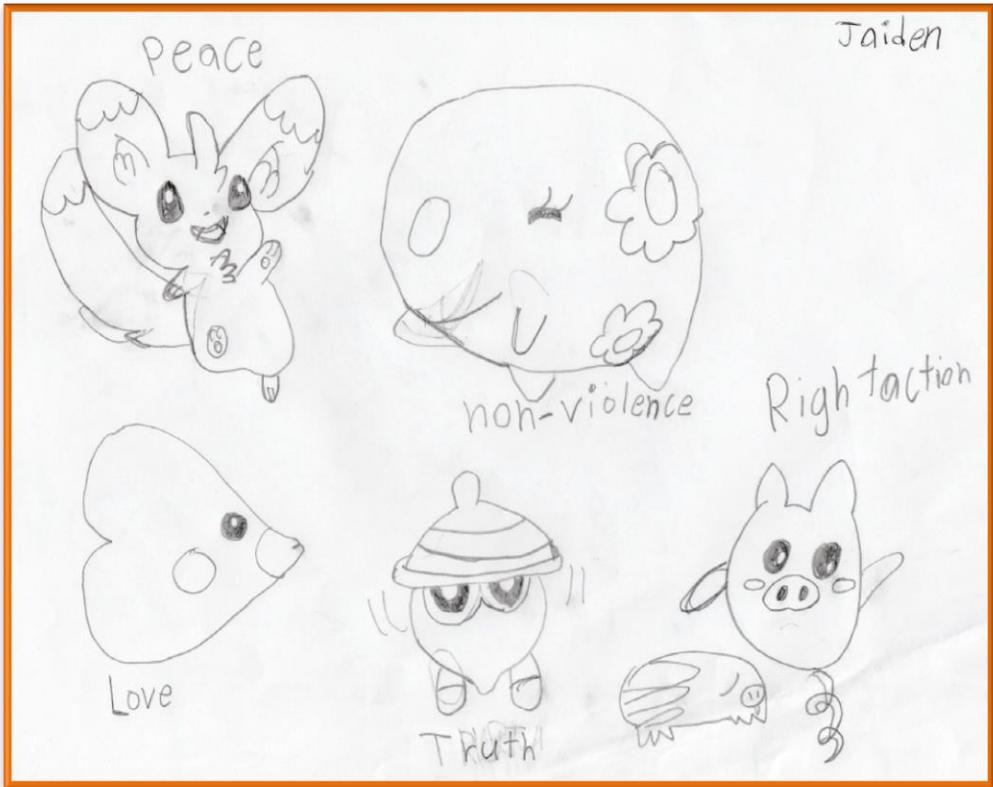
Gautami Ballingam
Group 1 Year 2



**Muraari Civunigunta
Group 1 Year 2**



Aditi Ravuri
Group 1 Year 2

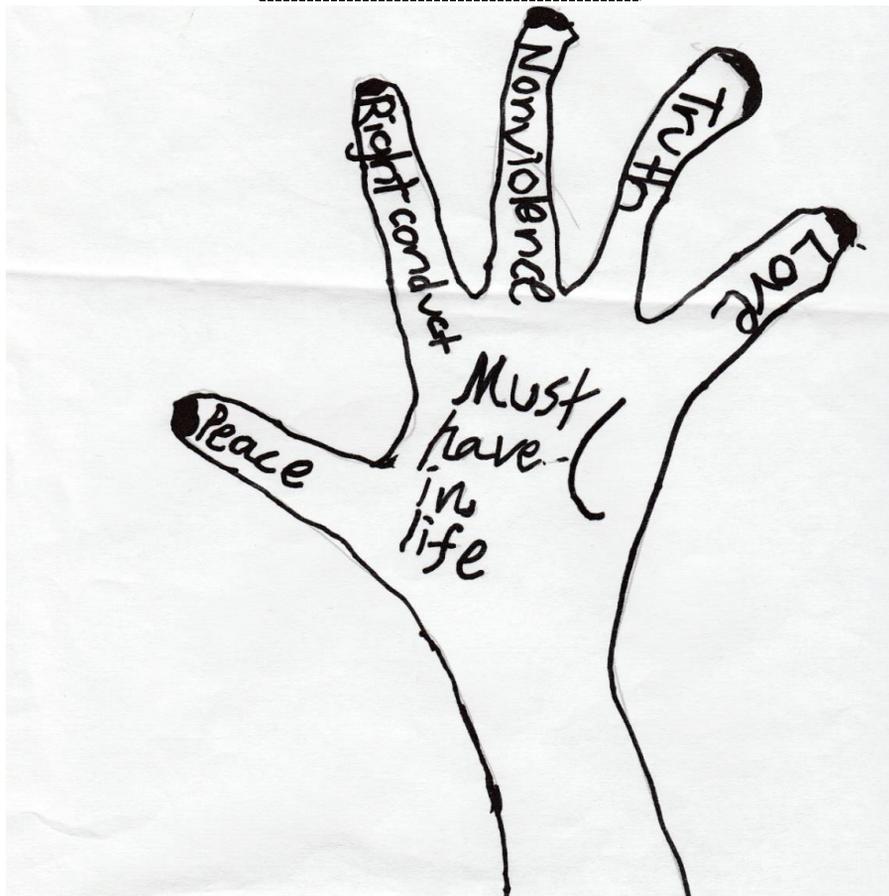


Jaiden White
Group 2 Year 1

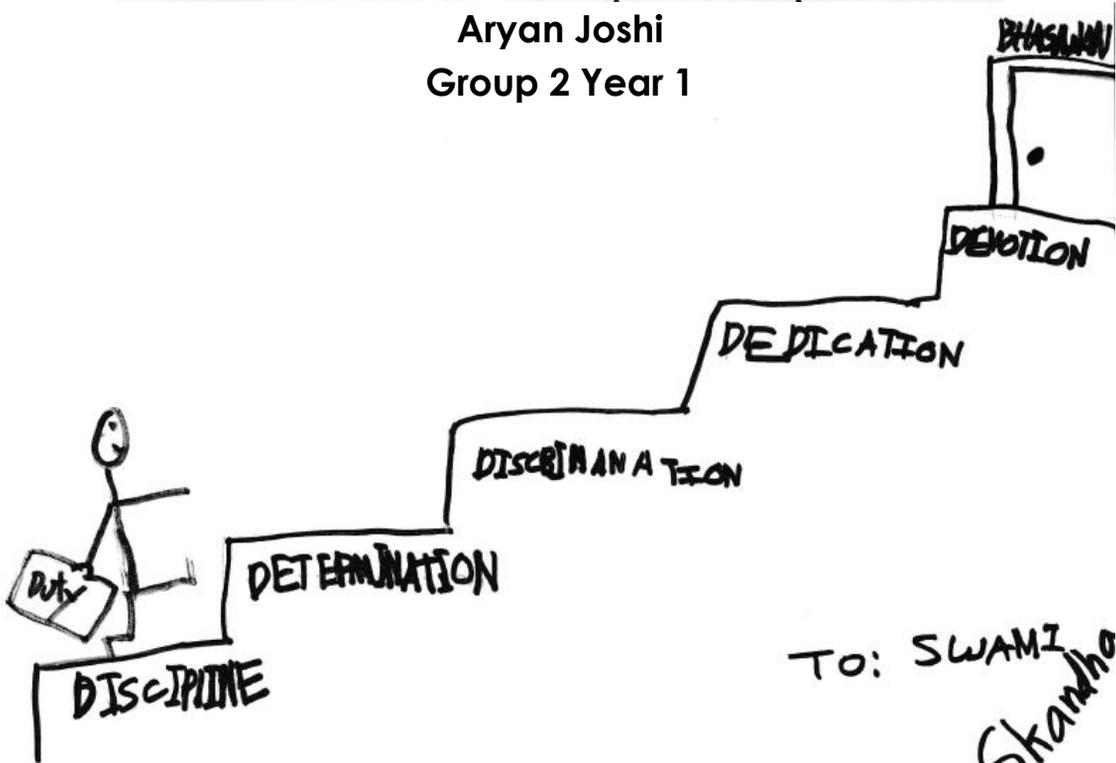
The Flower of the 5 Values



Akshara Venturupalli
Group 2 Year 1



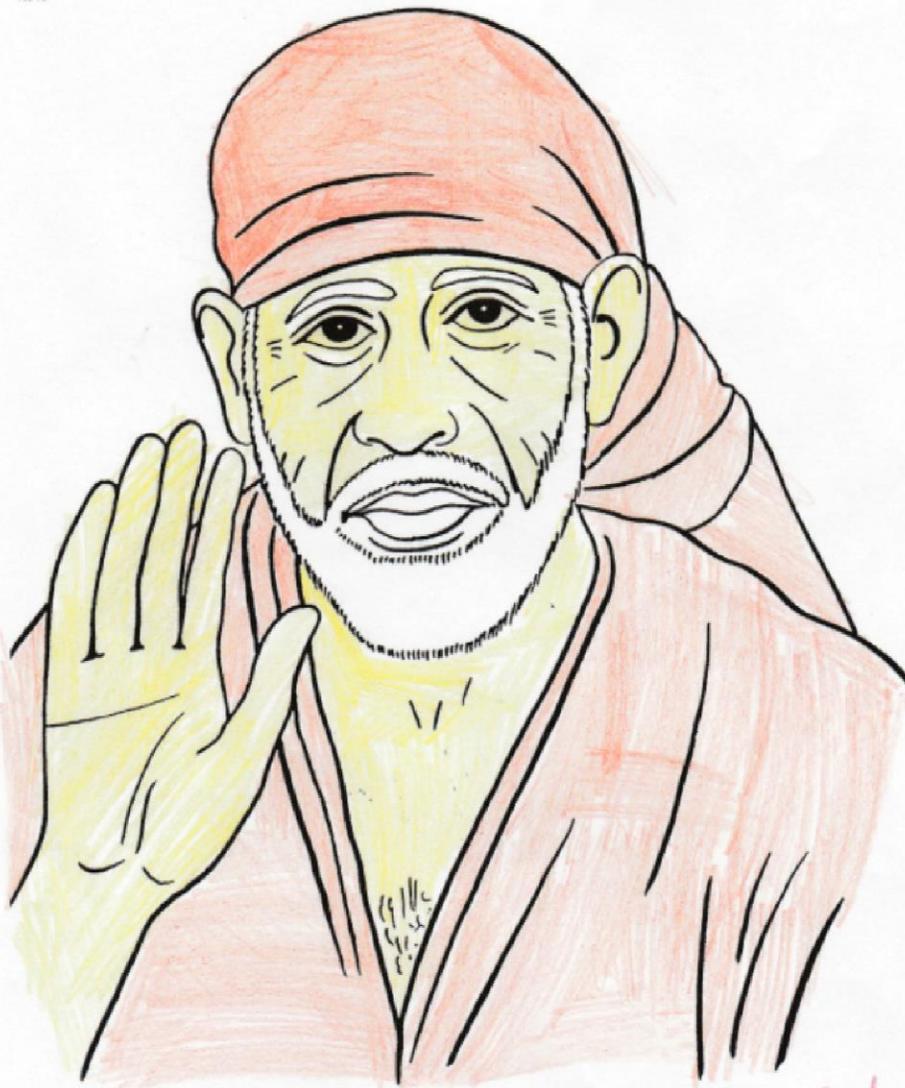
Aryan Joshi
Group 2 Year 1



TO: SWAMI
BY: Skandha

Skandha Krishnan
Group 2 Year 1

my Beloved Sai Baba



Baba is with me nomatter what.
He is my Guidance all the time.
I Love my Sai.
" Love All Serve All "

Aryan Patel

Aryan Patel
Group 2 Year 1

Divya



Divya Ravuri
Group 2 Year 1



Kaviya Ravi Kumar
Group 2 Year 1



There is only one religion,
Religion of love

-Sri Sathya Sai baba

Krishan V.



Krishan Vachhani
Group 2 Year 1



Lahiri Ladi
Group 2 Year 1

Blissfull
Heartful
Admirable
Glorious
Wise
Ambitious
Non-violent

Lucinda
Patel

Lucinda Patel
Group 2 Year 1



Pranitha

Pranitha Pemmaraju
Group 2 Year 1



To: SWAMI
By: Skandha

Skandha Krishnan
Group 2 Year 1

Om Gannaanaam Tvaa Ganna-Patim Hava-Amhe Kavim
Kavinaam-Upama-shravas-Tanvam Jyestha-Bhagam Brahmanam
Brahmannas-Pata Ka Nah gnanvan-Nuuti bhimsiida-Saadanam

TO: SWAN



Prano devi Sarasvati vajebhirvajini vati
Dhinamavitratu Ganesaya namah saravatyai namah
Sri guru bhyo namah harih om santih santih santih ||

by: Skandha

Skandha Krishnan
Group 2 Year 1

Saving the Environment

We need to love and preserve the environment for ourselves and future generations; our blue green planet is the only home we have. Baba says, "Plant the seeds of love in your hearts. Let them grow into trees of service and shower the sweet fruit of ananda. Share the ananda with all."

Creating and caring for our Sai Garden has been a wonderful experience for our family. We chose the name "Garden of My Heart" because we have to care for the saplings with a lot of love and affection.



I am curious to look at my garden every morning to see if a new seed has sprouted. One of us takes the responsibility of watering the garden while chanting Gayatri mantra to spread positive vibrations in the family as well as to the growing plants. That is also the time for us to ponder over our actions and think of showering loving on everyone and get rid of negative thoughts and emotions that might crop up in our mind like weeds in the garden.

We chose the sub value Sharing so that we can share produce (organic vegetables) with the food bank. In day-to-day activities, I practice showing Baba's five main values (Truth, Non-Violence, Love, Peace, Right Conduct).

We are very thankful to the Sai Garden volunteers' team who helped us setup this garden in our backyard in cold and wet weather. This act was a great sign of sharing and love, which will grow into the Garden of My Heart! Jai Sai Ram!



Somya Mehrotra
Group 2 Year 2

Me as Swami's Child

In this essay, I describe some of my most cherished experience with Swami when HE was physically amongst us as well as after HIS Sannidhi to highlight HIS Omnipresence. I pray to HIM that HE writes the remaining sections through me.

I was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan and am told that the first word I uttered after birth was "OM". My parents tell me that after I was born Swami came to their dream and instructed them to go to Sai Center. Thus by HIS grace, I came to know of HIM when I was born. At Ann Arbor, as a part of the Sai Center, I used to be a regular participant in their service projects both the Soup Kitchen and Nursing Home project. This is where I first learnt about Love, Care and Sharing. I went to "Parthi yatra" in 2007 with my parents and other young adults from the region 5. I participated in a group performance in front of Swami and enjoyed HIS Amazing Grace. I have continued participating in service projects first in Augusta, Georgia and now in Houston Texas. Since coming to Houston in 2011, I have started attending Balvikas at the Sai Center where I learned about Human Values and their application in daily life, some of which I will describe later.

Swami has been instrumental in every act and is part of my life. I started learning Tabla with Subhendu Uncle with the prayer to Bhagavan that HE should bless me to play for HIM during bhajans. During one of our visits to Parthi in 2014, Bhagavan blessed me with opportunity to go to the Mirpuri College of music and get lessons from Nishikant Sir, Bhagavan's most beloved Tabla teacher. During this visit, I was also blessed to play Tabla in Mirpuri College of Music in front of the students, teachers and in HIS divine Omnipresence. In 2015 Swami blessed me with an opportunity to speak in Radio Sai where I talked about how we should care for Mother Nature. It was indeed a unique blessed experience.

I have always tried to follow HIS teachings that I learn at Balavikas, both at home and in the School. In my second grade, as all children do, I had classmates who were good to me and those who were not so considerate to me. One day as my classmate was celebrating her birthday by distributing goodie bags to all of us, she found out that she was one bag short. Further, the child who ended up not getting the goodie bag was a member of the "not so considerate group". I saw that he was sad and immediately gave him my goodie bag that made him happy for the rest of the day. Swami had taught me that when need arises we have to be ready to share.

Another time, during PE at school, one of my friends accidentally kicked the soccer ball outside the boundary limits and I went to fetch it. We were told by our teachers that students are not permitted to cross the boundary and those who did so will not be allowed to play soccer for a week as punishment. When the teacher asked, I truthfully told her that I had crossed the boundary to fetch

The ball. I was asked to stay away from soccer for a week. I did feel sad but then my father reminded me that truth should be told irrespective of the consequence.

Swami says Mata Pita Guru Daivam. As a child there are many days I don't listen to them. On such instances, I have always faced failures and I consider this HIS unrelenting attempt to teach me that listening to parents is the most important karma for children. It was the first day of my STAAR exam and as soon as I woke up in the morning I was not in a good mood. I didn't listen to my mother and I ended up not doing so well in the exam. I realized my mistake, The next day, I listened to my parents and on that day's STAAR exam I was able to perform outstandingly well. I could feel Swami writing the exam through me. I understood that when we as children listen to parents Swami is always be with us. From then on, I study for the exam, take blessings from Swami and my parents and chant Gayathri Mantra and write OM SRI SAIRAM on all my exams, and feel Swami's beloved presence next to me.

I have come to learn that life is a game of chess where we have wins and losses. We are pawns that move around the chess board. With constant prayers to Bhagavan and by following HIS teachings we can have him move the pawns on the board. When this happens the results are always going to be beneficial, whether we realize it or not. I would like to conclude with our beloved Swami's quotes:

"Life is a song - sing it.
Life is a game - play it.
Life is a challenge - meet it.
Life is a dream - realize it.
Life is a sacrifice - offer it.
Life is love - enjoy it." — Sathya Sai Baba

"The end of education is character" — Sathya Sai Baba

Jai Sai Ram

Aaditya Krishna Arun
Group 2 Year 2

The Boy Who Studied

Have you ever been judged by what you did or do? Have you ever been made fun of because of something? When that happens, it's called prejudice or unfairness. Now, you may know what it means but you will understand the real meaning, by reading the following story. It is about a young boy who liked to study, but was bullied by the smart and athletic kids. Let's find out what happened.

Once there lived a boy named Saaj. He was a religious boy who loved to sing bhajans and believed that people who studied well would get good jobs. But above all his beliefs, there was one he always believed in and is often called it the golden rule: "Treat others the way you want to be treated." And he respected this rule very much but always thought that that rule did not work at his school. He found that whenever he tried to be nice to a bully, it would only backfire and the bully would do something mean to him.

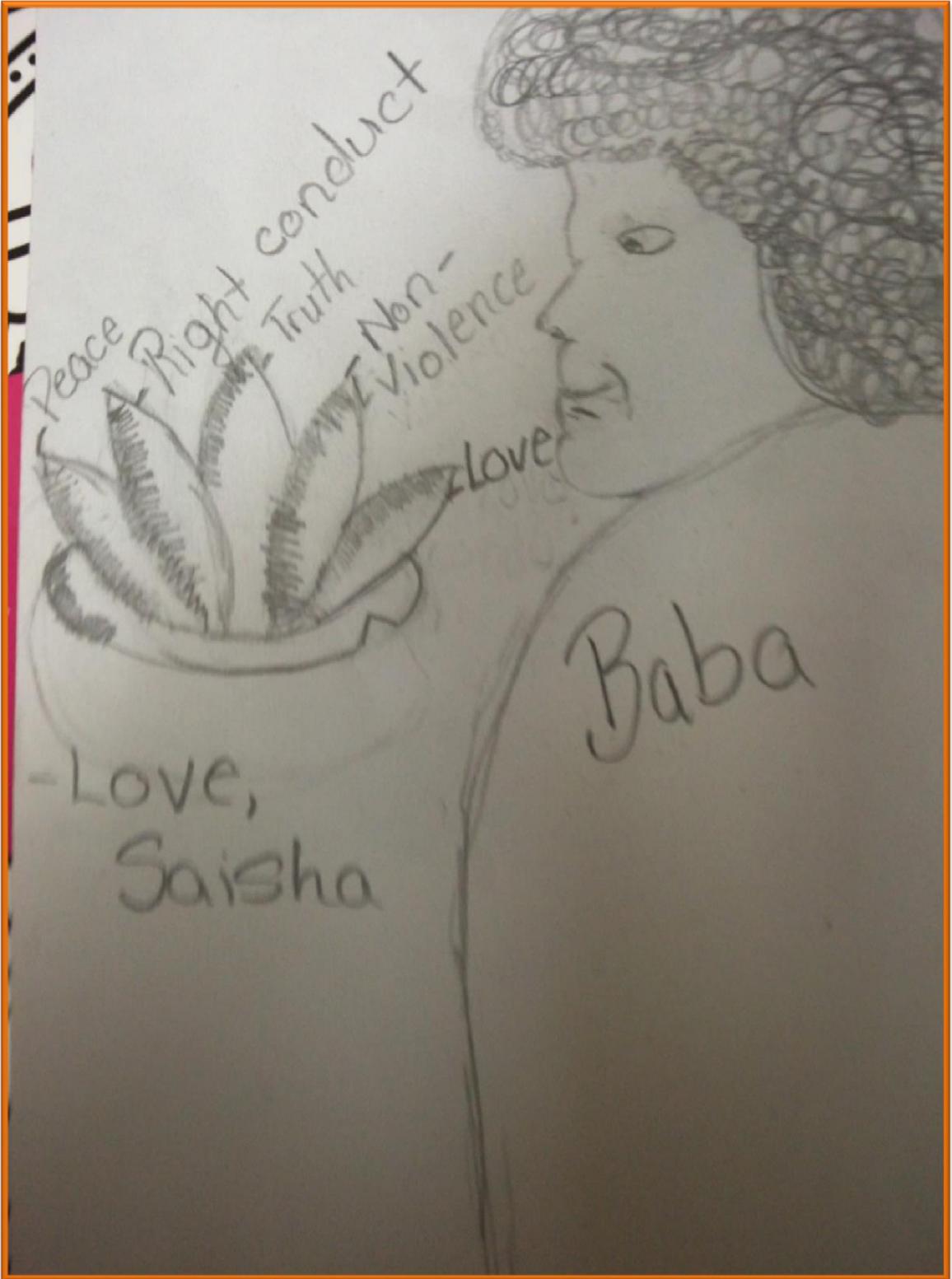
If it wasn't for the day when he had a meeting with the counselor, he would have never known what to do. When he met the counselor, she told Saaj to be himself and ignore the bullies. And if that didn't work, then he should think of some good memories and avoid the bullies. She assured him that then he would surely have a better day than usual. Soon, Saaj tried the counselor's method and it worked! His parents saw that Saaj came home with a bright smile on his face and he became friends with the bully, like he wanted.

So here is some advice - if you are facing prejudice or if you are being bullied because of what you do and how you look, or for any other reason, tell the counselor or a grown-up. I have experienced it so I know how it feels. It really works, so try it!

The moral of this story is "Tell a grown-up if you are having problems and follow the golden rule - **Treat people the way you wanted to be treated.**

Aishani Sakalabhaktula

Group 2 Year 2



Saisha Bellare
Group 2 Year 2



Shreya Nair
Group 2 Year 2

Food for Thought

Somewhere in the world
Begging on the streets
People yearn for a morsel
Of one meal of food to eat

So be glad and happy
You have this luxury
Please do not waste
For so many today go hungry

Say the prayers for your food
Every meal and every day
It will enrich you and protect
And make your food turn okay

Every day you watch
The portions of every meal
Don't eat too much or too little
Eat just enough and see how you feel

Drink plenty of water
To keep your body going
Limit the junk that you eat
With the right food you will be glowing

Food is sacred
Food is God
It is to be worshipped
Not to be thrown away like sod .

Daksha Gia Krishnan
Group 3 Year 1

Blessed to be your child, O Lord Sathya Sai
Heaven on Earth is when you appear in my eyes
All beings surrender to you
Giver of blessings, bestower of virtue
Ahimsa, Prema, Dharma, Sathya, and Shanti
We thank you for what you inspire us to be
All day, all night you are in my thoughts
Near my heart you always are, you are what my soul had sought

Daksha Gia Krishnan
Group 3 Year 1

One Sunday At SSE

Sunday afternoons are a time to reflect
We go to the Sai Center where we all connect
We learn lessons that we can use in reality
Of the five values that take us close to divinity.

Let there be truth in thought, word and deed
Peace and Non-violence is what the world is in need
With Right Action in everything you will succeed
And pure Love will win everybody indeed

Sneha Kumar
Group 3 Year 2&3

Swami's Grace

Sai Ram. My name is Akhila, and I am 14 years old. From when I was little girl, both my mother and grandmother have told me their many experiences with Swami and how his miracles impacted their lives. My mother grew up listening to my grandmother telling her many things about Baba and about his many leelas. My grandmother used to take my mother to "Sammiti" (Sai Center) every Tuesday and Thursday. My mother actively participated in all the center activities and loved singing Swami's name. As children, my mother and uncle used to look forward to going every Thursday and seeing the huge, beautiful picture of Baba in the main hall. All of these created strong devotion and love for Baba in the heart of my family. She still tells me how she remembers the strong and nice fragrance of vibhuthi in the air. My mother and uncle used to look forward to and pray for the day they would meet Baba in person.

A few years later, the Sammiti moved further away from their house which made it hard for them to frequently attend. Swami came for the opening of the new Sammiti. My grandmother went and had darshan of Swami during the opening of the new Vijayawada Sammiti.

In tenth grade, my mother was feeling very bad that she wasn't able to meet Swami that day because she was in school. One day, a letter came from the Sammiti inviting her to participate in a literary day camp in the Sammiti. My mother felt that it was a blessing to spend a full day in the new Sammiti in Baba's presence. My mother, along with her friends, took part in all of the events offered at the camp. After the camp, my mother became busy with her studies and was unable to attend the Sammiti. She was extremely saddened that she could not meet Swami and get involved in his seva.

As time passed, my mother graduated, got married, moved to America, and settled in Massachusetts. Many years later, a lady came and told her about a Sai Bhajan happening in her house every Thursday evening. My mother was overjoyed knowing that she had been reconnected with Baba after all this time. She felt He had come back into her life. My mother started frequently attending the Bhajan and was introduced to a nearby Sai center. My mother, father, and I started to go to the Sai Center every Sunday.

After a couple of years, my family visited Puttaparthi. They found out that Baba wasn't giving darshan that day and were extremely saddened. We were supposed to go back to America the next day. My mother started praying to Baba and requesting him to give his darshan to us. Suddenly, people started running from the canteen saying that Swami had come to give darshan. We felt that it was truly a miracle. All of us had a wonderful darshan of Swami that day.

My mother always had a small card with Swami's quote on it that said "Come

just one step forward, I shall take a hundred toward you". My mother feels that Baba is always with our family, saving us from everything, and helping cross all obstacles in life. She told me, even though we have been through incidents that could have been life-threatening, with Swami's grace we are all safe. He is like a mother, always protecting us.

Once when we were coming from Dallas, a car crossed us from the front on the freeway and caused our car to go completely out of control. Our car started to spin and finally landed in a deep grassy area next to the freeway. We suddenly realized that the road that was formerly packed with dozens of cars was now completely empty. We all soon realized this was simply Baba's miracle and felt that He saved our family.

I have learned many things from the experiences of my mother and grandmother. They have always taught me to love Baba and to always have faith in Him. Whenever I have any kind of difficulty in my life, I put this into action and remember that He is always there for me; to help me and guide me. Sometimes when I am tensed or feel anxious, I remember this quote from Swami: "I shall be with you, wherever you are, guarding you and guiding you. March on, have no fear" – Baba.

Jai Sai Ram

Akhila Venuturupalli
Group 3 Year 2 & 3



Kiran Kumar
Group 3 Year 2&3

It was around one o'clock in the morning in the small town of Surandai, India. It was my fourth night in the local hospital and I was getting very restless. My grandmother had fallen very ill and my aunt and I had been at the hospital for almost a week trying to care for her. Neither of us had gotten much sleep. My aunt would spend all her spare time praying to Lord Ganesha inside the hospital. Finally, our bodies started to show exhaustion. My aunt said she needed coffee immediately. She gave me five rupees and told me to run to the shop just outside the hospital. I ran to the shop and pounded on the door, but they were closed. It was then I started to have a panic attack. I cried on the step of the hospital. I was so angry. I was angry at myself for not being able to help my grandmother. I was angry at my aunt who was not able to stay awake. I was angry at the shop owner for closing the store. But most of all, I was angry at Sai Baba, who I thought had deserted me in my time of need. I finally stopped crying and was about to go back inside the hospital empty handed when an old man came up to me and asked what I was doing at this hour. I explained to him that I came outside to get coffee for my aunt, but the store was closed. He then directed me to a store past the bus stop and told me that there would be coffee there. Hesitantly I said, "I am just a little girl! How am I supposed to walk all the way to the bus stop at one in the morning all by myself?" He then said to me "You are not by yourself. I can't walk that far, but I will watch you from here and make sure you are okay. Just say the name of Sai Baba and you will be okay. It was then I noticed he was wearing a necklace with Sathya Sai Baba holding his hands out in blessing. This surprised me because there are hardly any Sathya Sai Baba devotees in that region. Nevertheless, I believed in him and clenching tightly my five rupees, I quickly hurried across the streets, avoiding eye contact with anyone. I kept looking back at the kind old man and he was smiling at me and reassuring me. I soon went far enough and couldn't see him anymore. I had reached the bus stop and got coffee at the adjacent stand. To my amazement, the coffee cup had a picture of the goddess Shakthi whom my grandmother and I worshiped her ardently. She had even named me Shakthi Sowbhagya in honor of her favorite Goddess. It was then I realized that Sai Baba was with me. I immediately felt ashamed for losing faith in him. I returned back to the hospital with confidence and wanted to thank the old man but I could not find him. I came back and gave the coffee to my aunt, but she fell asleep anyways. I was no longer scared because I knew in my heart that even though my aunt wasn't awake and taking care of me and my grandmother, Baba was with us. This is how I came to know that Sathya Sai Baba is omnipresent. Even if you give up believing in him, he will never ever give up believing in you.

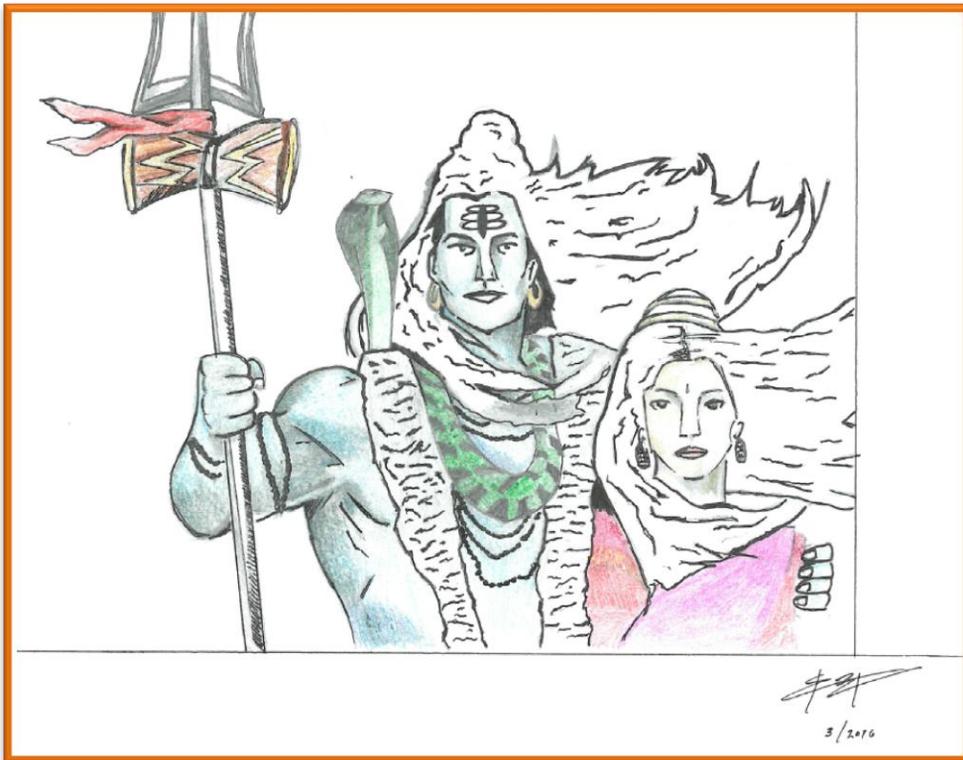
Sowbhashri Suresh
Group 3 Year 2&3

Swami Swami We love you
You're so kind and lovely too
You are the one true God
You are not at all flawed

You are omnipresent
You are completely content
You reside in my heart
We can never be apart

Swami Swami We love you
You're so kind and lovely too

**Samhita and Sowbhashri Suresh
Pre-Balvikas and Group 3 Year 2&3**



**Suvin Ajith
Group 4 Boys**

Knowing Swami



As a young child, my first impression of God was a mysterious power living in the clouds who spreads love into the world. In these stressful high school years, I find it extremely difficult to manage my schedule and time to incorporate Swami into my daily life. I started thinking of Swami when I have difficult times in my day to day activities. I recognized that every activity become manageable by integrating Swami into it and felt His blessings in every step of the way. Thus I discovered that Swami exists in every stress, every homework, every test, and every single activity in life proving my initial perception of Swami. Swami is love and gives love to all of his children. As SSE children, it is important to take this love and dedication and pour it into our daily lives. It may be very difficult to perceive, but God lives around us, within us, and inside every little action and task we do. Swami says, "Love is my form. Truth is my breath. Bliss is my food." If we take this principle into our lives, we will be able to see Swami within us and all around us.

**Subhiksha Srinivasan
Group 4 Girls**

My Experience with Sai Spiritual Education

I'm sure that Sai Center, and for many of us, Sai Spiritual Education, have positively changed our lives and spiritual practices. Many aspects influence the way we think about how we govern our life. In group 1 of SSE, students learn about great leaders throughout history. The kids take the courageous aspects of these heroes and learn how it could be applied to their lives. During this stage of SSE, character and important values are taught to children. In group 2 and 3, more values and spiritual aspects of living life are taught and are used in the children's daily lives. Once you reach group 4, practical daily lessons and tips on living life are taught. It is only once I came to group 4 that I felt groups 1, 2, and 3 coming together. It is now that these experiences come into practice throughout high school and eventually into college. My consciousness sets in on every action I do. These developments in how I live my life are all thanks to the teachings and contributions of the Sai Center and all that it has to offer. The spiritual aspects outside SSE such as bhajans, retreats, seva, and the occasional Satsang by a distinguished person help as well. The messages heard and the tranquility felt help shape me as a person and guide my day to day actions. Most importantly, what you learn in SSE will help guide me through college when no one is watching. This is when your character is tested by god; when you are alone. This is why Sai Center is important, so you have a guiding tool and make the better change for yourself, your family, community, and eventually the world.

Swami says:

“End of Education is Character.”
“ Service to MAN is Service to GOD.”

Sainath Krishnamurthy
Group 4 Boys

LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Parent's Corner- Anandamayi

Parents must feel that they are servants appointed by the Lord to tend the little souls that are born into their households; as the gardener tends the trees in the garden of the master.

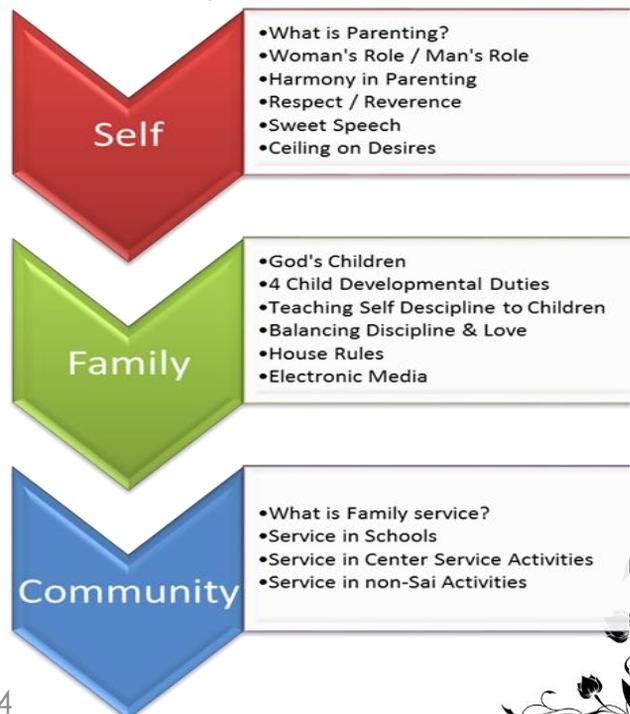
— Sri Sathya Sai Baba

To Parent? ... Or To Sai Parent? What's the Difference?

Parenting is a major segment in the journey of life. Typically, it begins at the birth of the child, though many young parents begin their study of parenting systems during the months leading up to the birth in an attempt to be better prepared to be good parents. Traditional parenting systems involve parents inculcating into the child the wisdom, knowledge, and traditions with which they, the parents, were raised. There are behavior modifications plans or structured scheduling ideas to minimize negative behaviors and increase desired positive behaviors. Generally, the flow of knowledge in this perspective is from parent to child; it's unidirectional. The focus of parenting, therefore, is to pass on the beliefs, culture, traditions, academic aspirations and goals, and to raise a member of society that is productive and successful.

Sai Parenting, on the other hand, is bidirectional. The flow of knowledge is from parent to child and also from child to parent. In Sai Parenting, the child is viewed as innocent and close to divinity since they have not been tainted by worldly affairs. The child can therefore teach us, the parent, how to come back to divinity as we teach them how to navigate the world. The key element in Sai Parenting is Divinity. With this perspective, behaviors are evaluated under the light of moral and ethical principles stemming from Divinity, and children and parents are encouraged to evaluate their behavior based upon those principles. The focus of Sai Parenting is to not only raise a child with a moral and ethical compass that will enable the child to navigate the world, and through service and knowledge attainment reach divinity, but to provide a pathway for parents to work out their own spiritual sadhana to attain divinity.

The Sai Parenting Class of Sathya Sai Center of South Houston was created to help parents integrate Sai values and teachings into their daily parenting. The curriculum was written with the idea of integrating the various aspects of a person's life in a harmonious way so that the children benefit from the spiritual elevation of the parent and is designed to be cyclical so as to evaluate all three areas multiple times as the child progresses through the 12 years of SSE. Using the book *Sathya Sai Parenting* by Rita Bruce as a guide, the curriculum is divided into 3 areas: **Self, Family and Community.**



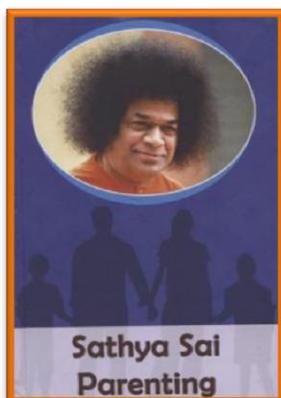
Each area has been further divided into topics that have been broken down by weeks. In the first year, the curriculum starts with focusing on oneself and transforming one's own attitudes, actions and discipline as a parent. In the second year, the curriculum focuses on the child's behaviors and discipline. Finally, in the third year, the class will delve into service done as a family in the community. After the third year, the curriculum cycles back to Self so parents can evaluate their growth over the last 3 years. The intent of the class is that parents will implement the ideas put forth in class and thereby improve not only their own spiritual understanding but that of their child(ren).

The implementation of each week's lesson is key and central to the class. Time is provided at the beginning of each class to reflect and share the results of implementation of the previous week. After the sharing session, the lesson for the week is presented. The lesson is not presented by any one "teacher" but by participants of the class in a rotational basis. The lessons for each class are evaluated by parents in light of their own family situation. The class does not profess to provide any kind of "magic" solution to any family situation. Family dynamics are affected by a tremendous number of factors, such as the number of years they have been living in the US, the proximity of extended family members (grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, etc.), liberal vs. conservative parenting styles, temperament of the children and the parents, etc. In light of this, the class puts forth Swami's message and parents then have to brainstorm how to integrate and implement the message for the week into their daily parenting. Thus the "homework" for the week becomes personal and meaningful as well as differentiated for each family situation.

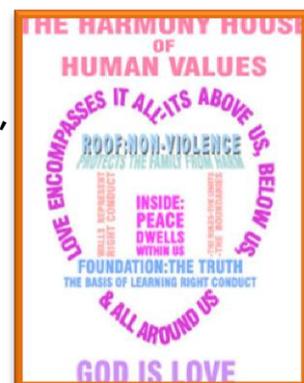
Parenting is an ongoing adventure because, honestly, there's never a break and no two days are ever the same. For that reason, the class meets weekly during the SSE time frame and runs on the SSE calendar so parents too can learn how to be better parents while children learn how to be a better human being. We would like to invite any and all parents of SSE aged children or new young parents of future SSE children to join our class so that we can grow and learn from each other, become better parents and together reach Divinity. Sai Ram.

For more information about the class itself, please visit;

<http://saiparentinghs.wix.com/home>



**Ajaya Sonde, Anita Raghavan,
Sai Lakshmi Subramanian,
& Bhavna Mathur**



The Impact of Sai Parenting Class

The class is helping me add a spiritual component to my parenting style. I have read every parenting book on the market but this has helped me the most. My husband has also enjoyed attending the classes from time to time. It has also helped me get closer to other members of the center.

- Sandhya Sabhnani

I saw other parents (not Sai center) going through the same male female roles combination scenarios.

It did help to understand the value of trusting each others parent responsibilities and being there to complete the balance of energies around the family environment. This helps me to be a little calmer in stressful situations.

- Shilpa Bellare

The class has been wonderful! It puts focus on balance for both parents and working together to be good parents.

- PK Chandiramani

By attending the SSE, I have gained a lot of knowledge on parenting. It has been a very good experience learning different opinions and views on raising children from other parents. I really enjoyed this class.

- Nitya (Payal) Chandramani

1. Getting tips from other parents on specific issues helped when I didn't know how to deal with it myself.
2. Finding out that the men have to also learn and practice the female roles so they understand what ladies face daily.

- Pushpa Ramdas

Sairam, I am so blessed to be in the parenting classes, it addresses everyday issues in upbringing children and helps parents in the right path. I consider these sessions as direct conversation with swami and always enjoy them.

- Dharani Narendra

Being a follower of Baba from childhood, I have had his influence at various stages of my life. After moving to the US, I was lost for a while with so many new things, moving to so many places and finally landing in Houston. Baba brought me into this Sai center and the Sai Parenting session at the perfect time in my life when I really needed it the most. I became a part of the curriculum writing team. I have learnt so much: from our beloved Baba, who is the ultimate teacher and from all the parents who attend the session who are also excellent teachers.

I thank everyone for being there with me in my journey of becoming a better parent.

- Sai Lakshmi Subramanian

As a curriculum writer and class participant, the class has provided me with a completely different perspective on parenting. When writing curriculum, parenting was more theoretical in nature, but participating in the class has brought the theoretical into practical. It has changed, or more correctly, fine-tuned my parenting skills. I love the aha! moments I get when other parents share ideas that I can personally relate to or hear ideas that give me more ideas on what I can do as a parent.

- Ajaya Sonde

As one of the curriculum writers it has been a wonderful experience working with the team to outline a plan for the class, and what "Loving/Spiritual Parenting is". Putting this in practice is a work in progress. As a class participant, its been a great experience getting a fresh perspective and insight on common issues confronting parents.

- Anita Ranji

Do With Me Lord, Per Your Divine Will

I did not know where I was going ,until I found you
Swami , you are the source of light shining through
Do with me Lord, per your Divine will
Guide me for all my duties to fulfill

Be it a Teacher, Mother or Father
Each one a role, teach me to honor
Do with me Lord, per your Divine will
Guide me for all my duties to fulfill

Let my role of power not take over me
A humble student let me always be
Do with me Lord, per your Divine will
Guide me for all my duties to fulfill

Teach me to Love all that I do
Forever to my heart, let me stay true
Do with me Lord, per your Divine will
Guide me for all my duties to fulfill

Let me forever be your student, give me something to learn
Let there be many roads, but you are the only home to return
Do with me Lord, per your Divine will
Guide me for all my duties to fulfill

Let me see you in everyone ,and everything I do
Let all my thoughts, words and actions be coming through you
Do with me Lord, per your Divine will
Guide me for all my duties to fulfill

Let your love permeate through me everyday
Let your love reside in my heart forever to stay
Do with me Lord , per your Divine will
Guide me for all my duties to fulfill

Pavithra Krishnan

Compassion/Feeling for Fellow Beings

I, Lakshmy Mohan, mother of Nanditha, take this opportunity to share a personal experience that reinforced my belief in humanity, selfless help, and the peace I derived from the same.

Back in 2012, we lived in a rental apartment in Houston. It was a small apartment complex with few Indian families who later became friends for life. Being homemakers, most ladies restricted themselves to social parties or weekend getaways and did not drive or have the luxury of an extra car. I always felt that I had to learn to drive as it was necessary especially in times of medical emergencies or for kids rather than pleasure or leisure. Finally, I got my drivers license after years of trying and waiting.

There was a new family that moved into the apartment complex in the hot month of July, and the lady of the house was expecting a baby. As she was busy in her own life, she rarely could join our evening chit-chat group, and she kept to herself. We got to know that her aged parents were visiting her to help with the baby. The baby was born and, as a social norm, we went to visit the newborn and her parents. A weird odor welcomed me into their house. With a look of hesitation, I mustered the courage to ask what the matter was and found out that the smell was from a wound her diabetic father had been suffering from for a week or so. I was shocked and disappointed to hear that he was not given any medical help, due to the busy family environment with a new born, several financial constraints, and also due to the high medical expenses for visitors in this country. I left the home angry and disappointed, and I felt terrible for not being able to help in anyway. That night I could not sleep in peace and made a decision with the support of my husband to help her take her ailing dad to the nearby medical clinic. I succeeded to convince her that she need not worry about taxi fare and she could just spare \$100 from her pocket money or I could lend her the same. But at any cost she had to take her dad to the doctor. She was very emotional and was helpless due to conditions at home.

The next day, we got her dad down the stairs with lots of difficulty and drove him to the nearby medical center. The wound was so bad that the smell from the pus was nauseating. I realized the value of the human body and how perishable it is in spite of all the physical, materialistic things we add to enhance its beauty. The doctor was shocked and angry and said the leg may need to be amputated. The lady almost became unconscious after listening to this, but I decided not to lose hope and rushed him to the Memorial Hermann Hospital nearby. At the hospital, he was operated upon. By God's grace he did not have to have his leg amputated. In time, he recovered completely.

I was thanked endlessly for my timely help. Today, I have lost contact with them, but I live in the hope that I have the blessings of the old father where ever he is.

I have grown up listening to, reading about, and seeing some great personalities who have sacrificed their lives for common men. On that day, all that mattered to me was my human impulse to help an old suffering man, and today, although I have no clue if I will ever meet them in my lifetime. I feel immense satisfaction and peace that I was some help.

I wholeheartedly thank God and Swami for giving me an opportunity to serve an unknown human being and expect nothing more in return than blessings from him.

I truly realized the lesson of selfless compassion. I hope to get more opportunities to help people in any small way I can.

Pranams at the lotus feet of Swami.

Lakshmy Mohan

You (Swami) and Me(We all)

You in me has changed the way I live.

You in me has changed the way I see

You in me has changed the way I hear.

You in me has changed the way I feel

You in me never let me down.

You in me always saves me from evil.

You in me has made me fearless.

Neelima Joshi

Sai - The Positive Power Within Us

Dear Lord,
You are the nearest
You are the dearest
You are the sweetest
You are there when I am my best.

Swami you are always with us
In every breath that we take
In everything that we think
In everything we see
In everything we do.

Your life is your message
Of truth, love, peace and righteousness
When we unite in thought, word and deed
You are in us and we are in You
And we experience a Supreme Bliss.

JAI SAI RAM

Sridevi Devraj

My Journey to Find Swami's Darshan

What is the easy way to get Swami's darshan? This question has been ringing in my mind for quite some time. I am sure that, like me, many devotees have had this question arise in their mind at some point. This thought was fueled by other devotees when they shared their experiences with Swami in adult study circle. During that time, my mind craved to have such personal experiences with Swami and to have Swami's darshan at least in my dreams.

Why are some devotees fortunate to have blissful experiences with Swami, while a majority of very good souls and devotees like me don't have such lovely experiences with Swami? What should we do, what would be the easiest way to have Swami's darshan? These questions I have put across to other devotees during the adult study circle in the Sai center.

One of the wise and long term devotees of Swami, Sam uncle, answered my question. The message was that "Swami's grace is always there for every one without any limits". Swami's darshan is purely based on one's karma of present life and past life. Swami has always said that the best Sadhana for this Yuga is "Namasankeerthanam". Recite Bhagawan's name constantly every minute with sincere conviction. Bhagawan's name will take you to his feet much faster than any other sadhana. I was thrilled by his answer. But the real answer came to me much later.

Namasankeerthanam has been a popular way of worshiping GOD and is widely practiced in India. I used to do namasankeerthan during my childhood days, especially more so in the month of "Markazhi" to recite "Thiruppavai and Thiruvempavai". But leading bhajans seems to be a really tall task. Recent rules to increase other language bhajans has made it a tougher challenge for a struggling bhajan singer like me. I took it as an opportunity to learn new Bhajans. I have not made the cut somehow to be in Swami's court of music and continue to strive on it. However our dear Bhagawan has given an opportunity for strugglers like me to sing to him during Akhanda bhajans. Normally, during Brahma muhoortham time between 2 AM to 4 AM only 5-6 devotees are there to sing bhajans. I use this golden opportunity to sing bhajans to my heart's content, I sing bhajans that I have practiced for several years and I feel blessed and thank Swami for his divine grace.

In 2014, Swami's close associate Professor Anil Kumar, visited Houston Sai Center. I must have done some good fortune to listen to his lecture on that particular day. He shared his experiences with Swami. The main points I gathered from his talk that I would like to share are "How to identify avatars and true devotees in society".

He said, "Both avatars and true devotees have two main distinct qualities not easily seen from others. First, avatars possess abundance of power and compassion and their grace is for everyone without any limits. We all have wishful thinking for others but avatars thinking becomes an immediate wish- that means it will happen even as they are thinking. Second, avatars have powers to pardon one's mistakes when there is true repentance; in addition they have the ability to take away any bad karma associated with that mistake. True devotees always yearn to see their masters, talk to their masters, and do service to their masters, and this becomes the main duty of their daily lives. In the literature, it has been mentioned that devotees can perform their duty in 9 different ways to seek their master's blessings. Secondly, true devotees will perform these duties with ease and effortlessly serve their masters. As Prof. Anil Kumar explained the characteristics of a true devotee, Kannappar came to mind. When he heard the temple bell sound from Kalahasthi temple, his mind got surrendered 50%, and when he saw the form of Lord Siva, he totally surrendered and attained oneness with GOD. He lost his name also after that. The great sage Adi Sankarar" expressed his appreciations to Kannappar and enquired "What boon did you get in your past life to reach GOD's feet with such ease?"

After Dr. Anil Kumar's lecture, he answered devotee's questions with Swami's quotes from Swami's lectures and from Swami's books. Through out the Q&A session, he insisted that he was only conveying swami's words and he was repeating Swami's words from Swami's lectures and Swami's books. After Q/A session, I had an opportunity to meet him personally for 2 minutes. I offered my salutations to his feet and submitted my question as follows. "Dear sir, I would like to have Swami's darshan like how I am seeing you now". He looked at me with a smile and explained to me that Swami is always within me and around me. Then he asked me a simple question, "Do you drink coffee in the morning?". It wondered why he asked me such a question, perhaps to distract me from the original question. I replied, "Yes sir, I drink one cup of coffee in the morning as does my wife."

"Do you have any withdrawal symptoms if you miss your coffee one day?" – he continued.

"Yes sir, for me it is like the day has not yet started but my wife feels devastated and she complains her whole day was spoiled if she misses her morning coffee"- I answered.

Professor Anil Kumar replied "How you are craving for coffee in the morning, similarly, if you crave for swami you will get his darshan. In that state, you feel miserable when you miss to see his form or miss to recite his name in the morning. This sort of yearning will earn Bhagawan's grace and will get you His darshan. It is easy to please our Swami who is also referred as 'Sulabha prasannaaya namaha"-he completed.

What a simple analogy, but how profound! I got a sense of clarity in my mind on what I should do to get His darshan. I paid my respects to Professor Anil Kumar for explaining a noble truth in an easy way.

Whenever I think of coffee, my mind now automatically thinks of Swami's lotus feet. Every day, I feel my coffee tastes better and better and with that, my confidence of having Swami's darshan grows stronger and stronger.

Jai Sai Ram

Pappa Kumar



Sandwich Seva Bellare House



Teacher's Corner- Karunamayi

Parents and teachers are the sculptors who have to mould the shape of the students for whom they are responsible. If parents and teachers set the right example, the students will automatically blossom into models of excellence and bring glory to the nation.

— Sri Sathya Sai Baba

LOVE ALL SERVE ALL



Teacher's Training



Region 10 | October 10-11, 2015



सफर -साई के संग

यादों की मंजूषा से उभरकर याद आता है वो दिन,

The memory of that day comes out from the treasured thoughts in my mind

जब नन्हें से बालक की ऊँगलियाँ थामें आई थी साई की दुनिया में ॥

When I stepped into the world of Sai Holding hands of a little boy

मन को लुभा गया बाल-विकास का अनूठापन,

My heart was instantly fascinated by the uniqueness of Bal-Vikas

कृतज्ञता के उद् गार हृदय से निकले पलपल क्षिणक्षिण ॥

Every moment my heart feels that gratitude

जैसे माँ की गोद में बच्चे को शरण मिली हो,

It seems like a child found shelter in mother's lap

जैसे लम्बी बरसात के बाद धूप खिली हो ॥

It feels like bright sunlight after long and heavy rain

साई के कहे में वही गूँज थी, जो तुम कहा करती थी माँ,

I feel Your voice as an echo of my mother's voice(that is) full of Swami's teachings

तुम्हारी ही ममता के एहसास से भीग रही है आत्मा ॥

Swami, coming close to You, my soul is soaked with that same motherly love

अद्भुत है साई की दुनिया परे स्वार्थ और नफरत से,

Sai, your world is devoid of any selfishness and hatred

सारे ताने बाने बुने आपने सेवा और सेवक से ॥

You have taught us how to serve humanity

धीरे से मन की परतें खोलकर तोड़ते हैं अहम् चुपके से,

You melt our hearts slowly and diminish our ego

और फिर प्रेम की डोर से बाँधते हैं कसकर चहुँ ओर से ॥

But your love binds us from all sides

उस पर नन्हें मुस्कुराते बच्चों का साथ है बाल विकास में,

And it's most rewarding to get the company of innocent smiling children in Bal-Vikas

यहाँ मानवीय मूल्यों की प्राथमिकता है चरित्र के उत्थान में ॥

Where Human Values are of utmost importance in character building

बच्चों को सिखाते, कब ये सीख, हृदय का हिस्सा बन गए पता ही न चला,

I don't know when these values and your teachings entered my heart while teaching

it to children

विस्मय से सोचती हूँ, बरसों पहले किसकी ऊँगलियाँ थामें कौन चला ?

Looking back I wonder now - who came holding whose hands years ago?

Madhu Kumar



Pavithra Krishnan

Note from Pre-Balvikas

It is truly the most cheerful and happy class at the center. This is the first step kids take before they start Balvikas.

Every Sunday, kids spend time learning to recite sanskrit verses, listening to Panchatantra stories, watching videos, doing hands on activities, and even having time for a snack before going home! They have learnt two prayers- a prayer to Lord Ganesha – “Vakrathunda Mahakaaya” and a prayer to our Guru – “Guru Brahma Guru Vishnu Guru Devo Maheshwara”.

One of the five human values set forth by our Bhagawan is present in every Sunday lesson and the kids deduce the value from the moral of the story they hear. As they color, they often sing simple bhajans. Some kids are happy to lead bhajans in our class as the rest of the class follow along! These kids propel positive energy with their gift of making everyone in the room joyful.

Needless to say, parents of these children are the key to the success of this group. We would like to thank them for being so very supportive and enthusiastic in aiding us in all activities.

Spending Sunday afternoons with Pre-Balvikas kids is very rewarding on many levels. These kids teach us to be simple, to love, to laugh, to be in the present moment, to share, and to be happy. I often wonder at the end of every class who is teaching whom.



Chaya Satish

90 reasons for you to love all

What do you give someone who is always happy, needs nothing, has plenty to give and fills you with bliss? Well, our Bhagawan turned 90 years young and all his years is a reason for us to change our lives to be something better for ourselves and for others around us. The South Houston center hosted special bhajans on November 23rd at the Kids R Kids center in Sugarland TX was attended by 175 devotees. The bhajan filled everyone with Swami's love and blissful vibrations of Swami's presence amongst us. The hall was full and so were our hearts.

Swami's big birthday bash happened in the Durga Bari Auditorium on November 27, 2015, in Houston. We had Sri Raviraj Nasery and the Consulate General of India, Mr. Parvathaneni Harish as the esteemed guests of Honor. The event was open to friends and family, and Swami's love drew 525 people in for an evening of music, dance, and drama by the SSE children of North and South Houston. The evening started with both centers expressing gratitude and honoring long standing devotees who formed the backbone of the centers in years past. The fruits of their hard work, diligence, and dedication is now enjoyed by all of us as the Spiritual avenue for SSE, various devotional and service activities.

The Pre Balvikas children offered an enchanting dance sequence to celebrate Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi, Prema, and Ahimsa- the 5 human values. The tiny tots were followed by the Group 1 children showing us all Unity of Faiths, with multi-faith prayers to celebrate the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

The boys and girls of the South center took the audience through a journey back in time to reflect on the life of real heroes Nikola Tesla and Rani of Jhansi to remind everyone of some very important life lessons. As Swami always says, Character is the End of Education, the boys unfolded the journey of a man with a scientific mind. It was his journey to understand that the path inwards and outwards need to connect to make his life fruitful. Nikola Tesla embarked on a path to understand himself after he had understood everything he could in the scientific world. His journey inwards, taught him that he should work to use his mind to benefit more than himself to add true meaning to his life. The girls opened the window to the years that led to struggle for Indian independence. It was one woman who thought her duty towards her people was her primary goal in life that ignited the spark for the struggle for India's freedom from the British Raj. Her steadfast devotion to her duty towards the Divine Mother, kingdom, country men, and her Guru without any expectation of the consequence or results was an exemplary example of the message of the Bhagavad Gita. Her life

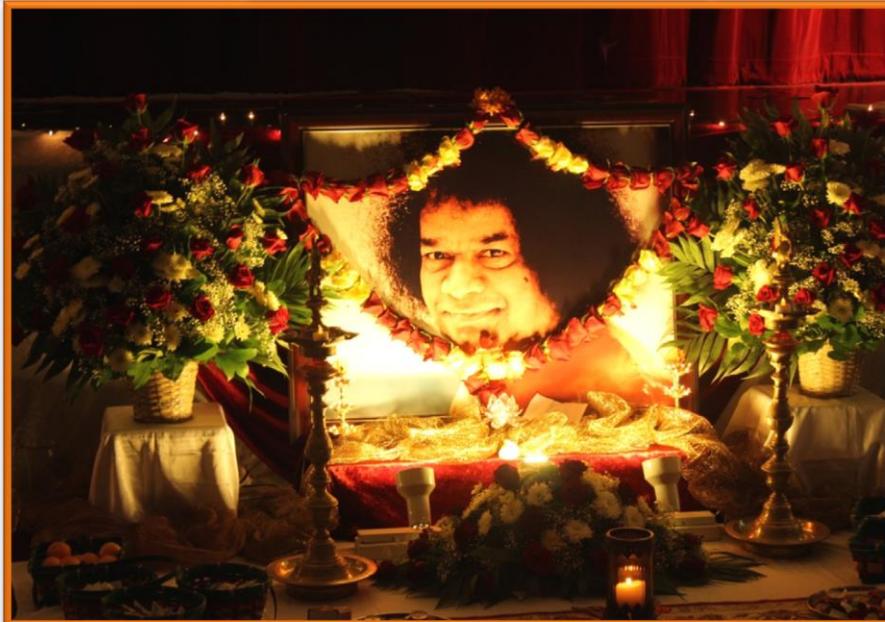
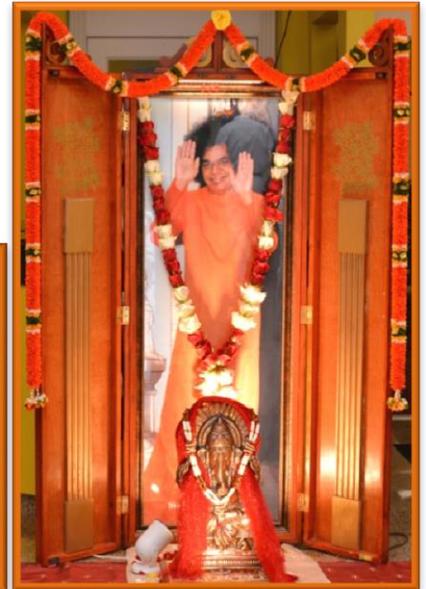
was a message of Sadhana to protect what belonged to her people, even if it meant she would lose all that is hers. She thought her duty was her offering to the Divine Mother and performed it flawlessly until her last breath. Every task from dawn to dusk when done with the sense of divine purpose all reach the ultimate goal of being unattached from our Karma and lead us to the light.

The evening concluded with moving bhajans by our Young Adults and a special treat by our visiting chief guest Bro. Raviraj Nasery. As the hall was filled with Swami's love and his vibrations, the arthi brought every devotee to still their minds and consume his love in all eternity. What is a birthday party without cake! Swami's life is worth all the celebration it deserves. The tiny tots cut scrumptious homemade cakes made by devotees to celebrate Swami's milestone 90th birthday, followed by a filling dinner for all present in the celebrations.



Jai Sai Ram

Pavithra Krishnan



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL



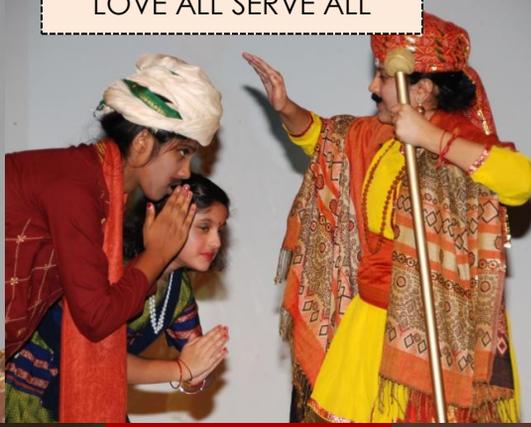
Life of Nikolas Tesla



SSE Boys Play | 90th Birthday Celebrations



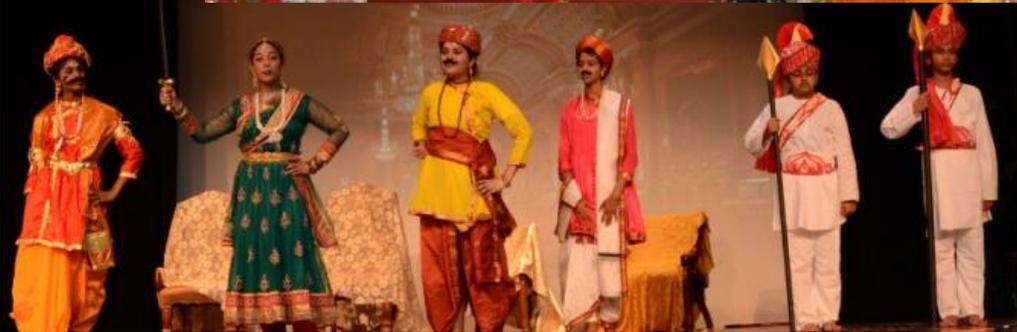
LOVE ALL SERVE ALL



Jhansi Ki Rani



SSE Girls Play | 90th Birthday Celebrations



'EGG' Sighting Easter at the Sai center

Every year during the month of March, many Christians celebrate Easter Sunday as the day of Jesus Christ's resurrection. Easter is a festival of enlightenment. For the young minds, Easter means 'Egg Hunt'.

On Mar 27th 2016, in our South Houston Sai Center, we had great fun celebrating the Easter Egg Hunt. With the help of parent and teacher volunteers, who agreed to bring Easter eggs filled with goodies and Swami's quotes, we had about 350 eggs in total. We chose the Kids play area to be the arena and with the help of a few interested Group 3 kids, eggs were hidden (some obviously visible?), for the little ones to have fun.



Our tiny tots from PreBalvikas and Group 1, with great enthusiasm and with a greater responsibility by saying no to plastic bags, arrived to the center, carrying their Easter egg baskets in a variety of shapes and colors, with pictures of bunnies, flowers, butterflies and what not. It was 2.20 pm and they couldn't wait until the doors to the play area were opened. Some started

peeking through the window, working out a plan to grab a lot of eggs.

The scheduled time to start was 2.30 pm. With a loud and loving 'Sairam' from their tiny lips, they set off on their mission looking for eggs. As they went in to the area one after the other, working on cute little strategies and with total focus,



They started filling their baskets with colorful eggs. Ten..twenty..and so on. One little angel, after collecting ten eggs said she had collected enough eggs.

Till the last egg was found, the little ones were so busy that they didn't even lift their heads up to see their parents, who were busy taking pictures. When one friend joined a little later, and could not find an egg, they all picked one egg from their baskets and filled their friend's basket. Are they learning from us, or are they teaching us contentment and sharing?

They all posed for pictures with their heavy egg baskets and cute smiles. Then the Pre-Balvikas kids who were dressed up as Easter bunnies came around, wishing everyone a very Happy Easter.

As they left with their baskets filled with eggs and their hearts filled with joy, we felt it was a day filled with bliss.

Jai Sai Ram

Ranjani Ramamurthy



Everything is for the good

Once upon a time, there was a king. He had a minister who had great faith in God and would always say that whatever happens, happens for the good. The king never believed this. Once the king cut his finger and as usual, the minister said that all happens for good. Hearing this, the king got quite angry and put the minister into prison. Even then the minister said that everything happens for the good!

A few days later, the king went hunting in the jungle, by himself, since his minister was in prison. As the king was hunting, some tribesmen trapped him and took him to their chieftain. But when the chieftain saw the cut on the king's finger, he ordered the king to be released, saying that a person with a cut finger would not make a good offering to the tribe's Deity.

Happy, due to the narrow escape from death, the king returned to his kingdom remembering his wise minister's words that even the finger getting cut was for the good. Upon his return, he immediately ordered the minister's release and welcomed him back in his position as the royal minister.

The king said to the minister, "I now believe that everything happens for our good, as my life was saved because of the cut finger. But, what about you? How can you explain that it was good for you?" The minister replied, "As you had put me in prison, I was not able to accompany you on your hunting trip. If I had been there with you, the tribesmen would have taken me along with you and would have definitely sacrificed me to their Deity, as I do not have a cut finger!" The king was pleased with the minister's reply, and from then on, always consulted the wise minister while making any decisions for his subjects

Several of us in region 10 recently had the privilege to hear a talk by Brother Arvind Balasubramaniam on "Paripoorna Sharanagathi" or complete surrender. I was reminded of this story when I heard this talk. He narrated an incident experienced by one of swami's boys Jagdish where swami explained that surrender means ability to accept positive and negative with equanimity and with a mindset that "it is all for my good". It does not matter if you do not understand how or why it must be good. Perhaps time will tell or maybe it won't.

This mindset only comes when you know that the Lord is most powerful and can make anything happen or not happen if He wills and that He loves you unconditionally. So whatever happens as a result of or despite your effort is willed by the Lord and so it has to be for your good.

He used the analogy of car manual transmission. There is no problem when you are driving in any particular gear but when you are changing the gear, you could have challenges if you do not have good clutch control. Similarly the two

gears in life are happiness and sorrow and all our pride, arrogance, anger, frustration and other emotions take control of us when we switch gears from happy to sad or sad to happy. The clutch that helps us in life to transition between these states is the total surrender.

However here is a cautionary note. This is not to say that we do nothing and just justify that whatever happens is for the good. His grace has to always be complimented with effort on our part. We need to ask ourselves every time the following questions. 1) What should I do in the current situation? 2) Have I done everything I can or is there more I can do? The answer to this question is not a one solution fits all as we are all in different stages of spiritual evolution. We have to listen to our conscience.

As a total surrender, we need to offer ourselves as His instruments to carry forward his message and our focus must be on our effort and learn to accept whatever the outcome is as "it is always for our good"!!!

Gopi Balakrishnan

15 days of your life....

Every day, in fact every moment, of our life is precious. But how can we enrich our life experience with minimum effort resulting in maximum benefit? This is a key question we always ponder about, and we try different ways which results in different experiences in our journey. But what you are going to read below is a fact supported by simple math. This will open our eyes to an option, in a long list of priorities.

Be calculative and be brave enough to try different paths within Swami's values to seek best results suited to your life. The calculation I would like to present is very simple. In a year we have approx. 30 SSE classes, which means 30 ($1*30=30$) hrs spent on SSE in every year. Extrapolating that to the entire SSE curriculum of 12 years of class room experience results in 360 ($30*12=360$) hrs. Converting to the number of days results in only 15 ($360/24=15$) days of SSE for an entire life. Remember, an average life of 90 years has a total number of 32,850 days. So, if you devote 15 days of your life in SSE, that will change the direction of your life. We adults (many of us) have missed this opportunity, but do not let this pass by for you or our children or grandchildren. The decision is yours – you invest your dedicated 15 days to SSE, and the results will be evident for rest of the 32K days of your life.

Prafull Kumar

Our Beloved Lord's Message and Origins of Sanathana Sarathi¹

When Dr. Devdutt Nagarkar narrated the following in Group 4 class, the thought that this should be read by one and all arose. So here are excerpts from Radio Sai Listeners' Journal. The full article is available at the website (see link below¹).

'Sanathana' means 'Eternal, the timeless one'; and 'Sarathi' implies 'Charioteer'. "Recognise God as the Sarathi (the charioteer of our life), yield wholeheartedly to His direction, reach your Destination in good shape", is the message that Bhagavan is conveying through the name," Prof. Kasturi explains in 'Loving God'.

Everything about this hallowed magazine [Sanathana Sarathi] is so significant, be it the date of its inception, the year of its birth, the place of its origin, the immense implication of its name, or the Lord's instruments chosen for this divine endeavour. In His first public discourse on the occasion of Vijaya Dasami (last day of Dasara) in 1953, when Bhagavan was only 27, He revealed, "The first sixteen years of this Life have been, as I have often told you, the period when Bala leela (divine child sport) predominated, and the next sixteen is being spent mostly in Mahimas (miracles) in order to give santhosha (joy) to this generation."

And significantly enough, in His thirty second year Bhagavan unfurled this unique conduit of His mission and message on a no less significant day than the occasion of Maha Shivarathri. It was February 16, 1958 when Bhagavan blessed the first few copies of this newest 'manifestation of His will' to be distributed freely to all present.

But why the name 'Sanathana Sarathi'? Could it not have been 'Divine Love', 'Sai Speaks', "Unity to Divinity" or anything similar? And who christened it so? Prof. Kasturi, the Lord's hand-picked mission-man and the first editor of this magazine, narrates a beautiful incident to put to rest all such often queried queue of questions.

"I got the good news pretty quick; Baba had come to Bangalore. He was staying in Sri Vittal Rao's house on the 9th Cross Road, Wilson Gardens, only 5 minutes away from my residence, 'Ashoka' on the 12th Cross," writes Prof. Kasturi in his biography, Loving God. "Knowing that there was a possibility of His coming to his place, I had tipped the dry cleaner, who attended to the washing and ironing of his door and window curtains, to inform me as soon as he delivered the wash to Vittal Rao. I had noticed that he had the curtains washed and ironed as part of house-cleaning, preliminary to Baba's visit. When the news leaked at last, I posted the little daughter of my domestic help on a slab of stone facing his house, with directions to keep watch for a big car and an orange robe. So within ten minutes of Baba's stepping into his house, Vittal Rao was

amazed to find me on his verandah! "Wait! Wait!" he pleaded. But Baba spotted me and came towards me with His palm ready to fall on my shoulder. "Now, you have to work at Puttaparthi", he said. "A monthly magazine will start soon. Guess! How is it named?" He asked. I confessed I could not delve into His Will. Yet He drew out from my reluctance a few names. "The Godward Path", "Karma Dharma ...", "Premayoga." He waved aside the titles I suggested and announced that he had decided to designate it as "Sanathana Sarathi!"

Who else but the parents name the child, isn't it? The "Sanathana Sarathi" is a product of His divine love, to share love and transform every being into a beacon of love, just as He is. And so, from its very beginning, Swami took great care of it. Apart from appointing a man of supernormal caliber and competence like Prof. Narayana Kasturi, who had a plethora of popular Kannada and English literature to his credit and also had served as Assistant Director of the All India Radio (in fact, he was one who named the all-India radio broadcasting service 'Akashvani' which has stuck on permanently since India's pre-independence days); personally visiting Bangalore to 'Vichara Darpan Press' in Avenue Road and buying a foot-operated treadle printing machine along with a case of Telugu and English types; setting up the 'Sri Sathya Sai Press' in Prasanthi itself right next to His residence in late 1950s; appointing people and selecting volunteers to serve in the press as well as aid Prof. Kasturi; visiting the press every other day to correct, direct, instruct and inspire; laying down clear and austere guidelines with respect to its content and format; even Himself editing articles on many occasions– Swami was concerned about every single detail.

And just like a mother would sacrifice everything and go to any extent to take care of her just born infant, Swami too, embarked on an exercise that was hitherto unprecedented by any standards in any age – The Lord decided to take the pen Himself. And this was perhaps, the greatest demonstration of Swami's immeasurable love and immense concern for Sanathana Sarathi (and through it to all mankind).

It was epoch-making. Imagine God himself writing week after week! Imagine if we had the Bhagavad Gita written by Lord Krishna Himself and not by a third party! Imagine having Lord Rama's life story in His own hand-writing! For the first time, the Avatar acceded to document His message Himself. Perhaps, this is the best way the purity of His preaching could be preserved, and the destiny of mankind could be rewritten to save it from impending peril in the present Kali age.

1. Source Radio Sai Heart 2 Heart http://media.radiosai.org/journals/Vol_05/01FEB07/03-coverstory.htm

2. For past editions of Sanathana Sarathi visit <https://saireflections.org/journals/PastEditions.php>

Group 4 boys: Ashish, Lakshman, Saideep, Sainath, Suvin

Teachers: Devdutt, Ravi, Gopi, Prateek, Satish

Meet The (Sai) Parents (Family Mixer) – Feb 21, 2016

A glorious day filled with fun and frolic is how I would describe it. It was exciting to meet the parents who shared their stories of how they came into Swami's fold. Our group decided that we would do a Group Activity-Teachers, parents, kids, all sharing and caring together. We talked about the upcoming events in Houston – the Rodeo and how nice it would be for kids that could not go to the Rodeo to partake in the fun. We decided we would bring rodeo themed gift bags to the children in the Cancer Unit at Texas Children's Hospital who were confined to the ward because of their condition. The boys sat a table and made activity books with the Dads helping them. The girls sat at 2 tables, one table assembled the bags with soft toys, and cowboy hats, crayons and decorated the activity books with rodeo stickers while the other table made Buster the Cloud by sticking a face, 2 legs, 2 hands, and a cowboy hat on the cloud. Thank God for some very cool and artsy Moms in our class. As we made the cloud, Sridhar and I, as teachers, also explained the importance of air pollution and what they could do to minimize it. Buster the Cloud formed the decoration in front of the gift bags. At the end of a very quick (and probably noisy) hour, we had a dozen bags neatly arranged in the middle of the room and we prayed to Swami for his blessings to be passed on to those who received our gift of love.





The cornerstone of SSE is education in human values, loving all and serving all without expecting any reward and getting involved in devotional activities and service. Yes, this was a social, a Meet the Parents Session, which exemplified His Message. We delivered all the activity bags along with the Houston Rockets members to the kids in the Cancer unit at Texas Children's Hospital and they were so elated, their sweet and innocent grin and sheer joy melted our hearts. We knew then that there is no precious gift more than the gift of sharing and caring.

Sridevi Devaraj



KIDS AT TEXAS
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
HAPPY RODEO DAY
FROM LOVING HEARTS

Sai Garden Initiative

The Sai garden initiative in the Houston area is off to a very promising start. Houston area now has 9 gardens installed. The interest for participation is steadily building up. The participation from children in the host families has been terrific and they have been taking very good care of their gardens. 4 children made presentations at the South Houston Sai center sharing what the garden means to them and how they and their families are connecting with the garden on a daily basis and spiritually growing as the garden grows. The goal of the Houston center is to install more than 30 gardens in 2016 and to create an environment for all the involved families to collaborate and share their best practices both in caring for the garden as well as spiritually on an ongoing basis and make it a community movement.



Gopi Balakrishnan

The Power of Human Values

Once a month, a diverse group from Sai Center visits Juvenile Detention Facility in Katy and spends time with 12 boys and 12 girls. The teens, ages 13 - 18 have been placed in this facility after being prosecuted for crimes related to drugs, theft, and prostitution. This seva started recently (December 2015), thanks to the hard work of a lot of devotees through a year-long process of approvals and background checks.

Before the first session, among the billion questions in our minds, we wondered how the teens would be, how would they react to us, would they even like the human values-based activities and discussions. The moment we walked in, all our doubts vanished and we met these wonderful teenagers full of smiles and loving warmth.

In our very first sessions, we introduced ourselves as the "Sai Group" and that the founder of the Human Values program is Sathya Sai. This prompted a few teens to ask where is Sai? Did he come with us? We started our sessions with an introduction to human values and in subsequent sessions, we focused on a sub-value/value. In its format, it is very similar to an SSE class, and going by the heartfelt responses of the JDC teens, there are times, you can hardly tell the difference between them!

As we spend more time with them, the differences between them and us have started disappearing. One of the best sessions was when we sat around with the teens around the table and talked about the good wolf-bad wolf story. It felt like I was talking to my own younger self. The teens have so much love and goodness in their hearts; it's hard not to be touched by it. In the surveys that the teens fill out at the end of every session, a few of them mentioned their goal after leaving the facility is - "to learn and practice the 5 human values". As a step in that direction, we recently started a value tree exercise in which the teens write a value they would like to work on for a month on a leaf cutout and paste it on tree drawn on the poster board. We started out with a bare tree with no leaves and hope to add color and meaning with these "value" leaves. A special shout out to the SSE student (Kiran Kumar) for drawing those trees for us!

I'm usually nervous before the seva wondering what if they ask me a question on human values to which I don't know the answer to. But thanks to the Expert in and around us, and to the dedicated volunteers, near and far, we live and learn. I consider myself immensely fortunate to be a part of this seva. The response to the seva has been incredible! We are told the teens wait for us to come back (I'm sure the snacks are partly responsible for that too).

In our last session, a girl shared her experience about how she has transformed herself by being non-violent, not only towards others but most importantly towards herself. Her comment made me wonder how non-violent am I? This is just one of the many instances where the teens have shared how they have been practicing a particular human value in their day-to-day lives. I always walk out of the session feeling I learnt something new today. And here I was thinking I was going to teach them about human values. How naïve of me!

Tanvi Ritwik



LOVE ALL SERVE ALL

Sai Ram

We humbly offer this magazine at the lotus feet of
our Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

We seek His pardon for any errors we may have
committed in the production of this magazine.

Our heartfelt thanks to all the children, parents,
and teachers who have contributed to this
magazine.

