

Love and Light!

SSSSO (UK) - monthly update



9th August 2009

"We've Heard it All Before!"

Dear Readers, Sai Ram!

The summer is here bringing some of us our longed-for holidays but well-watered ones from the frequent showers!

Since July 1st I've been up to the Sathya Sai Organisation building in Leicester four times and each visit amazes me by the amount of progress achieved in between.

YOU have all been remarkably supportive and have helped tremendously by showering your energy on to the various tasks that required completion before the Sathya Sai School could move in this very weekend...

You know, I think, that each year whilst I've been National Chairperson I've organised a 'Vision Weekend' for the UKCC. They were held in April 2007, October 2008 and one will be held in October this year, too.

These have been not only great opportunities for cross-pollination of knowledge amongst Council members but occasions where we can look at the 'bigger picture'.

As a Council, I believe we have been very effective in addressing issues that lay dormant and were occasionally resuscitated but then laid back to rest over the years.

The Handbook for Office Bearers was a useful addition to the Organisation Manual (that needs updating now). The HoB's accompanying Resource CD is testament to the amount of resolution that has been applied to ongoing problem areas - like crystallising various guidelines and policies.

At last year's Vision Weekend we were able to really list and categorise points that require implementation by the Council for the long-term betterment of the Organisation. The timescale for the implementation varies, as even small change is hard for many to embrace. Therefore we come from that 'source not force' approach. It is probably true that there is nothing particularly 'new' in our targeted areas of action. However, it is our intention to set mechanisms in place to complete these actions, over time, if necessary. In order to embrace Regional Wing Coordinators, with a view to having cross-Wing collaboration on these important key actions, we presented the list of target areas and gave a background to how the list came about, to all our RWCs in June.

It was sad for me to hear some say "We've heard it all before." For, it is precisely to finally address matters that repeatedly arise - year in year out - that we have applied ourselves, on Council, to sort out all the issues that we have, over the past three years. I've often said that we are 'The buck stops here Council'!

Language, trust and intention all become skewed when the ego speaks. Cynicism is very much the ego driving the tongue. I have witnessed my own cynicism at times with some horror and great dismay.

Further on, you will read a quote in an article where Swami says that we should not believe a thing is 'impossible' but rather we would be better saying, "I'm possible"...

In the immortal story of 'Peter Pan' the eponymous hero says that whenever a child says that they don't believe in fairies, a fairy dies...

One of the earliest implementations of our discussions will be the production of a DVD that has facilitators and participants from our Organisation's various well-established and transformative programmes and trainings, speaking informally together whilst being filmed. Hopefully this will shed light for you on what to expect if you attend any of these and explain why, for example, it is ideally necessary for SSISAP to be run over two consecutive days.

The Spiritual Wing will be working hard to draw together Swami's Teachings on various subjects, in order to create 'Remote/Distant Learning' modules via our national website. This will allow individuals to follow a line of study alone at home (especially where there is no nearby Centre or Group), or for Centres/Groups to tap into a sequence of Study Circles on a particular theme e.g. Swami's quotations on 'Ecology and the Environment'.

It is hoped that this will be a method to deepen understanding by individuals whether alone or in groups.

The fact is' that although 'we have heard' much of what Swami has said 'before', there is always something new to be gained and deeper insight to be had, by revisiting His words!

**Love and Light,
Rosemary Perry, National Chair**

National Sathya Sai Retreat 2009 Cancelled

It is with great regret that we had to inform all Regions, Centres and Groups that this year's National Sathya Sai Retreat has had to be cancelled. Unfortunately, we were unable to meet the minimum numbers of participants required to make the retreat viable this year.

Our sincere apologies to those of you who registered and sent in your application forms. We understand that this has been very disappointing news for you. You will by now, I'm sure, have received by post, the return of your application form and cheque, for your records.

If you have any comments please do email us at: sairetreat2009@googlemail.com

We shall review the status of the retreat programme and look at possibilities for next year.

Caroline Vasey for the National Sathya Sai Retreat Planning Group

National SSE Teachers' Day 2009

"My Life is My Message" Sunday 20th September

Windsor and Maidenhead Town Hall,
St Ives Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1RF

Keynote speaker: Phyllis Krystal.
The day will be a wonderful celebration of Sai Spiritual Education in the United Kingdom and is open to all.

Prior registration is necessary in order to attend and details of how to do this are all available via your Regional SSE Coordinators or your Regional Chairs.

Lakshmi Puvanendran,
National SSE Coordinator

YOUTH

Youth Forum: 'Living With Sai'

Sunday 23rd August, 10:00am-12:30pm
St Andrews School, The Green,
Totteridge, N20 8NX (Mill Hill Centre)

Calling all youth! Please join us for an uplifting programme where you will have the opportunity to hear from, and to speak freely and candidly with, a group of former Sai Students about their experiences growing up with Swami and studying at the Boys/Girls College in Prashanti. The programme will feature speeches from the former Sai Students as well as an interactive workshop/panel discussion to deal with

general questions you may have. For more details please contact: mathan@arulvel.co.uk

Youth Sadhana Day:

'The Power of Discrimination: Its practice in daily life' 12th September 2009

Winstanley Community College, Leicester,
Kingsway North, Braunstone,
Leicestershire, LE3 3BD (UK)

This most uplifting day forms a part of the post-Summer Course series, giving you the opportunity to understand deeply the topics that emerged from the memorable Summer Course in 2008, and the World Youth Conference in 2007 that so many of you attended.

Many of you will also remember the first sequel of the 'post-Summer Course' series, which was themed, 'Faith in Self, Faith in God'. It took place on 25th April 2009 in Leicestershire where youth from throughout the UK enjoyed a variety of inspirational guest speakers, thought-provoking workshops, panel discussions and musical interludes. The theme for this satsang will be 'Discrimination'.

If you have any questions about discrimination or any dilemmas that you're facing in your life right now, we would love for you to send them to us via the registration form. All questions will remain completely confidential and will be answered on the day. And why not also check out the latest National Youth Satsang factsheet on 'What Is Discrimination?'

All of this and more info is available at:
http://www.saiyouth.org.uk/region_4.php
Or email: saiyouthr4@gmail.com

National Youth Day:

'The Rising Generation'

10th October 2009, Leyton, London, E10

This will be our official launch for a special series of programmes and events that will take place over a year in the lead-up to Swami's 85th Birthday in 2010, and the World Conference to be held in that year!

Source of National Youth Day theme:

"It is the duty of the elders to show *the rising generation* by their lives that spiritual practice (or sadhana) and study have made them more joyful and courageous in the adventure of life."

~ Sathya Sai Baba

Please use your initiative to distribute this monthly newsletter as widely as possible to all devotees and interested parties.

Also, a very important announcement will be made about the up-and-coming joint National Youth Conference for the United Kingdom and Ireland in 2010 ...and how you can be involved.

What is your role in this drama of life? What questions do you have? What topics do you want to explore? What is your role in the mission of our Sai Avatar? These are the things we want to explore and find answers to together. We want to hear from you! Email us your thoughts, and come along on the day. More detailed information will be coming out very soon. To contact us use the link: <http://www.saiyouth.org.uk/contact.php>

Or email: mathan@arulvel.co.uk

Mathan Arulvel,
National Youth Coordinator

Sathya Sai Leadership Training Programme 2009/ 2010

Leadership:

"Those who are leading must themselves follow; those who command must themselves carry out what they expect others to do. I am engaged in activity so that you may learn to transmute every minute into a golden chance to ennoble yourselves into Godhood."

~ Sathya Sai Baba

The National Youth Co-ordinating Committee, as a direct implementation of the First World Youth Conference resolutions, successfully launched the Sathya Sai Leadership Training Programme (SSLTP) in October 1997. Since then six cohorts with a total of 60 candidates have successfully graduated and completed the programme. (Although the coordinating committee is of all ages.)

Following the success of the programme, over the past 12 years, it has been decided that another intake will be accepted in 2009. Hence, this is another golden opportunity for those interested in self-development and acquiring leadership skills to enrol on the programme.

The programme takes the form of a 14-month modular type course of one-day workshops, projects, assignments and 'outward bound' activity weekends to consolidate learning. Members of the Organisation whose professional background has relevance to the particular module facilitate each module.

The course is due to commence on the weekend of 24th/25th October 2009. For an

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application form or further details please speak to your Centre/Regional chairs or contact the SSLTP Coordinator, Deviesh Tankaria at deviesh_tankaria@hotmail.com. The deadline for submitting the application form is September 6th 2009.

Deviesh Tankaria
SSLTP Coordinator

British Institute of Sathya Sai Education

is hosting a

National SSEHV Day: 'Living the Values'

Saturday October 3rd 2009

10am – 4pm

Abbey Primary School, Leicester LE4 5LB

*Entrance and parking will be from Ross Walk
and Bruin Street.*

SERVICE

Basic First Aid Training

On Saturday 11th July, in Coventry, a Basic First Aid Training 'Appointed Person' course was completed by 20 devotees.

The majority of participants were from Region 4 but a couple came from London; it was felt that any future courses hosted by any Region should open them out across all the Regions. This is yet another way of fostering harmony and consistency nationally.

As with any First Aid Training, once certified, it only lasts for 3 years and it is essential to have certified volunteers present at any event - local, Regional or National. Having qualified First Aiders is essential in the Service wing but also this knowledge is beneficial at any place - at home, at work or in your Centre.

Keith Turner, a retired trainer, came with his colleagues and trained us; he offered his service at no cost - only administration charges and petrol allowance. Keith's method of training is totally different - he is humorous, funny and brings essential points across excellently.

Comments from devotees having done the course: "...have not laughed like this for a while and learned at the same time, such a valuable and life-saving course, one never knows when it will be needed."

I am sure we will use him again and if any Centres or Regions would like to host a First Aid Course we simply need 18 to 20 participants.

Rajendra Thakordas,
Region 4 Service Coordinator

Region 1

Sports and Family Values Day

Another summer, another Region 1 Sports and Family Values Day: this year Swami literally showered his grace on us! Many would have expected the rain to dampen our spirits but the rain was all part of the fun and most activities were conducted as planned. This year approximately 100 SSE children and their families from all over Region 1 attended this annual event.

The children were split into 5 teams, each team named after a human value: 2 boy teams; 'Truth' and 'Right Conduct' and 3 girl teams; 'Love', 'Peace' and 'Non-violence'. A traditional 'March Past' of the teams was organised so that each child would have an opportunity to begin their day with Swami's blessings. They did so by marching past Swami's altar and saluting our Lord's picture. The children were judged on their teamwork and their unity to march in synch with each other.

With the March Past completed, the real competition began. With the help of all the youth and adults many activities were organised for the enjoyment of the children such as sprint races, obstacle races, football and cricket for the boys and rounders for the girls. The whole day was spent in love with all the children remembering the underlying message of the day that the aim was not to win but to take part and share in their love for our Baba.

The parents also took part in many of the activities, a favourite for the ladies was the obstacle race, and it was such a pleasant sight to see all the ladies take pleasure in such competition with even one aunty attempting to do the sack race in a sari! The same can be said for the men, showing off their skills at the shot put event and putting the youth through their paces at cricket.

We were fortunate enough to be joined by special guest, Cllr Nick Draper, the newly appointed Mayor of Merton who said that he was very busy attending many functions but always enjoyed spending time at events such as these where he could see children and adults enjoy a day filled with love and team spirit. He hopes to join us again next year. Another special guest was Siobhain McDonagh, and our final guest, Rohan, who is the former deputy mayor of Kingston and a current nominee for mayor. Rohan was also a previous SSE student and pupil of our Regional chair and commended the work of the Sai organisation stating that what he

learned when he was an SSE student definitely moulded his character. He told us that he has incorporated what he learned from the 5 human values into his daily life. He added that he looks forward to see some of the current SSE children follow his footsteps and someday enter the world of politics.

The last event of the day that children (and adults) much anticipated was a 'Tug of War'. With the heavens open, the challenge was greater than usual. The youth and the adults took it upon themselves to show their full potential but I think it is safe to say that the real 'competitors' were the adults.

Swami's love was felt by all and to conclude the day Aarathi was performed. The day ended with a buzz. All present thoroughly enjoyed the day even though it did rain. The winning teams of the day were Right Conduct (Boys) and Non-violence (Girls). Let's see if these teams can retain their titles next year!

R1 Guru Purnima Celebration

On 18th July 2009, Guru Purnima was celebrated in Region 1.

The programme started with the inaugural lighting of the lamp by a former President of the UKCCC, Mrs Rajesh Sivayogan. The Centres of Region 1 participated to offer devotees an evening of Vedam Chanting and group devotional singing. SSE students from Bromley Sai Centre chanted 'Ganesha Pancharatnam' and sang a hymn 'He has got the whole world in His hands' which everyone joined in to sing. A Region 1 SSE children's play (Villupattu – The Bow Song) on the meaning of Guru Purnima with beautifully scripted references to five Gurus: Guru Veda Vyas Ji, Guru Maha Rishi Valmiki, Guru Vishwamitra, Guru Vashishta and Guru RamaKrishna Paramhansa. A solo bhajan and a hymn 'Amazing Grace' sung by Dr. Sharavanan Jeyanathan with his melodious voice, was a real treat demonstrating his mastery of the electric guitar.

The talk on the significance of Guru Purnima by Dr Veeru was very illuminating and very inspiring; with poems in Telugu, which filled the auditorium with awe, everyone, felt the presence of Swami himself. The changed attitude, new dimension and approach, away from the usual 'Miracles' and 'Personal experiences' of most speakers, he was really refreshing and made us search our Soul - 'See within.' He spoke of the presence of divinity within us all, not only as the Guru but also as 'Guri', meaning faith, steadfastness, determination and focus. The real message of our Swami is to realise the Guru is not only in

our Mandir or even at Puttaparthi ...but also within our very own hearts.

The unity that the Divine brought together that day was immense with love shared from not only the Region but all across the UK having guests not only from Region 1 but including our guest speaker travelling all the way from Cardiff, which was a true blessing from Swami.

The evening came to a close with inspiring bhajans of the Divine making us all feel at one with the Lord. Arathi, followed by Maha Prasadam, brought the celebration to a grand finale.

Raj Rajasingam, Chair Region 1

Region 2

Family Values Day 2009

'One World, One Family

Coming Together'

...And it happened ...just like the title above, on the 5th July 2009 at Whitmore High School. The R2 Family Values Day was beautifully begun by the Nursery children from Pinner SSE classes as they sang their hearts out and reminded us all of the importance of saying "Please" and "Thank You" and this was followed by two further SSE year groups presenting role plays based upon on Love, Truth, Peace, Non-violence and Right Conduct in the form of songs, poems, role plays. Some children shared personal experiences of the benefits they have gained by taking part in the 'Ceiling on Desires' programme. Both role plays demonstrated why these values are so important in our daily lives and showed us how to love and share - and how love can break down all barriers of culture, language and countries, bringing all of us together and acknowledging that, 'We are all children of the same God, members of the Universal family'.

Without a quiz no programme is complete! Divided into 4 groups ('Prema', 'Sathya', 'Dharma' and 'Shanti') the questions varied from picture questions to being quizzed on short film clips and the Sai teachings.

All of the children who presented the Five Human Values demonstrated that by joining together, by being united in our thinking and actions we can all bring about change in ourselves, in our family, and in our society.

The children of Harrow West who, through their mime act, showed us that 'actions speak louder than words' magnificently portrayed this. The mime show had to be witnessed in order to fully appreciate the impact it had on all present. From an ordinary stone, each religion proceeded to carve its own God form.

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The mime demonstrated that with just a slight alteration on a previous carving you are able to transform an ordinary stone from Christ on the cross to Krishna playing his melodious flute.

Children are the buds that will blossom into beautiful flowers if they are rooted with human values and watered with love by all who are responsible for their nurturing. In his talk Bhupendra superbly enforced this message with a pinch of humour to captivate the audience. He managed to encompass the attention of both the parents and the children alike, bringing in the significance of how all the values can interlink with each other and the important message they bring home to us. He emphasised how 'all Gods are one' and that it does not matter who we believe in, or what religion we follow, as all paths lead to the same God but with different names and forms.

R2 Sports Day

'Demonstrating Unity in

Diversity'

On the 19th July three Sai Centres held a sports day for their SSE children and Youth. Nothing is possible without the divine grace of God in the form of Sathya Sai Baba and everything happens for a reason. We are all truly blessed to be part of this divine mission and to be able to set the benchmark for other Sai Centres to follow. After the warm-up came activities such as an obstacle course, cricket, football, rounders, yoga, a relay race, a lemon and spoon race, etc. These were all encompassing on this divine day, as parents were also involved in all these activities. This made them feel very much a part of the day and enabled them to see Sathya Sai Baba's message of, "Love in Action" being demonstrated through the service of the SSE teachers and the volunteers present. Despite spells of heavy rain, the sun shone through and made it a very exciting and eventful day for the children. The 'Ashiana' group, which is an initiative for children with learning difficulties, joined the SSE children. Baba clearly stated once to a devotee that, "The saying 'anything is IMPOSSIBLE' does not exist. Separate the 'I' and 'M' to make I AM POSSIBLE" ...which is a clear message to one and all. We must Love all for HIS sake, Serve all in HIS name.

Bharti Thakrar, Region 2 SSE Coordinator

R2's Desire for more

Ceilings!

The Centres and Groups within Region 2 took up the wonderful incentive for a 'Ceiling on

Desires' month during June. Office bearers invested a lot of effort to distribute calendars and information devised for the project. An additional impetus for the project was provided by Prabodh Mistry who addressed an office bearers meeting and gave updates on the progress on the 'Leicester Building Project', which was to be the focus of this sadhana effort. The intention was not to get members just to simply 'dip into their pockets' and offer contributions but to find unique ways - and to encourage others too - to save time and resources and thus lead to better health for them and their environs. Any resulting savings could then be offered to the Leicester Building Project.

Regular announcements were made throughout the month and, towards the final week, contribution forms for the focus project were offered to the participants in case that was where they wished to donate any material savings made during the month. The whole project was an exercise in free choice - how and where to employ self-control. The culmination of the R2 Ceiling on Desires Project for June was the presentation of the offerings from Centres / Groups / Members at the Divine Lotus Feet of our Swami on the R2 Guru Purnima function, which was celebrated on Thursday, 9th July. Earlier in the month the Regional Team too had agreed to practise Ceiling on Desires and postpone the pre-planned R2 Guru Purnima function by joining in the celebrations at Wembley Sai Centre (on their regular centre day), which were being held just two days later. The savings made from venue rental were donated to the Leicester Building Project on behalf of all the Region members.

The June CoD sadhana initiative has now been completed and we can share some of the feedback from people who has spoken to the R2 Service Co-ordinator in the last few weeks:

- Cars - washed own and neighbours' cars - gained exercise and fresh air.
- Cut out bread from diet for the whole month
- Walked to the local shops - got some exercise, saved on fuel, energy and pollution
- Baked own cakes and biscuits (and even shared!) - learned new skills and about caring for others

Now back to the heading – 'A Desire for More Ceilings' – this seems to be very much the general response from the members in Region 2 and our Service Wing Co-ordinator can't wait to start!

Sunita Verma, Region2 Service Coordinator and Vinod Parmar, Region2 Vice-Chair

R2 SSE Sadhana Camp

14th July 2009 and the countdown began...
...Nine days until the summer camp with a difference. The preparations for the SSE Sadhana Camp, orchestrated by the Divine was soon to come to fruition and the children, parents, volunteers/ youth were waiting with bated breath...

From the pre-camp meeting, describing the discipline to be upheld, to the spiritual quizzes, fun games and prayers on the outward-bound journey, ALL was pitched to His perfection with every inspired thought being implemented. It was not only 3 nights and 4 days of Sadhana sandwiched between Sun, Sea and Service, but an ENTIRE JOURNEY for one and all to experience 'Unity in Diversity', to learn that we are all different yet we are all aspiring for the same goal, and emanating the same Love from within, carrying out His teachings in all our daily activities through our varying roles. This was imbibed through the beauty of the children's Sadhana Journals that encompassed prayers from all faiths and promoted the cultivation of looking within to ensure that simple facets of daily life are performed correctly and various aspects of their Sadhana completed. Indeed, a 'training' through love and joy.

A unified but diverse team of 144 students, plus their parents and volunteers making some 248 gleaming faces, arrived to join the 17-member Planning Team and raise the roof of the PGL Activity Centre in Osmington Bay, Dorset, on the afternoon of the 23rd July 2009. Whilst this was an SSE Camp, Swami showed the prevalent Unity in Diversity by inspiring all to be actively involved - whether they be youth (many of whom were team captains), adults, SSE teachers or parents.

A start at 5.45am with daily morning prayers in the most magnificent Mandir energised the now converted Beach Hut and all the students, followed by a bounty of adventurous activities, which revealed the confidence that the students and parents unknowingly had within. A real sense of achievement was felt in successfully completing the outdoor feats such as the Giant Swing, the Zip wire, Kayaking, and Archery, to name but a few as well as the thought provoking and intellectual activities, namely problem solving and the terrific Treasure Hunt which all instilled courage and leadership skills with the aim of creating

future nation builders upholding the five human values.

The campfire was a singular highlight which ended with the rousing "Earth song", inviting all present to consider the plight of the Earth and its peoples and to think about how we can bring more love and compassion to all.

Guest speakers included the National Youth Coordinator, and The Region 5 Spiritual Wing Coordinator, all of whom presented a diverse facet of the diamond that is Unity. Each of the speakers, reinforced the message of Sathya Sai Baba: **"Where there is Righteousness in the Heart, There will be Beauty in the Character, where there is Beauty in the Character, there will be Harmony in the Home, where there is Harmony in the Home, there will be Order in the Nation; when there is Order in the Nation, There will be Peace in the World."**

Our SSE Students certainly showed us that they have the potential to be strong Nation-Builders through their exemplary conduct that was driven by the righteousness in their hearts.

We had volunteers and parents who were wonderful role models, always encouraging the SSE Students to strive to be the Human Values. A parent, who herself had not attended the Camp, sent an email in which she could not praise one of the Team Captains enough for the beneficial impact that Captain had on her daughter.

Smiles and laughter elevated not only Osmington Bay, but also the PGL staff. They were choked up not only to see the exemplary behaviour of the children (and adults!) but also when they were lovingly invited to join in the now famous Camp Song:

***We Stand for Truth We stand for Peace
Right Conduct and Non-Violence
Underpinning all of these
To Love is our alliance***

Love in all our hearts

Love is our Stand

Unity in Diversity

The call throughout the Land

From North and South from East and West

We value one another

***Respect for one Respect for all
Each Sister and Each Brother***

Love in all our hearts

Love is our Stand

Unity in Diversity

The call throughout the Land

The atmosphere of togetherness grew stronger and stronger day by day and this was His way of nurturing His children to be great leaders of tomorrow.

Although elevated yet exhausted on the return journey, all were eager to complete the feedback forms. We leave you with a few samples of what their hearts were calling out: A parent: *"The whole experience was FANTASTIC! The parents found out wonderful things about their children and how brave they can be without us!"*

A volunteer: *"Sorry, I cannot put everything in writing as I am tearful and filled with boundless joy."*

A 13-year old: *"Awesome man! Can I come next year – PLEASE?"*

A 9-year old: *"Really fun, felt like a family. Sai super-duper!"*

**Anila Modi, R2 Information Officer,
on behalf of the R2 SSE Sadhana Camp
Planning Team**

**All articles submitted by
Kavita Trivedi, Chair Region 2**

Region 3

Reaching out in Newham

Members of our Region joined hands with the London Borough of Newham Primary Care Trust on the 11th and 12th of July 2009 to run a Free Walk-in Health Awareness Clinic. This was held at the Newham Show and succeeded in reaching out to residents of the most diverse borough in the UK. The Planning Group for this event consisted of Dr Chirag Parikh (Region 3 Medical Coordinator), Bharat Handa (former National Service Coordinator), Rajan Supriya (Region 3 Service Coordinator) and Gurmail Singh (Region 3 Chair).

The two-day show in Central Park, East Ham, attracted thousands of people of all different ages who had the chance, if they wished, to come to the Clinic for a free health check-up. There was an active team of SSSSO medical professionals and volunteers in attendance, including Dentists, GPs, a Paediatrician and an Ophthalmologist. They all dedicated their valuable time and skills to assess the multitudes that came to their stall. A range of basic health checks was offered, including Weight/Body Mass Index, Blood Pressure and Blood Sugar readings. Eyesight tests and dental check-ups were also provided and specialist advice offered. At the end of the busy weekend, over 150 individual consultations had been given and over 400 health checks were completed. A number of referrals were made to GPs and many

visitors left, not only with improved health awareness but, more importantly, with peace of mind.

The Region 3 Chair reflected on the benefits of holding such an event: "Service to Man is Service to God; the constant queues spoke for themselves. As Swami says repeatedly, "there is only one language, the language of the heart". This was an ideal way of reaching out to the wider community – I would highly recommend this to other Regional Chairs". He offered his thanks to all who supported this service activity and is looking forward to repeating this event next year.

Gurmail Singh, Chair Region 3

Region 4

Ladies Event in Coventry

Theme: "Health and Well Being"

The event, held on July 19th, began with three Aums, which Vina orchestrated. Then Reena and Nishal led the group into a meaningful and very harmonious song which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Bobby began the welcome speech and introduced the itinerary for the day's events. She quoted a sentence in which our Beloved Baba emphasises on 'Womanhood'. The Sai sisters who were facilitating the workshops for the day were each introduced.

Vina began her meditation session, and offered everyone a 'grape'. She spoke lovingly about the origin of the 'grape', its shape, its texture, its taste, etc. She emphasised the manpower involved to grow such exquisite fruit. She described its delivery to stores for our enjoyment and satisfaction, and the many stages involved in its creation to perfection. This meditation was very helpful and thought provoking, and encouraged others to realise the care and attention given from 'the beginning to the end product' of these grapes that we so liberally purchase at our supermarkets.

Everyone was then instructed to go to their allocated workshops.

Vikki presented a workshop on 'Colour Therapy'. She spoke about the different chakras of an individual, the importance of colours and their significance, and the 'unconscious' power they hold in changing one's mood, one's feelings, one's level of self-confidence, performance and outlook, each day.

Carole conducted a workshop on 'Know Thyself'. The group was asked to draw a picture using the items listed. From this, Carole was able to identify personalities,

traits, hindrances in one's life, and comment on their potential and 'reserved' career path. As the saying goes: A picture can tell a thousand words.

Kuly facilitated the 'Dental Hygiene' workshop. She spoke in great detail about the correct method of brushing your teeth. She showed the group many gadgets used for successful dental flossing. She emphasised the importance of cleaning your teeth twice a day for the prevention of gum disease. She talked about certain foods and drinks that would be advisable to avoid, and showed various pictures of patients' teeth that had escalated beyond the stage of repair, and had to be extracted.

Finally, she distributed freely amongst the group many samples, leaflets, stickers, and lots of other information. These 'freebies' were gratefully received. The famous saying that sprang to mind inspired by all this was: "Prevention is better than cure!"

Gargi demonstrated 'A Healthy Dish' which was shared by the entire gathering during a refreshment break. She talked about the importance of different foods, the spiritual implications, and she had prepared literature which was handed out for all to take home with them on the subject of 'Rajasic, Tamasic and Satwic' foods.

Everyone gathered together, and then an individual from each workshop was asked to give some feedback.

Kalpana gave a brief talk on 'Health and Wellbeing', and spoke about what Swami advises on this subject. Baba's advice, guidance and words of wisdom when digested and practised meaningfully can positively influence our lives for the better.

Kalpana concluded the event, and thanked all those sisters involved in the many preparations for this event, the 'behind the scenes' work involved, the facilitators of the workshops (whether they travelled from near or far), and most important of all, our Beloved Baba who is always present.

Before refreshments, Vina led everyone in singing several beautiful, meaningful and inspiring songs of 'Love and Light'.

Tea lights were lit, and everyone was given the opportunity to hold a candle, think about their chosen deity, and offer many thanks, be 'still' in the moment, and enjoy the peace.

During the refreshments, talk was overheard about the different workshops, what had been learnt from it, and how certain aspects of the talks had resonated in different ways for each individual. The beautiful tastes from the different dishes were mouth watering, delicious and satisfying.

Heartfelt thanks to those who contributed and shared the various foods from different cultures and backgrounds. The afternoon was a huge success and we look forward to the next Ladies Event in November!

Bobby, member of Coventry Centre

Global Service Day Coventry

On Sunday 12th July, the Coventry Centre held a 'Global Service Day' in Coombe Abbey Country Park.

This annual event for the elderly and children from Care homes around Coventry was conducted in the beautiful surroundings of the park.

Fifty volunteers were involved in serving and joining in with the guests.

The day fared well; with an almost clear sky, the guests arrived and were seated in the fresh air, with cups of tea or coffee to help them settle down.

The first entertainment lined up was Charlotte Costello, a singer. She beautifully sang songs for both young and old to dance to.

In the midst of all the dancing, Pru Poretta, a.k.a. 'Coventry's Lady Godiva', graced the event. Dressed in her beautiful traditional attire and long flowing locks, Pru talked to most of the guests and danced along with them.

Our volunteers then served a vegetarian lunch, with food ranging from Indian delights such as Samosa and spicy potatoes, to good 'old fashioned' picnic food like sandwiches, mini pizzas and cake. During lunch, the 'Combined Ex-Services Pipes and Drums Band', a Scottish bagpipes band, entertained the guests.

The guests were then treated to one of their favorite activities – Bingo - followed by a game of 'pass the parcel', aided by all the children.

Everyone felt a great sense of love and unity, whether a volunteer or a guest, and Pru Poretta stated that, 'The food was great, the entertainment fantastic, but the feeling of LOVE was felt all around'.

Smiles were present all round too, and even as the guests were taken back to their minibuses and we bade them farewell, an amazing sense of love and happiness was felt. Volunteers felt joy to know that even if they made one of the guests smile during the day, it was worth it. The motto of 'Love All, Serve All' was radiated throughout the day to all the guests.

**Yatisha Lad, Young Adult Wing,
Coventry Centre**

Birmingham Full Moon and Global Service Day

The month of July is a month of picnics in the park, swimming, holidaying, and of course cricket (!) all signalling that summer is finally here. Well whether we could say it was summer or not, one day still sings many songs in unison every year in July for eons and that is Guru Purnima day, our Guru's Day!

Although the actual Guru Purnima day was on the 7th of July, Birmingham Sai Centre celebrated its special day on the 10th of July. The programme started with silent sitting followed by prayers and a Paduka puja by way of offering flower petals to Swami's Paduka in line with chanting our Lord's 108 holy names.

Thereafter, a small talk was given on the significance of Guru Purnima and soon came what everyone was patiently waiting for - GDS with a generous 45 minutes of beautiful Guru bhajans. By the time the evening and celebration came to a close, everyone was in joy and bliss. Prasadam was then distributed and the group of about 35 devotees went home in bliss. Another conclusion to a very auspicious day until next year.

And just as one occasion ended another one was set to go. Global Service day followed on a trot on the 12th of July. The Centre has for many years has been marking this day in a variety of ways from street cleaning to taking the elderly and vulnerable adults to the sea side or visiting temples and holy places. This time what else to celebrate it but by way of a picnic in the park! Our Service Wing organised the programme where it was decided to take our elderly citizens from various Senior Citizens Homes to Sandwell Valley Park for the day, giving them an opportunity to meet the natives of the farm from the boisterous cockerel to the genteel jersey cows.

The day started with our various volunteers collecting their charge from the relevant Homes and meeting at a decided venue. We had at least 22 eager residents signed up for this day. After arriving by the set time, the volunteers, together with their guests, and all the Centre's members headed for a visit to the dairy followed by a gentle walk in the countryside and then for a brief interlude near a lake where the swans, the ducks and the geese had a treat of roti and bread, cleverly remembered and brought by one of the members of the Centre.

Although we had feared that the weather would be unfavourable, after prayers to Swami and Lord Indra the clouds slowly parted, allowing warm sunshine to pour down on us with its love. Suddenly the mood changed and laughter and fun followed.

Our dear Swami's grace was felt at each moment from the time we started this service. The staff of the Farm readily gave us one of their rooms for our personal use together with urns to serve fresh tea and coffee to our guests and, of course, ourselves. We had other visitors and onlookers who came over with curiosity and wanting to know more about Global Service Day and our Sai Baba. The whole atmosphere it seemed was surrounded with love that day. The highlight of the day was lunch al fresco graciously provided by the Centre's dedicated ladies. This was their ultimate selfless service by providing food fit for the Lords of the Manor. After a hearty lunch it was time for fun and games specially catered for the entertainment of our guests. From singing to mimicking they participated to their hearts content to the extent that 'Garba' was played on one of the playgrounds. So much amusement it caused, that we had other unknown visitors join in the Garba circle! It was fun to see Swami playing His Leela with and through his children, from all walks of life. Time just flew by. Soon it was time to pack up and say farewells to a group that came to bond so closely in just a few hours. Our guests took turns to give thanks and praise for such a memorable outing, for being fed and watered and entertained all in one day. It was quite emotional to bid good-bye especially with the thought that we might not again see some of these wise and elderly guests next time. As Swami says, start walking towards the real journey for this human birth is full of change and decay. From this everyone went back to their homes with fond and emotional memories of a wonderful day out with our elderly members of our society.

**Written by Raju P. Gadher,
Birmingham Sai Centre**

Gents Retreat: 'Spiritual Enlightenment and Learning Experiences'

With Swami's grace, this year's Gents Retreat – for the sixth year in succession – took place at Beaumanor Hall over the weekend of the 20th and 21st June. The retreat has gone from strength to strength each year, with new activities and enlightening topics for study

circles. There is an opportunity for everyone to express him or herself openly and heartily participate in the activities.

The theme this year was 'Spiritual Enlightenment and Learning Experiences', a theme used previously but that was again deemed appropriate for this year's retreat.

About 30 devotees had agreed to attend this year and everyone turned up early on a bright and sunny Saturday morning, eager to start on time at 9am. Early morning light refreshments were available during registration and the allocation of group duties.

After registration, everyone gathered into one of the common rooms, which had been converted into a 'meditation room'. Our brothers had beautifully decorated the altar early in the morning. The retreat got off to a wonderful start with a session of vibrant devotional singing.

Suresh welcomed everyone to the retreat, and he wished everyone a wonderful and enlightening experience over the next two days.

The retreat activities are targeted at three levels – Mind, Body and Soul. So, for maintaining a healthy body, Ashok conducted an excellent session of Yoga in the sports hall. He took great care in explaining the health benefits of each exercise. He put a lot of emphasis on the breathing exercises, as apart from physical benefits, it helps with calming the mind and improving concentration.

Following the yoga session, the group sat round in a circle outside in the warm sunshine to enjoy the 'shared brunch' of sandwiches, bhajias, hot drinks, fresh fruits, etc. To make best use of this break, everyone talked about personal experiences of Swami and how Baba came into their lives. Some of the new devotees, who were attending the retreat for the first time, also spoke about their experiences. This was a very good way of getting to know each other in a reflective manner.

After a very enjoyable lunch, it was time for a walk – to burn off some calories and also learn about nature. There is a nature trail around the grounds of the Beaumanor complex. Four teams set off in different directions to look at trees and correctly identify them, based on the clues provided. It was both educational and great fun.

Subash then conducted an interesting study circle on 'The Journey and The Destination'. When we first come into contact with Swami's 'Lotus Feet', a pleasant transformation starts happening within us, an urge to better ourselves. We start reading Swami's

Discourses and other spiritual literature. In time, this takes the form of a journey of Spiritual Discipline. As every journey has a destination, so has this spiritual journey. This was an interactive session that highlighted many interesting points about Swami's teachings on Right Thoughts, Right Speech, Right Action, etc.

Our next activity was a team-building exercise with a game of Five-a-Side football! Very energetic, (too energetic for some!), but everyone participated with great enthusiasm. Lessons learnt from the game were then discussed. We have to be mindful of the role we are asked to play and different skill sets that team members bring. We have to become active members to influence our organisation; standing on the sideline is not an option. We all have to be team players.

The evening meal consisted of a BBQ – burgers, cassava, corn, salad, fruit punch, and lots more. Swami graced us with excellent weather for this, and additional time to share personal experiences.

But that was not the end of the day, Raj Rajasingam, Chair of Region 1, joined us as our guest speaker. Raj talked about his experiences and interaction with Swami. He highlighted the playful nature of Swami and that Swami knows everything. It was a very inspiring talk that would help everyone in his spiritual journey. Next was a combination of physical and spiritual games.

The different games involved working in teams, to accumulate points based on the team's skill levels and knowledge of Swami's teachings i.e. Spiritual Enlightenment through fun. The first day ended with wonderful devotional singing.

Sunday morning started bright and early at 5:30 with Meditation, Suprabhatam, Nagarsankirtan and Devotional singing. Nagarsankirtan was conducted around the grounds of Beaumanor Hall. Swami had again graced us with a wonderful dawn and it really felt like being in Prashanti. It was a magnificent start to our day!

With Swami's grace, the wonderful weather continued and we all enjoyed some yoga and light exercises. Light Breakfast was outside in open air – wonderful!

After breakfast, a study circle on Healthy Living with a difference! Everyone related their own experiences of trying out remedies for different illnesses. From 'karela' (bitter gourd) helping 'control' diabetes, to headache cures. Everyone had something they could relate to or were able to speak about, someone for whom a 'cure' had worked. During this discussion, Swami's emphasis on Satwic Food was quoted time and

time again. It was concluded that eating Satwic food in moderation and regular exercise was a sure way of living a healthy and peaceful life.

Next was another study circle - entitled 'Ideal Sevadai'. Amrat conducted this study circle in a calm and relaxed manner, using lots of examples from Swami's teachings and referring to Swami's books. The main theme that prevailed in this study circle, was that a 'sevak' (volunteer) whilst performing a service activity, should firmly set in his/her mind that the service being carried out is not for others but for the SELF, i.e. Selfless Service without any notion of EGO on the part of the volunteer.

And then the great CRICKET MATCH! Our version of Twenty20 competition! ...Based on our own rules! It was great fun for all, and everyone had an opportunity to bat and bowl. A very enjoyable way to build up your appetite.

Lunch consisted of freshly cooked potato and chickpeas curry, with naan bread and rice biryani. And a special treat of pudding made with strawberries, raspberries, blue berries, ice cream, custard, and more – delicious!

We were now coming to the end of the retreat. Time seemed to have flown by! Everyone was given opportunity to reflect on the retreat and to discuss the good/not so good points from the last two days, and to come up with suggestions on improving future retreats. Overall, everyone agreed that there were many positive things about this event. It was also felt that this retreat should be extended out to Region 4 so we have larger number of attendees. Devotees attended this year's retreat from Leicester Central, Narborough, Coventry and Nottingham. "Group Photographs", a reminder to all of a physically, mentally and spiritually rewarding weekend followed this discussion.

The retreat finished with Devotional Singing and Hemant concluded the event by offering our vote of thanks to Swami for such a successful retreat.

Everyone said their goodbyes and all vowed to be there again next year.

One final comment from one of the attendees - "Thank you Swami for a very enjoyable / spiritual / sporty weekend, yet a weekend full of love and laughter!"

Rutland Water Picnic: Global Service Day, Leicester

This year, our Global Service Day was celebrated on Sunday 19 July. And like in previous years, we decided that we would take our guests out for a day – this time for a picnic at Rutland Water.

Rutland Water is the largest man-made lake in Europe. Built in the 1970s to supply water to the East Midlands, Rutland Water is now Rutland's most popular tourist attraction, offering activities for all ages. There are sports such as windsurfing, rock-climbing or canoeing, cycling, nature reserves, or just relax by the water and watch the action around the 25-mile shoreline. We decided on the 'just relax by the water and watch the action'!

For this year's Global Service Day, we invited elderly and disabled guests from our Centre and from various homes for the elderly around Leicestershire. We ended up with around 100 guests this year – this was probably the largest number of guests who've ever accepted our invitation for the Global Service Day.

The planning for this event started many weeks earlier – we visited the management team at Rutland Water and explained our plans for the day. They were very happy to help us and suggested a number of different areas for us to use for our picnic, and also suggested some of the interesting areas around the lake, which were suitable for disabled guests.

And once the guests had responded to our invitations, it was then time to arrange the transport for all our guests – all guests are collected from their homes and returned home at the end of the day. We also had to arrange a special minibus with a lift because some of our guests are totally wheelchair bound.

The refreshments were prepared on Saturday – pasta, Samosas, pizzas, sandwiches (prepared early Sunday morning), cheese and potato pasties, 'theplas', potato 'shak', and cakes, fruit yogurt, fresh fruits for pudding. And we brewed fresh tea and coffee served with homemade cookies and scones with jam/butter. There was a fantastic choice to satisfy the varied makeup of our guests.

Early Sunday morning, some of the volunteers left early – before 8am - to set up the picnic area. Three gazebos were erected, the forecast for the region was rain later on in the afternoon, and having learnt from our previous experiences, we didn't want to take any chances with the weather!

As the guests arrived at the site, they were registered and everyone was handed a name badge for the day. All our volunteers were allocated guests to 'care' for throughout the day, and they were soon on the way to follow the nature trail set up within the grounds, a great start to the activities. And there was much else to see and admire around the site

– the lake itself, the information centre, the aquatic and butterfly centres. And they all came back to the picnic area for lunch – served by enthusiastic volunteers – and all served lovingly and with smiles.

Everyone then joined in the Bingo game – as always, this is everyone's favourite game and it's a game that everyone can join in, with volunteers helping out wherever necessary. Prizes were handed out for complete lines and for 'Full House' – 'BINGO' shouted joyously by many of our guests! And to the delight of everyone!

Another favourite is singing by our guests – Karaoke is always a big hit. Some of the guests came forward to sing their favourite songs. Great entertainment for everyone! And then there were the other games laid on by our Centre youths – beanbags, table skittles, 'parachute throws', etc – with prizes for all winners! Fun filled activities that everyone could join in. And there was magic on show as well! Fantastic fun for all!

With Swami's grace, the weather stayed dry for the best part of the day for us. It started to rain just as we had served the afternoon teas, and we all hurried to gather our guests to return them to their homes.

Many of the guests came forward and commented on the day – '...thank you for a wonderful day', '...we've all had a great day out', '...thank you looking after us and for the refreshments', and '...can I please come again next year'.

And next day, Matthew's Mum rang up to say how much he had enjoyed the day. He was already looking forward to next year!

All in all, thank you to Swami for a wonderful and satisfying day for all volunteers, and such was the volunteers' dedication to this service activity that everyone went home tired but very happy.

All articles submitted by Ramesh Mistry, Chair Region 4

Region 6

Ambassadors of Love

Region 6 is geographically widespread. So it is with pleasure and great gratitude to Swami that he has bestowed the wonderful grace upon us of allowing two wonderful Sai Elders, in the form of Arthur and Poppy Hillcoat from Australia, to come direct to some of the Centres right here in our Region.

The Hillcoats will be speaking in the following places:

- Brighton/Hove on Sat 15th August at 3pm.
- Reading on Tuesday 18th August at 7.30pm.
- Southampton on Thursday 20th August at 7.30pm.

Also, on Wednesday 19th August, from 2pm until 5pm, there will be a 'Prayer and Meditation Afternoon', which will be preceded by a short talk by the Hillcoats. This will be held at the Church Hall, Tekels Park (a Private Road at the end of Tekels Avenue off Park Road), Camberley, Surrey GU15 2LF.

Bring 'Food to share' for early supper at 5.30pm. Please confirm your attendance with Bahnoon at: bahnoon@hotmail.com or call or text 07738 701329

SSEHV Training and SSISAP

It will soon be the end of August and two thirds of the year will have disappeared. In the short tenure of my two years as Regional Chairperson, I hope to bring to devotees in Region 6, the often unappreciated and unrecognised jewels of Swami's love: the SSEHV and SSISAP Training programmes. We are planning to hold another SSISAP weekend on Oct 31st and 1st Nov in the county of Kent and a further SSEHV Training, commencing Jan 2010, also to be held in Kent.

The last SSEHV Training held in Reading, Berkshire, which finished last month, went extremely well. The group of 12 participants learnt, amongst other things, how to love each other better. Many especial thanks go to Asha Sirha, the spiritual co-ordinator of the Reading Centre, who not only opened up her house for the training and accommodation needs, but also worked diligently in seducing, inspiring devotees to wear upon themselves these bejewelled Immortal Gifts from Swami.....the gift of 'The Change Catalyst'... the subtle illuminating seducer of transformation ...the Trainings!!! Our heartfelt thanks also go to Lark Beecham and Prof Niranjana from Region 6 who gave of their love and time to facilitate the training.

Mellifluous Mela

Saturday 18th July saw the Southampton and Portsmouth Groups finally manifesting a joint long-planned service project at the annual Southampton Mela. 20 devotees gave of their time to provide 215 people in the community with 708 consultations at a SSSSO UK Free Walk-in Health Awareness Clinic for vital check-ups.

Four doctors and two dentists from Region 6, three eye specialists from London and a further 8 grown ups and 3 teenagers worked ceaselessly to fulfil our purpose.

At 6pm, after our stand was taken down and the clinic had ended, those that remained of the volunteers bought ice creams, drank tea and water, ate chips and exotic food together while enjoying the music and the dancing at the Mela, we left at about 9pm.

It was altogether a good and healthy learning experience for everyone during the build-up to the Mela itself and all who participated on the day had a most enjoyable and satisfying time. Here is a piece of written feedback I was handed by one of the ladies we served... Quote: "What a great idea, coming out to the people in this way. I am having a major operation in a month's time and many worries were in my mind and consultations in clinics are often rushed and later one remembers things, often forgotten, to ask. Today several concerns were answered... Thank you very much. More opportunities like this are needed in our very rushed world."

Group Prayer

Sunday 19th July saw an impromptu opportunity for a 'Prayer Afternoon' in Camberley, Surrey. Five souls turned up and each chanted 1008 of the mantra 'Om Sri Sathya Sai Krishnaya Namaha'. We prayed for the Region, we prayed for God to grant forgiveness in all hearts, we recited multi-faith prayers and sent healing and love to all in our Region and beyond.

Bahnoon Karim Agnew, Chair Region 6

Region 7

Sanathana Sarathi Speaks

Sathya Sai Baba has blessed a project for Region 7 to produce Sanathana Sarathi on audio CDs for blind and partially sighted people. Therefore, if you know of anyone who would like to receive a copy of Sanathana Sarathi on audio CD each month then can you or they please contact your Regional Chair who will direct all enquiries to me.

Nirmala Pisavadia, Vice-Chair Region 7

Hillcoats-by-the-Sea

During their forthcoming visit, Arthur and Poppy Hillcoat have graciously agreed to visit Bournemouth to talk to local Sai devotees. This will take place on Saturday 22nd August, and there will be an afternoon programme starting at midday with Prayers and Bhajans. The period between 1.00pm and 2.00pm is allocated for a 'shared lunch' break. (Devotees are kindly requested to bring a vegetarian lunch offering to share).

Arthur and Poppy will address the devotees between 2.00pm and 4.00pm, after which there will be Satsang until around 6.00pm, during which Bournemouth and Poole devotees will provide a buffet Cream Tea.

If you wish to attend this then please email:

region7@srisathyasai.org.uk

Ram Thiagarajah, Chair Region 7

Sathya Sai Bookshop

The bookshop has a regularly updated website. Please visit it at:

www.srisathyasaibookcentre.org.uk

DVDs are often being compiled and released along with new interesting books.

'Love and Light' Submission of Articles

The deadline for submission of articles to Love and Light is no later than the 4th of the month for publication on the 9th of the same month. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate articles after this date, inclusion cannot be guaranteed.

An article can only be accepted via a member of the UKCC who will then forward it to the editorial team.

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Love and Light SSSSO UK Diary Dates 2009		
Month	Date	Event
August	23rd	Youth Forum
September	12th	UKCC 3rd Quarter Meeting
September	13th	NWC Meeting
September	17th / 18th / 19th	Seminar with Phyllis Krystal
September	20th	SSE National Teachers' Day
September	26th / 27th	Regional Meetings
October	3rd	SSEHV National Day
October	4th	Region 4 ROAD Show
October	10th	National Youth Day
October	24th / 25th	UKCC Vision Weekend
November	19th	Ladies Day
November	23rd	Sathya Sai Baba's 84th Birthday
November	29th	UKCC 4th Quarter Meeting
December	5th	Region 2 ROAD Show
December	6th	NWC Meeting
December	12th/13th	Regional Meetings



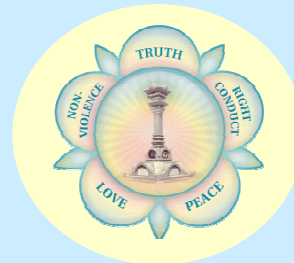
BISSE

**British Institute of Sathya Sai
Education**

Find out more about

Sathya Sai Education in Human Values:

www.BISSE.org.uk



**The SSSSO UK
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is to be found on:

www.srisathyasai.org.uk