

## Dharmic Response To President Obama's Call To Serve

Hindu American Seva Charities (HASC) aims to mobilize talent and resources and assist a coalition of "Seva Centers" within Dharmic<sup>1</sup> institutions, temples, ashrams, gurudwaras and service-based organizations. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the seva (service)<sup>2</sup> capacity component.

On June 22, 2009, President Obama called on Americans to participate in the nation's recovery and renewal by serving communities. Dharmic Americans from coast to coast responded to the President's call and worked to address community needs. For the first time, the Hindu community was nationally mobilized to serve. They increased the ongoing seva projects. Over 120 "Seva Centers" in temples and ashrams participated and supported the United We Serve campaign. Thousands of volunteers undertook over 1300 humanitarian seva projects<sup>3</sup> and performed without outside assistance. HASC organized the groundbreaking initiative.



During the summer, the Dharmic community focused on **poverty reduction** through soup kitchens in local churches, fundraising walk-a-thons, holiday meals, building homes, clothing and shoe drives, care packages and free hotel/motel rooms for U.S. soldiers and homeless, prison yoga etc.<sup>4</sup>

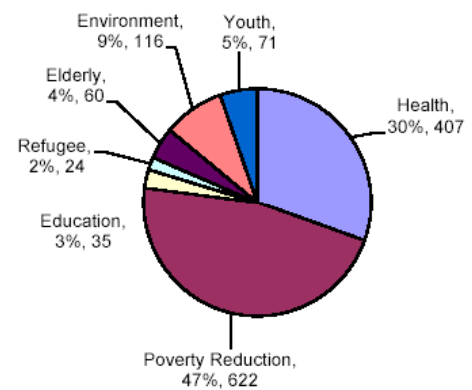
Traditionally, **health camps** are held on a regular basis in temples. For the first time, on a national basis, coordinated health events (camps and awareness sessions) were held on August 1-2. Through interfaith collaboration, physicians, nurses, and individuals provided services to the uninsured.<sup>5</sup>

Many, including **youth**, worked on improving the **environment** to clean and clear roadsides, beaches, parks, and plant trees in the community. **Education** projects included filling backpacks with school supplies for low-income children. Volunteers visited ailing **elderly** and assisted Bhutanese **refugees** in adapting to America.

Seva is inherent to Hindu/Dharmic traditions and many volunteer regularly. Yet, few Temples and Dharmic institutions have the capacity to provide social service in a sustained manner. As the community becomes integrated in all aspects of American life social services will need to be addressed appropriately.

HASC was developed with the guidance of the Office of Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (OFBNP). OFBNP is providing a context, a voice and learning opportunities to bridge the gap between the U.S. government and Dharmic institutions<sup>6</sup>.

Seva Project Categories by Number, Percentage



<sup>1</sup> Dharmic traditions are Hindu, Jain, Sikh and Buddhist

<sup>2</sup> WSJ Article US Community Building in Dharmic Institutions by Anju Bhargava <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124875466922186053.html>

<sup>3</sup> Survey of Summer 2009 Activities - [www.hinduamericanseva.org](http://www.hinduamericanseva.org)

<sup>4</sup> India Abroad - <http://www.hinduamericanseva.org/media-coverage/IndiaAbroadaugust72009-page.pdf?attredirects=0&d=1>

<sup>5</sup> Hindu Americans Respond to President Obama's Call to Service [http://www.serve.gov/stories\\_detail.asp?tbl\\_servestories\\_id=85](http://www.serve.gov/stories_detail.asp?tbl_servestories_id=85)

<sup>6</sup> White House Initiative-APA Outreach by Anju Bhargava, Community Builder Fellow [http://www.anjubhargava.com/White\\_House\\_Initiative\\_-\\_APA\\_Outreach.pdf](http://www.anjubhargava.com/White_House_Initiative_-_APA_Outreach.pdf)

## Participating Organizations

### **SEVA CENTERS**

1. Asian American Hotel Owners Association, USA
2. American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, USA
3. AIM for Seva, NJ
4. Allentown Hindu Temple, PA
5. Amma AL
6. Amma AR
7. Amma AZ
8. Amma CA
9. Amma CO
10. Amma D.C.
11. Amma FL
12. Amma GA
13. Amma IA
14. Amma IL
15. Amma KS
16. Amma MA
17. Amma MD
18. Amma MI
19. Amma NC
20. Amma NH
21. Amma NJ
22. Amma NM
23. Amma NY
24. Amma OH
25. Amma OK
26. Amma OR
27. Amma TX
28. Amma UT
29. Amma WA
30. Amma WI
31. Anoopam Mission, PA
32. Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, PA
33. Arya Samaj FL
34. Arya Samaj NJ
35. Arya Spiritual Center, NY
36. Austin Hindu Temple, TX
37. Badarikashrama Center, CA
38. Bala Vikas, VA
39. BAPS Swaminarayan Atlanta
40. BAPS Austin
41. BAPS Birmingham
42. BAPS Boston
43. BAPS CA
44. BAPS Charlotte
45. BAPS Cherry Hill
46. BAPS Chicago
47. BAPS Cleveland
48. BAPS Clifton
49. BAPS Columbus
50. BAPS Dallas
51. BAPS Detroit
52. BAPS Edison
53. BAPS Fresno
54. BAPS Houston
55. BAPS Indianapolis
56. BAPS Jacksonville
57. BAPS Jersey City
58. BAPS Los Angeles
59. BAPS Miami
60. BAPS Minneapolis
61. BAPS New York
62. BAPS Orlando
63. BAPS Parsippany
64. BAPS Perry
65. BAPS Philadelphia
66. BAPS Raleigh
67. BAPS San Jose
68. BAPS Tampa
69. BAPS Washington
70. BAPS Westchester
71. Barsana Dham, TX
72. Bharatiya Temple, MI
73. Chinmaya Vrindavan, NJ
74. Dada Vaswani Center, NJ
75. Dakshineswar Ramkrishna Sangha Adyapeath/Sri Krishna Vrundavan Mandir, NJ
76. DFW Hindu Temple, TX
77. Durga Temple, VA
78. Federation of Jain Association in North America, USA
79. Forum for Religious Freedom, NY
80. Ganesh Temple, NJ
81. Gayatri Pariwar, NJ
82. Grace Center of Hope, USA
83. Hindu American Community Svc, VA
84. Hindu Jain Temple, Pittsburgh, PA
85. Hindu Organization of Long Island, NY
86. Hindu Society of North East Florida, FL
87. Hindu Temple of Central Indiana, IN
88. Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago, IL
89. Hindu Temple of Minnesota, MN
90. Hindu Temple of St Louis Missouri, MO
91. India Assoc. of Western Washington, WA
92. Infinity Foundation, NJ
93. International Mahavir Jain Mission, NJ
94. ISKON, NJ
95. Kaur Foundation, DC
96. Laxmi Narayan Spiritual Organizations, CA
97. National Association of Indian Nurses of America, USA
98. Sai Center, NJ
99. Sai Center of Atlanta, GA
100. Samhaj, NJ
101. Satya Sai Center, NC
102. See the Real, IL
103. SEWA International, CA
104. SEWA International, TX
105. SEWA Atlanta, GA
106. SEWA Boston, MA
107. SEWA Chicago, IL;
108. SEWA Cleveland, OH
109. SEWA Dallas, TX;
110. SEWA Detroit, MI
111. SEWA Houston, TX;
112. SEWA New York, NY
113. SEWA New Orleans, LA
114. SEWA Seattle, WA
115. SEWA Tampa, FL
116. SEWA Washington DC
117. Shanti Mandir, NY
118. Shri Ganesha Temple, NY
119. South Asian Total Health Initiative (SATHI), NJ\*
120. South Florida Hindu Temple
121. Sri Siva Vishnu Temple, MD
122. The Hindu Temple of Atlanta, GA
123. Vedic Cultural Center of Sammamish, WA
124. VHP- America

### **SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS**

1. Asian Indian Women in America
2. Council of Temples, USA
3. Educators Society for heritage of India, NC
4. Ekal Vidyalaya, DC
5. Hari Katha, NJ
6. Hindu Acharya Sabha, USA
7. Hindu American Foundation, USA
8. Hindu American/International Vedic Hindu University, FL
9. Hindu Collective Initiative, NJ
10. Hindu Mandir Executive Council, USA
11. Hindu Students Council, USA
12. Indo-American Psychiatrist Association, PA
13. National Alliance on Mental Illness, NJ
14. Sindhi Circle, NY
15. World Council of Religious Leaders, NY

\* Developed Health awareness presentations distributed to temples.