



Anju Bhargava

## *Hindu Temples Plan Service Projects*

Hindu Americans are responding to President Barack Obama's call to the United We Serve initiative through various seva or service projects.

The Hindu American Seva Charities (HASC) has been established as a community space to bring together seva projects across the country and showcase them. HASC was developed with the guidance of Office of Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (OFBNP) and is a service partner with Serve America Program (SAP). Anju Bhargava of Livingston is a member of President's Council on Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

In a recent interview with the Wall Street Journal, Bhargava is quoted as saying, "Seva is an integral part of dharmic culture and religious practice, our sadhana, from volunteering in soup kitchens and shelters, to assisting in health camps and disaster relief. In Livingston, N.J., I served on many township and Board of Education

committees, and am a member of the Interfaith Clergy Association, which promotes interfaith collaboration. Here, I have seen the important role secular and Judeo-Christian institutions play in community governance. Unfortunately, few dharmic institutions have the capacity to provide social services and do seva in a sustained manner. As we, the new Americans, mature and root ourselves further, transformations are needed to strengthen community governance."

The ultimate goal is to reach 1,001 seva projects by September 11. Numerous temples and individuals have joined forces in the cause of seva and assisting in outreach.

HASC has requested Hindu temples across America to plan their individual seva events anytime between June 22 and September 11. The seva projects can be in the form of health events, food drives, walk-a-thons, etc. Furthermore, HASC has set primarily the August 1 weekend to have temples hold a focused seva event on health.

"This is the first time that the entire Indian American community is coming together in the spirit of seva (Seva Bhava)" said Bhargava, "thus, making a concerted effort to undertake widespread seva activities in a coordinated fashion in response to the clarion call from President Obama."