



Zone 1

Moraine Lake, Canada

ZONE 1 HIGHLIGHTS

COUNTRIES	CENTRES/ GROUPS	SSIO MEMBERS	SSE STUDENTS	ISSE	SATHYA SAI SCHOOLS
Aruba	1	57	45		
Barbados	1	37	12		
Canada	54	5,996	1,873	1	1
Curacao	1	16			
Guyana	14	474	78		
Jamaica	3	35	50		
St. Kitts	1	5			
St. Lucia	1	14			
St. Martin	1	30	10		
Suriname	3	158	52		
Trinidad & Tobago	42	1,568	176	1	5
USA/Virgin Islands	214	12,831	3,200	1	
TOTAL	336	21,221	5,496	3	6



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Barbados

Chaired by the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados, Freundel Stuart, the SSIO hosted a major celebration honouring Sathya Sai Baba's birthday in 2017. This devotional and public outreach initiative saw many new faces introduced to the SSIO's message of love, service and peace. The Prime Minister also emphasised this message in his address, expounding "love as the answer."



Canada

Embracing a national sentiment of volunteerism in the year of Canada's 150th birthday, SSIO members across the country undertook novel initiatives in service and devotion. The environment was a key focus: as part of Earth Day celebrations around 22nd April 2017, volunteers helped plant about 800 trees, and in the town of Markham, a team of volunteers adopted the litter-strewn Featherstone Park to help restore its natural beauty. Numerous other activities, ranging from prayer chants, flag raisings and wheelchair cleanings to serving those less-fortunate, heralded a renewed emphasis on service this year.

In the small town of Cooksville, volunteers commenced an innovative programme offering music therapy for local seniors. They have since continued monthly and also organised special programmes for holidays. The SSIO sprang into action in the city of Montreal when record snowfall and heavy rains caused flash flooding



Barbados



Canada

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and a state of emergency in the early weeks of May 2017. Volunteers worked in teams to fill and stack sandbags to divert rising waters; they also consoled and aided displaced families.

Countless efforts of the SSIO around the country were recognised on 24th April 2017 by the Government of Canada, who proclaimed the date as Human Values Day by act of Parliament. Since then, 90 towns and cities, as well as several provinces have followed suit, setting apart the day for the recognition of human values.



Guyana

Volunteers in Guyana served more than 7,000 meals and bottles of water to the homeless throughout the year. This sustained effort brought relief to some of Guyana's most needy residents.



Jamaica

Residents of St. James Infirmary received a visit from a team of volunteers of the Montego Bay Sai Centre on 22nd April 2017. As part of broader Aradhana Mahotsavam celebrations, SSIO members served cake and drinks to more than 60 residents; the children of the Centre also made greeting cards for every resident, wishing them well.

Canada



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Suriname

The SSIO of Suriname achieved new heights in its commitment to service and public outreach. On 21st October 2017, young adults organised a green-themed Walk for Values, highlighting the integral association between the environment and human values. The 4.1-kilometre walk concluded with an inspiring concert and an afternoon of games and fun. SSE children also received a lesson in serving the planet at the Paramaribo Zoo on 10th August, where they were taught the dangers of pollutants to local fauna.

To help ensure that children across Suriname receive quality education, on 18th August and again on 2nd September 2017, the SSIO distributed more than 100 packages of school supplies in the Groningen and Commewijne districts.

Later in the year, Sathya Sai volunteers organised a spirited Christmas party for residents of a mental health care facility on 18th December, wherein they joined with the residents in holiday joy and merriment.



Trinidad & Tobago

SSIO leaders from around the world gathered in Trinidad and Tobago for an international leadership conference from 22nd–24th September 2017. The event brought together current and emerging leaders from six countries, providing a



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forum to discuss communication, training and management strategies. These lessons were tested as Hurricane Maria raged through the region. Though parts of Trinidad and Tobago were heavily damaged, SSIO volunteers knew that the neighbouring island of Dominica had been overwhelmed by the storm. On 1st October 2017, Sathya Sai volunteers shipped more than 5,000 boxes brimming with food and toiletries, along with at least 200 pallets of food and construction materials, fresh water and mattresses, on a chartered ship. The materials were distributed by five trucks to the hardest hit villages. Hearing of this extraordinary feat, the President of Dominica personally met with the SSIO members in his office to thank them.

In February 2018, Dominica relief efforts resumed, when 19 houses were constructed in a mere three days for families rendered homeless in the wake of the hurricane. The building team from Trinidad consisted of about 100 volunteers, half of whom were from the general public. In 2018, more than 30 houses have been constructed so far, providing shelter to dozens of families.

Volunteers also undertook to feed the homeless on the streets of Trinidad for 365 consecutive days. Inspired by this marathon of loving service, members of the public, including a former Miss Universe, assisted them. The combined efforts allowed 100–200 boxes of hot meals and bottled water to be distributed nightly.



Trinidad & Tobago



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United States of America

To practise human values is good, but the SSIO of the United States took awareness of human values one step further by organising the mammoth “Human Values Fest” celebration on 4th November 2017, in Austin, Texas. The event attracted hundreds of attendees and featured human values–themed art, music and writing. The day concluded with a rousing concert, with international stars and an award ceremony recognising the tireless work of the children involved.

Human values were also brought to the forefront in Memphis, when SSIO volunteers participated in a holiday parade. The event evolved into an impromptu Walk for Values, and members received a roaring reception as they joined in the 1.2-mile parade, waving banners extolling the values.

At the Santa Fe and Albuquerque Sathya Sai Centres, SSIO members have a 35-year-long tradition of devoting their Labour Day weekends to a retreat that includes loving service. This year, they again met at the Bodhi Manda Center for Zen Buddhism, where up to 90 volunteers helped clean and beautify the surrounding grounds.

The SSIO of Northern California similarly served nearby communities when devastating wildfires – among the largest in the state’s history – took 40 lives, dis-



USA



USA

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placed more than 50,000 residents and destroyed thousands of homes. Throughout October 2017, the SSIO brought supplies, meals and thousands of treats to the displaced. Volunteers further sought to elevate people's spirits by singing songs and giving out personalised messages of hope and encouragement.

A myriad of similar initiatives took place across the states. In Ann Arbor, Michigan, elders of the city's Sai Centre lovingly knitted 100 woollen items, including hats and scarves, for the city's homeless. Likewise, in New Jersey, on 6th May 2017, volunteers organised book drives and sent homemade gifts to displaced refugees in the Middle East.

On 23rd September 2017, Sathya Sai Young Adults from Southern California, with the help of more than 20 volunteers, coordinated a day trip for the developmentally disabled to Mother's Beach in Long Beach, California. This annual day of fun at the beach brought joy to 30 children and adults, ages 10 to 20, from Ability First, a day programme serving individuals with special needs.

About 14 SSIO volunteers participated in training courses in late January 2018 to become part of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in Southeast Denver, Colorado. CERT allows community members to be trained as volunteers to assist professional first-responders during disasters.



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