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- News
- Entertainment
- Sports
- Business
- Food
- Travel
- Technology
- Health
- Vid

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## AWARDS FOR SELFLESS SERVICE



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By Sam Devraj ( Assistant Editor )



*Virendra Sharma MP presents SEWA Pioneers Award to representatives of Barham Primary School*

FEEDING a 1,000 underprivileged people in Hong Kong and clearing 80 sacks of litter in Southall - these were just some of the selfless acts of kindness which were recognised in front of leading politicians at the Sewa Pioneers Award.

Held last month at the House of Commons, the awards honoured individuals and organisations who devoted time to the service of others through the global volunteering initiative, Sewa Day.

Sewa, which means “be of service”, was started by the UK charity Sewa UK and encourages people all around the world to take responsibility for overcoming the challenges of deprivation.

Last year 50,000 volunteers in over 20 countries took part in Sewa Day projects in their local community.

Members of Parliament supporting the initiative and who were present at the event in London included Gavin Barwell, Bob Blackman, Mike Freer, Barry Gardiner, Steven Pound, Virendra Sharma, Gareth Thomas and Baroness Sandip Verma.

Chairman of Sewa Day Arup Ganguly said: “Whilst the inherent nature of ‘sewa’ is selfless service, we could not continue without acknowledging the excellent range of initiatives that Sewa volunteers have created, germinated and nurtured.

“While every single person who took part in Sewa Day 2012 deserves our heartiest congratulations and deepest appreciation, ultimately, the judges were tasked with picking their favourite projects.”

SEWA Pioneers Awards 2013

Sewa Pioneers Awards 2013 Winners included Exemplaries, for organising a range of activities including providing free professional advice and health clinics.

Feeding the homeless, and collecting clothes to benefit local charities in Southall are other major works the volunteers did.

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Food for Life in Hong Kong encouraged 70 volunteers to come together to cook and feed 1,000 underprivileged people.

Om Unity Group involved 107 volunteers in making the Keech Hospice, in Luton, a more brighter, cleaner, and harmonious environment for its resident; Reachout Now for organising a clean up on the footpaths of the Grand Union Canal in West London where 80 sacks of litter were collected by 60 volunteers on Sewa Day and St. Philip's Centre for their commitment to multi-faith engagement in environmental & conservation projects in Leicester.

#### Winners

The winners in the schools' category were Barham Primary School in Wembley, London, where pupils provided entertainment at the local home to the elderly; Ealing Tuition Service in Ealing, London where pupils worked with the Ealing Council Park Rangers' Nature Conservation programme helping to clear a public footpath in the local area.

Students of Radford Primary School in Nottingham where students went to a homeless soup kitchen, a day centre and entertained and took part in activities with the elderly day centre users.

Students of Our Own English High School in Dubai hosted a Tree Plantation Event as part of the One Million Trees Initiative and raised awareness among the students regarding the need to preserve the planet by planting trees.

Kids of Kindergarten Starters in Dubai took part in a musical performance that addressed the existing social and environmental issues. The play entertained and educated the audience to highlight how service brings peace and harmony.

For further information visit [www.sewaday.org](http://www.sewaday.org)

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