

The Lighthouse

Rotary
Club of Madras



ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS

ISSUE 48
May 31
2026



SERVICE ABOVE SELF

BIRTHDAYS 	
Rtn. Mukund Subramanian	25 th May
PP Rtn. George B. Cherian	29 th May
Rtn. Balaji Chinni	31 st May
Rtn. Manish Mardia	31 st May
Ann. Lavanya, Spouse of Rtn. Vijay Balaji	25 th May
Ann. Ailya Parpia, Spouse of Rtn. Salmaan Parpia	25 th May
Ann. Vasughi, Spouse of Rtn. Kadiresan Adityan R	26 th May
Ann. Harsha Sajani Ganeriwala, Spouse of Rtn. Siddharath Ganeriwala	26 th May
Dr Gunjan Jain, Spouse of Rtn. Dr.Nitesh Jain	28 th May
Ann. Sreejata, Spouse of Rtn. Ashok Banerjee	29 th May
Ann. Pinky, PHF Spouse of Rtn. Hemant P. Chordia	29 th May
Ann. Meenakshi Raman, Spouse of PP Rtn. Raman KK	31 st May
ANNIVERSARY 	
Rtn. Ravindran G. & Deepam R.	25 th May
Rtn. Rajenderan & Priya Rajenderan	26 th May
Rtn. Srinivasan .M & Bhuvana	26 th May
PP Rtn. Shanker C. Mangadu & Bhagyalakshmi	27 th May
Rtn. Divya Poduval & Ajay Menon	28 th May
Rtn. V. Sridhar & Priya	29 th May
Rtn. Avali Srinivasan & S.Lalitha	29 th May
Rtn. Raja. K.N & Vasanthi	31 st May



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YATRATECHS

Rotary Club of Madras

46th weekly meeting

Arvind Swami

Decoded


Cinema, Character & Craft

Moderated by
Rtn. Shakthi Girish


Tuesday, 2nd June 2026 | 7.00 pm

Hyatt Regency, Chennai

6.30 to 7.00 pm Fellowship | 7.00 pm Meeting | 8.30 pm Dinner


SPECIAL
MARTINI BAR


Spouses are invited to this Meeting.



Rtn. Nikhil Raj
President

Rtn. Rajesh Mani
Director - Club Service

Rtn. Prasanna Rajagopalan
Honorary Secretary

Rtn. Mohit Bajaj
Chairperson - Programs Committee

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Rotary Club of Madras (RCM)

Minutes of the 45th Weekly Meeting held on 26-05-2026 1.30 pm at Hotel Hyatt Regency, Teynampet, Chennai

The 45th weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Madras was called to order by the President at 1:30 pm. The meeting commenced with the Rotary song.

The minutes of the 43rd weekly meeting and the 44th weekly meeting (Club Assembly) was confirmed.

The President extended a warm welcome to all members, spouses, guests, Annettes, and visiting Rotarians. Special mention was

made of Probus members Mr. Ramaiah (aged 100 years), and Mr. Prabhakar. Mr. Ramaiah had also participated in the visit to the VHS Senior Citizens Home the previous week. The President also welcomed Mr. Shankar Menon from the Rotary Club of Meenambakkam. A special welcome was extended to Mr. Suhail Chandhok (guest speaker) and Rtn Sanjay Madhavan (moderator).

President's Address and Club Updates:

The President briefed the members on the activities and projects undertaken during the previous week.

The Club Assembly held on 16 May 26 featured presentations by President-elect Rtn S Balakrishna and his team outlining their plans for the upcoming Rotary year. The President conveyed his best wishes for a successful year ahead.

On Monday, Rtn Basudev from Nepal, Rotary International Director Nominee, visited Rotary Nagar. The Rotary Nagar team organized an impressive presentation which was highly appreciated by the visiting dignitary. A felicitation event was later organized at Taj Coromandel under the convenorship of PDG J B Kamdar attended by several Rotarians.

On 20 May 26, the Club inaugurated 100 toilets sponsored by Sundaram Fasteners as part of their CSR initiative.

On 21 May 26, PP Rtn S Ravi, President Nikhil Raj, and PDG J Sridhar visited Trichy and Usilampatti for the handover of eight dialysis machines under the SBI initiative valued at Rs.1.2 crores.

On 25 May 26, four additional dialysis

machines were handed over at Villupuram under a CSR initiative supported by SBI Mutual Fund. The initiative was facilitated by Rtn Krishnamurthy Vijayan. PP Rtn Ravi S and PDG J Sridhar identified sixteen dialysis machine locations across four places in Tamil Nadu.

The Anganwadi Bhoomi Puja at Paiyanoor was conducted as part of a CSR initiative supported by Century Flour Mills.

Bhoomi Puja was also conducted for the Rajshri toilet project at Villupuram, expected to be completed within two months.

Members were informed about the signing of the MOU with Swabodhini scheduled for the following morning at the RCM office.

On 28 May 26, the inauguration of the Majestic Pond project supported by Sundaram Finance has been scheduled. The project was facilitated through DGN Dr Vijaya Bharati Rengarajan.

Appreciation was conveyed to Rtn Amandeep for continuing the "Chappal Seva" initiative, through which over 300 to 400 pairs of footwear have been distributed during the summer.

Fundraising and Contributions:

The President announced that the Club had received Rs.23.45 lakhs through the Art Auction fundraising initiative and thanked Rtn Sanjay Tulsian, Rtn Nimish Tolia and Fundraising Director Rtn Sandhya Sridhar for organizing the effort successfully.

Special appreciation was conveyed to newly inducted Rtn Ranjit Punja, who had

pledged Rs.4.05 lakhs within a week of joining the Club towards a home at Tirumanikuppam.

Rtn Mehul Uday Nanavati, through the Raj Charitable Foundation, contributed Rs.2.5 lakhs towards the renovation of the historic Presidency School at Egmore.

Secretary's Announcements:

Asst Secretary Rtn Manasa T Pillai announced the birthdays and wedding anniversaries of members and spouses for the week.

PP Rtn Shankar C Mangadu, who celebrated his wedding anniversary on 27 May 26, graciously contributed a sunshine amount of Rs.10,000 towards the "Little Hearts" Project of RCMCT.

Induction of New Member:

PP Rtn N K Gopinath introduced Mr N Anantha Padmanaban, Chairman and Managing Director of NAC Jewellers, for induction into the Club.

In his introduction, PP Rtn N K Gopinath highlighted Mr Anantha Padmanaban's distinguished contribution to the jewellery industry and his leadership positions, including Chairman of the All India Gems and Jewellery Council, Chairman of the Rate Committee Board of the Madras Jewellers and Diamond Merchants Association, Advisory Board Member of the

National Cyber Safety and Security Standards, and Convener of the Gem and Jewellery Panel of FICCI Tamil Nadu State Council.

Following the formal induction ceremony and administration of the Rotary charge, Mr N Anantha Padmanaban was inducted as a member of the Club and welcomed by all present.

The Rotary pin was presented by PP Rtn N K Gopinath. The President handed over the Membership Kit to the new member.

Guest Session:

Rtn Sanjay Madhavan introduced the guest speaker, Mr Suhail Chandhok, renowned sports broadcaster, entrepreneur, and sports administrator.

He highlighted Mr Chandhok's extensive career spanning cricket, IPL, Olympic Games, tennis, motorsports, badminton, hockey, golf, kabaddi, and other sporting events. He also referred to Mr Chandhok's academic achievements at the University of Adelaide, his sporting background, entrepreneurial ventures and family legacy in Indian motorsports.

In the session that followed, moderated by Rtn Sanjay Madhavan, Mr Suhail Chandhok spoke on the changing landscape of sports

in India and shared valuable insights into the evolution, commercialization, inclusivity, and future opportunities within Indian sports. Mr. Suhail Chandhok also fielded questions from the audience.

Vote of Thanks: Asst. Secretary Rtn Manasa T Pillai proposed the vote of thanks.

The President thanked Mr. Suhail Chandhok for his engaging and insightful address and appreciated Rtn Sanjay Madhavan for moderating the session effectively.

Mr. Suhail Chandhok was presented with the Club's commemorative publication, Timeless Legacy, documenting the Club's 97-year history.

The President adjourned the meeting.

The Dawn of a New Era in Indian Sports: A Masterclass with Suhail Chandhok

The Rotary Club of Madras' 45th weekly meeting was set ablaze by an enthralling and eye-opening dialogue on the changing landscape of Indian sports. Superbly moderated by Rtn Sanjay Madhavan, the session featured none other than Suhail Chandhok, a leading sports broadcaster, CEO of U Mumba, co-founder of Elevate India, and a former professional cricketer.

The "Cheap Son" of a Motorsports Dynasty

The afternoon kicked off on a delightfully humorous note. Coming from a legendary motorsports family, alongside his father Vicky and Formula 1 driver brother Karun, Suhail playfully introduced himself as the family's "black sheep" and "cheap son". He joked that the financial backing required for his entire sporting career equated to about one-tenth the cost of his brother's front-right F1 tire, effectively "keeping his dad off the streets".



Beyond the Hero Worship: Redefining Sports Culture

Diving into serious business, Suhail noted that while the 2008 IPL was the defining "penny drop" moment for the commercialization of Indian sports, a massive cultural shift is still required. He argued that Indian audiences must transition from a hero-driven culture, where stadiums only fill up to watch superstars like Dhoni, Kohli, or P.V. Sindhu, to a true affinity for the sport itself.

He passionately highlighted badminton as one of the country's most underappreciated sports. He pointed out the cruelty of the current ecosystem, noting that India's historic Thomas Cup victory, an achievement he equated to winning the Cricket World Cup, received tragically little recognition compared to routine cricket milestones.



Shattering the "City-Slicker" Bubble

When discussing sports consumption, Suhail shattered conventional urban myths with staggering data. While many assume that European football dominates non-cricket viewership, Suhail revealed that the opening week of the 2022 FIFA World Cup drew 31

million viewers in India, whereas the opening night of Pro Kabaddi brought in an astounding 45 million-plus viewers. It was a powerful reminder that the true viewing power of India lies in its heartlands.



Grassroots Glory: Structure Over Funding

When asked by Sanjay about the biggest gap in India's sporting pipeline, Suhail was unequivocal: we lack structural pathways, not just talent or funding. He criticized the tendency to only support athletes like Neeraj Chopra after they become global icons, rather than when they are struggling at the grassroots level.

To combat this, Suhail launched the Yuva Kabaddi Series to build a pathway from

ground up. He shared a spectacular success story of an 18-year-old boy from Uttarakhand who was earning a meager 20,000 to 30,000 rupees a year playing Kabaddi. Thanks to the platform provided by the series, he was scouted and sold at the Pro Kabaddi auction for an incredible 48 lakhs returning home to a massive 2.5-kilometer celebratory procession in his village.



Sanity vs. Vanity in Sports Franchises

Suhail issued a strong warning to the growing franchise ecosystem: leagues must prioritize "sanity over vanity". He condemned the practice of leagues charging exorbitant franchise fees just to secure early profits, which ultimately kills the sport when owners inevitably bleed money and walk away.

Instead, Suhail issued a compelling challenge to highly profitable IPL franchises: adopt a sport. He argued that IPL teams,

sitting on massive revenues, could easily spare a fraction of their budget to adopt and transform sports like table tennis, wrestling, or kho-kho. Suhail practices what he preaches; despite not yet being profitable, his U Mumba organization actively invests in the Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) league and the Global Chess League, an initiative that has helped push 15 Indian table tennis players into the world's top 100.

The Digital Age and "Invested Fans"

Addressing the controversial Real Money Gaming (RMG) ban, Suhail offered a bold perspective. He argued that platforms like Dream11 serve a vital purpose: they turn passive viewers into "invested fans". Having a small stake in a game forces fans to learn about new players and stick around until the

final whistle, which is how deeply rooted sporting cultures are built globally. Furthermore, the ban choked off vital sponsorship revenues that lower-rung sporting leagues desperately relied on to survive.

He also touched upon sports media, warning against the "masalification" of sports journalism. In an era where everyone with a smartphone considers themselves an

expert, the pursuit of clickbait is driving elite athletes inward, making them hesitant to share their authentic selves.



The Ultimate Wish: Transparency

Looking forward, Suhail envisions a massive boom for Indian sports over the next decade, fueled by state funding, a massive youth demographic, and the push for the 2036 Olympics.

When Rtn Sanjay Madhavan asked him for his one ultimate wish for Indian sports, Suhail's answer was profound: Transparency.

He stressed that transparent sports administration, funding, and selection processes are the keys to unlocking India's true potential on the global stage. Ultimately, Suhail championed sport not just as entertainment, but as an unmatched vehicle for building discipline and creating better human beings.



The spectacular meeting was adjourned with a witty vote of thanks, beautifully summarizing India's sporting journey: from watching "Doordarshan highlights at 10 p.m. to billion-dollar leagues, fantasy apps, and uncles screaming at umpires in 4K clarity".



A Little Groundwork, A Lot of Future

The Bhoomi Puja for the new Anganwadi at Paiyanoor marked the beginning of yet another meaningful chapter in service. What may look like a simple foundation ceremony on 25 May 26 will soon become a space where young children learn, grow, play, and receive the care they deserve.

This project, made possible through the CSR support of Century Flour Mills and the valuable support of Vinayaka Missions Research Foundation, is a reminder that real development begins at grassroots, sometimes with bricks and cement, but always with vision and compassion.



A heartfelt thank you to the donors, partners, Rotarians, and everyone who worked quietly behind the scenes to make this happen. After all, every great building begins with a foundation and every brighter future begins with someone deciding to build one.

Four Dialysis Machines, One Powerful Promise

The Rotary Club of Madras marked another meaningful step in healthcare service with the handover of four dialysis machines to the Government Hospital, Villupuram on 25 May

26, a vital contribution that will strengthen the hospital's ability to serve patients in need.



This impactful CSR project, supported by SBIMF, is not merely a donation of medical equipment, it is a lifeline for countless families who depend on regular dialysis

care. For patients, especially those from underserved communities, access to such facilities can mean relief, dignity, and renewed hope.



A heartfelt thank you to SBIMF for their generous support, and to every Rotarian and well-wisher who helped make this project possible. Once again, service has moved beyond words and entered the ward quietly, powerfully, and where it matters most.

Where Water Finds Its Majesty Again

The Majestic Pond Project was inaugurated on 28 May 26 with pride and purpose, a meaningful CSR initiative of Sundaram Finance Limited, brought to RCM through the efforts of DGN Dr. Vijaya Bharathi.

Executed by EFI and carried forward under the watchful and committed eyes of Rtn Sumit Kalra, this project is more than just the restoration of a water body. It is a reminder that when communities, corporates, and committed Rotarians come together, even a pond can become a promise of sustainability, responsibility, and renewal.





A heartfelt thanks to Sundaram Finance Limited, the donors, EFI, and every hand and heart that helped make this happen. Some

projects create ripples. This one creates legacy.



A Sacred Start to Sanitation: Bhoomi Puja at Rajshree Ramakrishna School

A meaningful step towards better hygiene and dignity began with the Bhoomi Puja for a new toilet block at Rajshree Ramakrishna School, Mundiampakkam, near Villupuram on 25 May 26. This initiative, supported

through a Global Grant from the Jain Family Foundation, promises to bring lasting impact to the school community by strengthening sanitation facilities where they matter most for the children.



More than just bricks and cement, this project represents health, comfort, confidence, and respect. A proper toilet block in a school is not merely an infrastructure addition; it is a foundation for attendance, wellbeing, and dignity, especially for young students who deserve a clean and safe learning environment.

A heartfelt thanks to the Jain Family Foundation, the generous donors, and every individual who helped make this project possible. With the Bhoomi Puja marking its auspicious beginning, this initiative now moves forward as another shining example of service that quietly but powerfully transforms lives.



Rtn Roshan Cyrus Poncha



FRESH FUEL

Every Rotary journey begins with that slightly awkward first step; the first meeting, the first handshake, the first “Where do I sit?” moment.

Fresh Fuel is our space to hear from our Green Rotarians not in polished brochure language, but in honest, human words. These questions are meant to bring out warmth, wisdom, humour, and small practical ideas that make a club feel less like an organization and more like a place where people belong.

1. The One-Minute Welcome

Qn. Imagine you're welcoming a new member who's nervous. What would you say to them in one minute to make them feel they belong — without sounding like a brochure?

A1. If I had to welcome a nervous new member, I'd probably first tell them — “Relax, nobody here remembers everyone's names either!”

Honestly, Rotary can feel intimidating in the beginning. There are so many committees, verticals, projects, traditions and WhatsApp groups that you can sometimes feel like you've accidentally joined three organisations at once.

I remember feeling that too.

But what I've realised in my short time here is that RCM is a little like theatre rehearsals. At

first, you feel like an outsider watching everyone else know their cues. Then slowly someone pulls you into a conversation, someone remembers your name, someone asks you to help with something and before you know it, you're part of the production.

I actually appreciate that RCM now asks Greens to send short self-introduction videos because it helps existing members know us a little better. But I think the other side of the bridge is equally important too for newer members to slowly get to know the people, culture and rhythm of the club without feeling pressured to absorb everything immediately.

So, my advice to any newcomer would simply be: don't try to "figure out Rotary" in one month. Just show up consistently, stay curious, volunteer for something small, and allow relationships to happen naturally.

Rotary works best when people bring their real selves into the room — not when they try to become "perfect Rotarians" overnight.

And trust me — there's space here for everybody.

2. Love in Action

Q2. Imagine you're welcoming a new member who's nervous. What would you say to them in one minute to make them feel they belong — without sounding like a brochure?

A2. To me, "love in service" is not really about grand speeches or dramatic gestures. It's about consistency. It's about quietly showing up.

Sometimes it's fundraising for a project. Sometimes it's making a phone call to check on someone. Sometimes it's giving of yourself - your time, energy, professional skills, or simply attention.

This year, I experienced that very personally through a small fundraiser connected to my mother, who is 87 and quilts beautifully. For years she had always said she wanted her

The toys eventually went to children in the cancer ward at VHS Hospital, Taramani, while the funds supported RCM's HPVax initiatives for young girls.

That experience reminded me that service is rarely about one person. Someone creates, someone organizes, someone contributes, someone encourages, someone delivers. One hand starts it — many hands sustain it. And many hearts too.

As someone from the performing arts, I've always believed people remember how you

talent to serve a larger purpose rather than simply become a commercial activity. So, she hand-made around 65 toys and two quilts, and we decided to do a small fundraiser for Rotary through Rotary.

What moved me most was the generosity and warmth with which people responded, even members who barely knew me personally. Within just one week, we raised a little over Rs.4 lakhs. I was also deeply grateful to the Director-Fund Raising, who guided me through the entire process so encouragingly despite not really knowing me at all then.

make them feel. Service is the same. Dignity matters. Whether it's healthcare initiatives, Boys Town, supporting women auto drivers, or simply helping another Rotarian quietly behind the scenes — "love in service" means treating people as human beings first, not as "beneficiaries."

And I think the Four-Way Test fits beautifully into that. Real service is not only generous — it is thoughtful, ethical and respectful.

For me, love in service is when action becomes a habit, not performance.

3. The Bridge-Builder

Q3. What's one simple thing RCM can do to help newer members feel included faster?

A3. One thing I think RCM already does beautifully is Greens on the Scene. I honestly feel it was specially curated to bridge exactly this gap between newer and senior members.

When you're new, people may know your name and classification, but not really you. Programs like that help newer members feel seen beyond the badge — your personality, background, interests, humour, vocation. It immediately makes conversations warmer and easier afterwards. I know it certainly did for me.

Maybe we could do more such interactions through the year, even in smaller or more informal formats and at shorter intervals, because they genuinely help break the ice.

I also feel involving Greens early in committees makes a huge difference. One of the reasons I settled in faster was because I was given responsibility through the Four-Way Test Committee. The moment people trust you with work, Rotary starts feeling less like "their club" and more like "our club."

At the same time, many newer members may not fully know what all the committees actually do. So perhaps a fun half-day orientation or induction session for Greens could help — where different committees across verticals briefly explain what they do, the kind of work involved, and where members can contribute based on their interests or expertise.

And I think pairing Greens together on committees is also a wonderful idea. Shared work creates friendships much faster than formal introductions ever can.

At the end of the day, belonging grows through participation, conversation and shared purpose.

ROTARY RADAR

Water, Dignity and Hope: Rotary Scales HANWASH in Haiti

As Haiti continues to face the combined challenges of conflict, recurring natural disasters, climate change and unequal access to basic services, millions remain vulnerable to waterborne and hygiene-related diseases. In response, Rotary is expanding a proven national water, sanitation and hygiene model through the **Haiti National Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Initiative — HANWASH**.

The new programme, **Collaboration for Sustainable Water and Sanitation Systems in Haiti**, aims to improve living conditions and reduce waterborne disease by **25% in three local government areas by 2030**. It will benefit nearly **70,000 people in Cavailon, Ferrier and Pignon**, strengthening access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene while building sustainable local systems.



Led by Rotary clubs in Haiti and the Caribbean, the initiative brings together key partners including **Haiti Outreach, Direction Nationale de l'Eau Potable et de l'Assainissement — DINEPA**, local communities, nonprofits and government bodies. The model has already shown success by working with **11 water service providers** to maintain infrastructure and ensure continued, paid access to clean water and sanitation services.

The programme will focus on building strong community ownership. Women and local leaders across **40 urban and rural communities** will help create awareness on the importance of safe water, hand washing, healthy hygiene habits and ending open defecation. The initiative will also support the construction and restoration of clean water systems, train local operators, and strengthen governance so that water services are managed, monitored and maintained effectively.

Rotary and Partner Quotes

Holger Knaack, Chair of The Rotary Foundation Trustees said, “Through Collaboration for Sustainable Water and Sanitation Systems in Haiti, Rotary is doing more than delivering clean water—we’re helping communities build long term health and resilience. By strengthening local capacity to manage and sustain water systems, this effort will help more children stay in school, improve public health, support livelihoods, and create lasting opportunities for Haiti’s future.”

Neil Van Dine, Haiti Outreach Co-founder and Director and a member of the Rotary E-Club of WASH said, “Since 1997, Haiti Outreach has helped lead the development of a community-led model for safe water access in rural Haiti built on durable infrastructure, local leadership, and long-term management. This

approach has reached more than 300,000 people across 550 communities and helped shape WASH practice nationally. We are proud to partner through Rotary to help scale this Haitian-led model across the country.”

Edwige Petit, Direction Nationale de l’Eau Potable et de l’Assainissement (DINEPA) Director of Sanitation said, “Rotary, through its HANWASH program, supports the Haitian government’s efforts to achieve the goals of access to clean, safe drinking water for all as well as ending open defecation in rural and peri urban communities. As the regulatory body for the sector within the Haitian government, Direction Nationale de l’Eau Potable et de l’Assainissement (DINEPA) is amenable to continuing this collaboration and extending clean water access to every Haitian.”



A Day of Learning, Fun and Leadership for Rotary Nagar Children



As part of our efforts to keep the children of Rotary Nagar meaningfully engaged during their summer holidays, I reached out to our own Rtn Sessa Sai to explore whether he could conduct a RYLA-style programme for them. In his characteristic warm and generous manner, Sai immediately agreed and invited the children for a full day of activities. What followed was a memorable day filled with learning, interaction, teamwork and fun, all delivered in a way that only Sai can.

Thank you so much, Sai. You have a wonderful way with children, and an exceptional ability to make learning joyful, lively and meaningful for them. The details of the programme, in Sai's own words, follow.

-PP Rtn Rani Muralidharan
Chairperson – Rotary Nagar

Seeds of Awareness – Rotary Nagar Children Experience the Joy and Importance of Agriculture at the Farm

- * A group of 25 children and teachers from Rotary Nagar visited Farm Guru to understand the importance of agriculture, food security, and why food should never be wasted.
- * The students experienced the complete rice cultivation cycle, beginning from ploughing the land, sowing seeds, transplanting paddy saplings, threshing, pounding, and finally winnowing the harvested grain.



- * They learned how much effort, patience, and teamwork is required before rice reaches our plates, creating greater respect for farmers and agriculture.
- * The children were also introduced to organic farming practices followed at Farm Guru. They understood how water from the fish tank is naturally used as nutrient-rich fertilizer for crops, creating a sustainable and eco-friendly farming ecosystem.
- * The visit highlighted the importance of chemical-free organic farming for better health, soil fertility, environmental protection,

and long-term food sustainability.

- * Apart from the educational experience, the children had tremendous fun enjoying a traditional bullock cart ride, a tractor ride across the fields, and a joyful shower under the pump-set, making them connect with village life and nature in the most memorable way.
- * The students returned with greater awareness, gratitude, happiness, and a deeper understanding of the value of food, farmers, and sustainable living.

-Rtn Sessa Sai



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