



Self-Realization Fellowship

Founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda

Voluntary League Appeal

SPRING 2017

“The spiritual relation of souls united in seeking God is stronger and more binding than any other relation. Each person is born into a particular family for one lifetime only; but he or she who forms a spiritual bond with kindred souls will walk together the path to God through many lifetimes.”

—Paramahansa Yogananda

Dear Friend,

Paramahansa Yogananda’s words about the blessings and benefits of walking the spiritual path with kindred souls hold great inspiration for Self-Realization Fellowship members worldwide. The deep bond that exists between those who seek God and strive to serve Him often expresses itself in an inner urge to support the spiritual lives of others, including the youngest ones on the path. Referring to this inner desire to serve, Paramahansaji wrote in the *Autobiography of a Yogi*:

“The ideal of right education for youth had always been very close to my heart....My first step in that direction was made with seven children in Dihika, a small country site in Bengal.”

From that humble beginning one hundred years ago in Dihika, India, our Guru went on to establish a larger school for all-round, “how-to-live” education in Ranchi, India, one year later — which was made permanent with the help of generous contributions from disciples and friends. After he came to the West, and again through the cooperation of many devotees, the first Sunday school programs were established at some of the SRF temples. In time, SRF’s Youth Services Department was formed to coordinate the growing efforts to spiritually educate our young members. Over the years, many souls have selflessly dedicated their time, effort, prayer, and material support to assist this department in its vital role of serving the youth of Self-Realization Fellowship.

Our children are the future...

Through this appeal we are inviting you to touch the lives of many children by supporting Youth Services’ *How-to-Live* programs. Three new programs are described below. Youth Services also aids our dedicated Sunday School teachers and teen leaders with ongoing guidance and by the creation of a variety of inspiring activities and materials that have been utilized at our temples and by members all over the world. These include a set of spiritual class outlines to instruct and engage the inquisitive and receptive minds of the children, in harmony with our Guru’s educational ideals for youth. The texts *Sunday School Training and Support Workbook* and *Exploring Paramahansa Yogananda’s Teachings with Teens*, and more publications, are available to Sunday school teachers as well as interested SRF parents whose children are not able to attend a Sunday school.

Continuing to walk in our beloved founder’s footsteps, Youth Services Department is creatively generating new programs that benefit our youth. In recent times they have introduced the following offerings:

1. Separate five-day *Summer Day Programs* for girls and boys held in Encinitas, California, led by

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monastics and qualified lay disciples. These events provide children and teens with a deeper exposure to Paramahansaji's teachings through meditation, the SRF Energization Exercises, and interactive classes and engaging activities designed specifically for the various age groups. During each week, there is also a separate one-day program for parents, helping them to augment the benefits their children gain in the Summer Day Program.

2. *Regional Day Programs* led by monastics, which provide the essence of the Summer Day Programs described above to youth in other areas of the country.
3. *One-day Teen Retreats* that are monastic-led and provide teenagers with a chance to mix with spiritual peers and enjoy meditations, *kirtans*, and classes while absorbing the vibration of peace at our Encinitas and Lake Shrine Retreats.

One youth who recently attended a *How-to-Live* program commented:

"I enjoyed it all. But to single out one thing, it would be the presence of love I felt here. You cannot have that type of feeling at that level anywhere else."

A parent remarked on the benefits of the Summer Day Program:

"This was the first time my daughter attended summer camp. She said it was the best camp she ever did!...She felt safe, loved, and cared for. This week already has brought a positive change in her attitude and behavior at home."

The instruction and inspiration these young devotees receive will be a guiding light in their lives as they grow into adulthood and seek to live a balanced life of physical, mental and spiritual development.

To increase the invaluable support this area of the SRF work provides to our youth, we recently set up a Youth Services Fund to receive contributions. Part of the proceeds from this appeal will go into this special fund to be used toward all aspects of this department's activities, including providing needed scholarships for numerous children, making it possible for more of them to attend the Summer Day Program and other youth events. To learn more about this fund and the various activities of our Youth Services area, please go to www.yogananda-srf.org/youth.

Other ways your gift will help...

In this letter we have highlighted activities for SRF youth. However, please know that contributions towards this appeal will also support the many other spiritual activities and multitudinous needs of Paramahansa Yogananda's society and worldwide mission, including ongoing costs of preparing the *SRF Lessons* and other SRF publications in multiple languages for the benefit of our members and other spiritually truth-seeking souls around the world, preserving the sacred legacy sites associated with our Guru's life as places of pilgrimage for present and future generations, corresponding with our worldwide membership in order to personally answer their questions about applying the SRF teachings, and providing for the running of a worldwide society and the growing needs of our Guru's global spiritual family. To contribute towards the spiritual and humanitarian activities of his sacred work, we encourage you to visit donatesrf.org, or fill out and return the enclosed donation form to the SRF International Headquarters.

Your heartfelt gift is deeply appreciated. Above all, we thank you for your efforts in following Paramahansaji's teachings, because we know how much your spiritual endeavors and prayers help to create powerful vibrations that benefit the whole world. We pray that you feel an ever-deepening bond with our Guru's worldwide spiritual family and with the Great Masters who continuously shower us with their love and blessings.

In divine friendship,



SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP
Mother Center