

A view of the 17th Annual

Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race



If Your Life Is Real

By Utpal
<http://perfectionjourney.org>
9 July 2013 (morning)

This is a shortened version of the article, please visit the website for the full version

Ashprihanal ran by me his morning as I was crouched on the ground taking a photograph. I heard him call out, "You know, some runners have gone half way." As I glanced up I saw a mischievous grin on his face. I caught up with him and he announced, "I reached the halfway point

yesterday. When I reach the halfway point I always have a big celebration. It is really nice. My big celebration is that I take a half cup of water," Ashprihanal said jokingly.

His friend Sopan asked him if he was now on track to finish the Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race in 45 days. Ashprihanal replied, "Well, you know, the last two times I ran here I got problems at the end of the Race. So, whatever the Lord gives, I take it." With 1,550 long, hard miles still stretching out in front of him it is too early to celebrate. Too much can still happen.

As each day passes it is becoming increasingly clear that some runners will simply not be able to finish the 3,100 Mile Race in the time remaining to them. Those runners have to come to terms with this stark reality and identify themselves with some other goal — a new goal that will continue to inspire them and push them on through the days ahead.

For Sarah, the recognition of what the Race was now going to mean for her became clearer just yesterday. "I suddenly realized how extreme this Race is compared to the Ten Day Race. It is so mentally different."

When Sarah saw that she would not be completing the full 3,100 miles she felt she had lost her motivation. But then she realized, "you have to think of every day as something new." She said, "Then the joy returned yesterday because I could appreciate just being here. Being with all these awesome runners, you know, who are flying past me — and hoping one day that I might have that kind of determination." She added, "You have to set a new goal and realize that it is a life-long process, you are not going to have the capacity straight away."

*If your life is real,
Then only
Your heart can be happy.
If your mind is free,
Then only
Your body can be happy.*

— Sri Chinmoy, excerpt from
"Ten Thousand Flower-Flames, Part 40"
(Agni Press, 1982)

Even with all her multi-day racing

Day 24

Moving On — Part 2

By Sahishnu, 9 July 2013 (evening)
www.3100.ws/blog

With the first legitimate heat-wave behind them, the great dozen runners continued on their journey of many steps. Nine persons covered sixty or more miles, led by the top two men, Ashprihanal Aalto and Atmavir Spacil who notched 70.24 miles each. Vasu Duzhiy and Ananda-Lahari Zuscin each garnered 64.2 miles, while enjoying the slightly cooler temps and random breezes. Three more men went past the halfway point bringing the total to four. Today's totals are the equivalent of four six-day runs done consecutively. And they keep on moving, too.

Atmavir Spacil:

1,550 miles=23 days+01:55:42

Vasu Duzhiy:

1,550 miles=23 days+08:32:50

Sarvagata Ukrainskyi:

1,550 miles=23 days+11:22:12



A runner passes by a flower on the Course



Sri Chinmoy at a 1981 sporting event

Photo by Bhashwar



Baladev and Pranjal



Sarah



Surasa shown with helpers takes a phone call

experience, the 3,100 Mile Race is an unprecedented event for the talented 37-year old Sarah Barnett from Adelaide, Australia. "I feel like I am the rookie — my first year of learning."

She received the welcome news from the race director that she should not feel unneeded pressure and that she should just aim for 50 miles a day [the original goal is to average 59.62 miles per day in order to finish 3,100 miles within the 52-day limit]. Sarah said that hearing this was a real relief to her. I ask if she imagined a van was going to show up with her suitcases packed inside ready to take her to the airport. She laughs at this and jokes, "I probably wouldn't have minded too much." She says that she understands that capacity has to slowly grow and be nurtured. "I hope to come back again and try. But anyway, there is still a long way to go with this one." For now, she says "It is more than the miles on the board. It is how you are feeling every day — and if you can be happy."

I remind Sarah that she came into the Race with a serious foot injury. "I have had a good two or three weeks running on it. Now it is starting to play up a little bit. I just have to tape it again. You know, it has been pretty good to allow me run at least 80 or 85 km a day. I am happy with that."

Speaking of the different nature of this Race compared to other races, she tells me, "I have got friends who have just done a Six Day Race in Italy. They just finished about a day ago and I can see the mentality. It is all about the winning and who is defeating who and, I think, this Race really feels different. I am really grateful for Sri Chinmoy's self-transcendence message. It is so different. It is just

about yourself. And next year you will try and do better or tomorrow you will try and do better than today. If you can just do that, then you are really happy. But if you start competing, then you are just getting a fighting-mentality."

"I feel in ones first races, all your negative qualities come forward — frustration with yourself, hoping you could achieve more. But I can see as the Race goes on it becomes more like a family. The other runners are encouraging, like you are the little child of the family. It is really awesome."

"The last few days I have got the feeling that these runners are warriors. That you are fighting against your own weakness. That is more important than the miles on the board. Everyone is fighting together against their lethargy, unwillingness, depression and all these things that everyone is kind of fighting on the same team. That is an inner feeling that I got the last few days."

She describes how this family includes not just the twelve runners but also everybody who supports and takes part in some way with the Race. "The whole thing works together."

* * *

Petra is heading back to her home in London today she says, "I feel as though I should come back each year and help. I am very honored that I could be here. Obviously, I am a bit sad that I am going



Nidhruvi and Petra



Ananda-Lahari captures a moment

but it has been such an honor so I am happy and grateful!"

Right now Petra is running alongside Nidhruvi, who I ask whether she thinks Petra may one day run the Race. Nidhruvi says, "She is so young. Definitely one day she will enjoy this Race. Many more girls will come and run this Race, I tell you. Now for the first time there are three girls. Some strong [women] runners will one day feel the inner call. They will definitely come. You will see it."

Nidhruvi adds that not only does one have to be strong physically to participate in this Race but "also inwardly and mentally you have to be strong in order to deal with all those struggles that you will definitely face. I have so many experiences from all those years of long-distance racing. So this is, of course, an advantage. You have to grow into it, you cannot just come and say 'okay, I am doing this big race.' This race is totally different from all the other races. Because it takes so long."

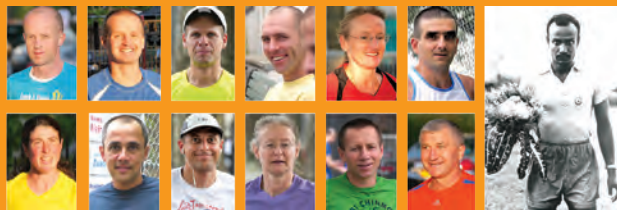
*Your heart's oneness-peace
Is not real
If it cannot fly
Across the vastness-ocean.*

— Sri Chinmoy, excerpt from
"Peace: God's Fragrance-Heart, Part 2"
(Agni Press, 1992)

A view of the

17th Annual

Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race



Focus Only On My Destination

By Utpal

<http://perfectionjourney.org>

10 July 2013 (morning)

This is a shortened version of the article, please visit the website for the full version

Pranjal tells me, "When I am here, I am focusing only on the running and nothing else. I don't look around or look at other people. Sometimes I don't realize that somebody has just passed me. Because I am somewhere else. When I come home I just try and forget it and focus on something else."

Sometime late this afternoon Pranjal will become the 5th runner to reach the half-way point. When this happens he will waste none of his precious energy with undue thoughts or celebration. He will simply continue to focus on getting in as many laps as he can before midnight. This is his sole devoted task.

When there is no more time remaining in the day, he will straddle his bicycle and peddle the four or five blocks to get home. At that point another clock starts ticking away — the precious six hours that he has all to himself. Then begins his 18-hour running day once again.

Today I left the tranquil, sacred orbit of the Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race and went into Manhattan to see a dentist. The energy and dynamism of the big city is in stark contrast to the simple, little concrete path that circles around Thomas Edison High School in Queens.

Standing on 5th Avenue I was aware of the waves of humanity surging in countless directions around me. I was not separate from any of it. I, too, am part and parcel of this chaotic life. But it

was a shocking reminder of how these two worlds, just a few miles apart from each other, can be so different.

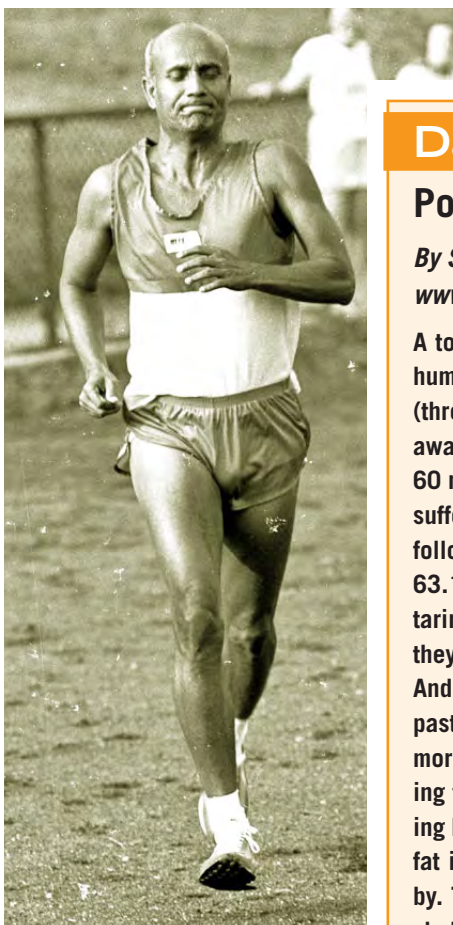
No matter whether it is Manhattan or Vienna or Helsinki, in the heart of every city people are busy trying to get someplace else. Important things must be done as quickly as possible. Then there is the scramble and rush to go home afterwards.

When I got home — absent a tooth that I had enjoyed using for many years, and a bottle of painkillers — I returned my focus back to the Race that

has consumed a large portion of my life for the past 24 days. Reflecting on the images and sounds of the Race is a sweet reminder of how different life can be when we turn our gaze to a more inspiring world. So much can be gained by identifying with what these twelve runners are doing and how they are tirelessly accomplishing this great task. With my focus back on the Race I felt a sense of peace once again — something a dentist drill and a subway ride had briefly snatched away from me.

*I must focus only
On my destination,
And not on my mind-hesitation.*

— Sri Chinmoy, excerpt from
"My Christmas-New Year-Vacation
Aspiration-Prayers, Part 32"
(Agni Press, 2005)



Sri Chinmoy in 1981

Photo by Bhashwar

Day 25

Post Wave Reality

By Sahishnu, 10 July 2013 (evening)
www.3100.ws/blog

A tough day all around as the Dozen endured more humidity, bright sun, dead air, heavy rain, multiple (three) doctor visits and the ever-present mileage awaiting their airspace. Only six people made it past 60 miles, with little fanfare as almost everyone was suffering. Ashprihanal Aalto ran 66.4 miles, closely followed by Atmavir Spacil, 65.8 and Vasu Duzhiy, 63.1. No amount of ice, sweets, cooler drinks or tarimisu could change anyone's demeanor — only they could. With steely determination and resolve. And a few more breezes, please. Six have now gone past halfway, with still time left for two or three more if they really bear down. As we are approaching four weeks in, the physiology of super-long racing begins to appear — all runners are thinner, body fat is history and energy is slightly harder to come by. The alternative is fat and food — tons of it. We shall see. Stay cool my friends....

Summer camp has begun, so there are lots of kids on the course this morning. They are coming and going most of the day. Pranjal says that, unfortunately, there are collisions sometimes.

He points out a pine tree that is one of his favorite spots. He says that a branch was cut that used to reach out across the fence. He can still touch it if he reaches out to it, which he does from time to time.

Later this morning he will be the next to cross the halfway point and jokes that it is all downhill from there.

Pranjal has maintained a video blog every day since the start of the Race. The video itself is about 5-minutes but the whole task takes him 15 or 20 minutes each night, though admitted it can take 45 minutes if he falls asleep while doing it. He says, "I did it last year as well. It is faster than typing for me. When I was typing I was falling asleep and it took me infinity to do." He says, "I summarize the day. I ask people how they feel and other things about the Race, but that is it." He adds that doing the blog, "helps me to take my mind from the Race. This is why I started to do it."

Aside from the video-blog there are other tasks that need doing, he says he had to order a new music player online last evening. All said, Pranjal says "Usually I sleep 3 hours and 45 minutes." When asked if this is enough sleep he replies, "it is not enough. I would like 8 hours or 10 hours. What can I do?"

For Pranjal, the halfway point is just "a line on the ground. I will just cross it. Still there is 3 1/2 weeks to go." Moments later he adds, "We are lucky."

Ashprihanal says, "Yesterday there was a hat on my box. I didn't know where it came from. It just appeared there. It is full of these LED lights so it blinks like anything in the night. It looked really cool when I was wearing it last night."



Pranjal making his way through a crowd of summer campers



Yuri gets a little relief from cold splash of water



After running 18-hours Pranjal goes home and does a video-blog



Style is most important



Joy comes in little (chocolate) packages

This morning he and Sopan recited an "immortal poem that I wrote a couple of years ago" for the group of singers who come in the morning. Ashprihanal tells me how it goes, "Miles are important. Smiles are more important. But style is by far the most important."

*I now follow only
The sunlit path
To reach my Destination.*

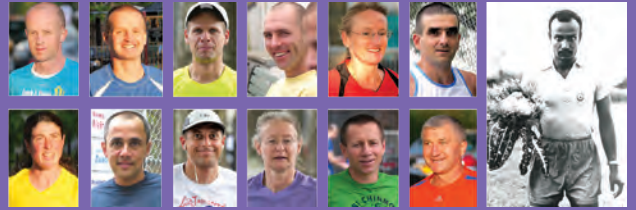
— Sri Chinmoy, excerpt from "Seventy-Seven Thousand Service-Trees, Part 48" (Agni Press, 2007)



Rupantar looks at the half-way group

A view of the 17th Annual

Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race



Inside My Heart Home

By Utpal
<http://perfectionjourney.org>
11 July 2013 (morning)

This is a shortened version of the article, please visit the website for the full version

"You have to do seven laps and then you are half way." These were the last words Surasa heard before leaving the Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race last night.

This morning, in her usual quiet manner, Surasa ran those seven laps and simply continued on without saying a word to anyone. The significance was not noticed by the morning counting crew until the numbers were crunched and it was clear that she had, in fact, achieved this milestone. Suddenly, the happy jingle of dozens of tiny bells gathers into a bright celebration for this spectacular runner and the sound of a conch — signifying victory — booms out in the background. She giggles with delight, steps momentarily to the board

and points at those very satisfying numbers 1550. Then she takes off running, chasing after an even bigger number.

Surasa says she was looking forward to going beyond 1,550 miles. She says of the second half, "Somehow it goes faster." As for comparing her results to other years she has ran this Race, she says simply, "I am not looking at this. I am just doing what I can. And that's it." And while she is happy to be mid-way she affirms, "You have to stay focused until the very end."

I am curious to know that since this is her third time running the 3,100 Mile

Race whether she enjoy it more each time she comes. "It depends on how you are feeling. If you are feeling good, everything is fine and you have no injuries then, of course, you can enjoy it. But if you have injuries, it is difficult. I think it depends on how you are feeling." I ask how she is feeling now. She laughs and says, "I am feeling very good."

*When I live inside my heart-home,
I clearly see that my faith
Can run infinitely faster
Than my doubt
To carry me to my destination.*

— Sri Chinmoy, excerpt from
"Twenty-Seven Thousand Aspiration-
Plants, Part 249" (Agni Press, 1998)

Day 26

Halfway Home

By Sahishnu, 11 July 2013 (evening) www.3100.ws/blog

The mercury did not cross 90° but the haze and humidity stayed around long enough to cause concern. Yet the runners 12 stayed the course. Eight finished over sixty miles, with Ashprihanal Aalto reaching 70.24 again, making it six of the last seven over the coveted 128 laps. Sarvagata Ukrainskyi showed good form with 68.6 miles. The Austrian ladies Surasa Mairer and Nidhruvi Zimmerman both hit 113 laps (62.01 miles) to stay the course well and increase their chances for a fine finish. The top seven overall are on pace to finish well. Let us hope everyone will reach their goals.



Sri Chinmoy in a race in 1981



A crew from ABC news is here for the entire day



Dan and his cameraman speak with Rupantar



... and with Sarah



Kevin

Surasa is thrilled to get messages of encouragement from her friends and family. I speak to her about one supporter she has never met in person — Laura, a woman from Texas. “This is really very nice and it touches me very much. Laura does not know me but still she has such concern.” She wrote Surasa an email before the Race and told her she was happy she was able to run the Race again. “She said that it is nice that women are doing this Race. She cannot do it — but she is doing it [self-transcendence] in another way.”

Yesterday, for some unknown reason, it was a bad day for most of the runners. Ten of the twelve ran fewer laps. Pranjal says, “Sometimes you simply don’t get into the flow. Sometimes with each lap you have to really, really fight.”

Kevin has been studying the race for the past few weeks along with Corina, another student from the University of Pennsylvania. They told Dan Kloeffler of ABC about the Race and he brought a crew out for the day to investigate.

I asked Dan what he thought he would find. He says, “A million and one questions comes to mind. How can you even accomplish a 3100 mile race? And then the follow up: *why* would you accomplish it? So when I started to learn a little bit more about the details — what goes into it, not only physically but mentally. That’s when we started talking at ABC, we figured that this was something that should be covered.”

He didn’t know what to expect, but Dan was surprised by how simple the Race begins, “They all ride up on their bikes and very casually and calmly

put their shoes on. Start at this one line on the sidewalk. Have a moment of silence and then take off — collectively.”

He also noticed the various people giving support — from musicians to helpers. “Everybody has a role to play and everyone knows what their role is.

There is kind of a give and take of energy.” Of the likelihood that it will be difficult to capture the story completely. Dan says, “We will be here all day and, honestly, I don’t think we will even scratch the surface on it. Even if we were to be here the entire length of the Race I don’t think we would be able to describe it.”

That these runners have completed 1,500 miles is “mind boggling.” Dan tells me that the longest distance he has run is 14 miles and “for about a week after, I was definitely paying the price for it. So, I really honestly can’t imagine waking up at 5 or 5:30 a.m., having the mind-set immediately to put on your shoes and to then run for the next 15, 16, 17, maybe 18 hours. I can’t quite understand how physically you can do it and how mentally you can do it. Yet I see them walking past here and they have *smiles* on their faces.

“It is amazing to see that, yes, it is possible. I have been asking myself could I do something like this? I don’t know. I am sure I will take a lesson away



Surasa is the first woman this year to reach half-way



Some of the early morning singers

from this in that the next time I look at a challenge as being impossible, I will think of this. I mean, it was tough just for me to get up at 4 a.m., just to roll out of bed, have a cup of coffee, drive here and not have to do anything but sit here and watch. They have to get up and run 60 miles today. Then they have to do it again tomorrow and tomorrow and the next day. It is exhausting just to think about it! I suppose that is why there are only twelve runners (laughs).

What are you waiting for?

Start running

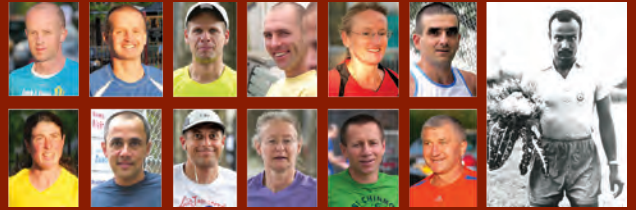
Towards God’s Heart-Home.

— Sri Chinmoy, excerpt from “Seventy-Seven Thousand Service-Trees, Part 36” (Agni Press, 2004)

A view of the

17th Annual

Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race



Nothing Frightens Me

By Utpal

<http://perfectionjourney.org>

12 July 2013 (morning)

This is a shortened version of the article, please visit the website for the full version

I don't know how a lot of things work, or why things happen the way they do. For example, by now I just take it for granted that the runners are simply going to show at 6 a.m. and run all day at the Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race. And, by some miraculous fashion, they do — continuing on like this for 52 straight days.

Today marks the halfway point. After 26 days of everything happening with such regularity, my mind has simply

adapted to a kind of logical pattern. I have become locked into this little daily routine — just as a lot of others have as well. All of this seems somehow just so normal and natural until you step back and take a closer look.

Snehashila, whose 88th birthday is today, has come by the Race this morning, just as she does on most days throughout the summer. She says, "I can't stay away. These people are like divinities brought down on earth for these few weeks. Each time I come, I get stronger and stronger. I can't tell you the name for it, but I can tell you that it makes me very, very happy."

It is Saturday morning and, as she regularly does, Snehashila is participating in the Self-Transcendence 2 Mile Race that is taking place just across the street. The arrival of the birthday girl forces me to marvel at just how remarkable she really is. Looking a

little past Snehashila's ageless, effervescent, beaming smile, I feel a little shock fly up into my thoughts. It is then that I wonder to myself, 'how is she still doing this at 88 years of age?'

A few years ago I made a film about running in which Snehashila had a role in (<http://www.srichinmoy.tv/480/sri-chinmoy-s-love-of-running/>). I just happened to be filming when she was sprinting towards the finish line of the 2 Mile Race. She said then, "I am kicking it in at 83."

Snehashila used to also run the Self-Transcendence Marathon every August in Rockland Lake State Park. When I ask her about that, she says emphatically, "Nothing frightens me. I would have done this [the 3,100 Mile Race] myself if I had joined the Marathon Team when I was younger."

She visits the Race this morning just long enough to greet and cheer the runners. Then Snehashila goes off at a fast pace down the block and on towards her home — moving along at a speed not unlike some of the runners out here on the course.

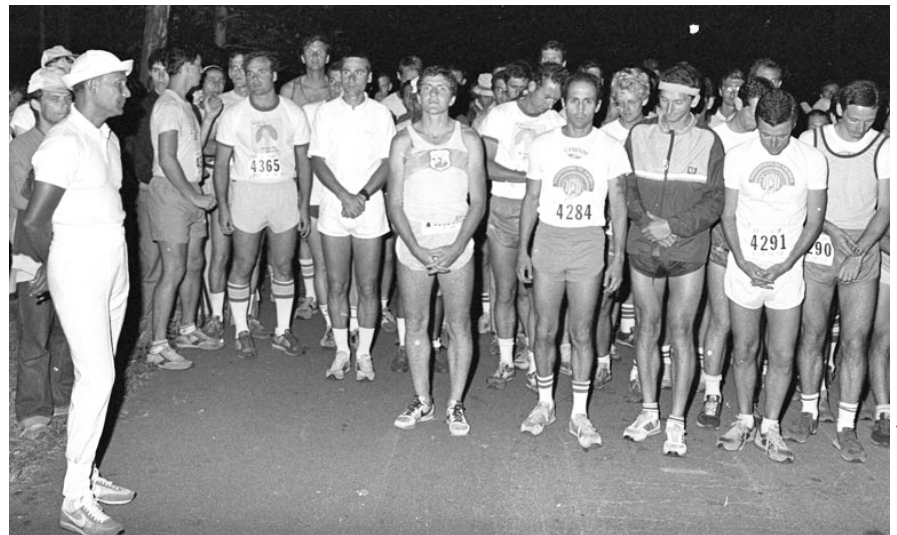
Day 27

Rains and Pains

By Sahishnu, 12 July 2013 (evening)

www.3100.ws/blog

An evening shower turned to an all-night affair as the temps stayed cool and our band of runners going nowhere kept going on. Ashprihanal Aalto led the parade again with 70.24 miles, padding his lead by a few more miles. Seven athletes went past sixty miles as small blisters appeared on some feet; sleep deprivation was a factor as well as more breaks were needed. It is still sticky and humid — a runner's enemy. As the race enters the final three and a half weeks, the beach and a lot of time away from the running course might be coursing through people's brains. But they cannot lose sight of the goal, however lofty or distant. A steely focus must be priority as well as a cheerful outlook — sometimes difficult to muster in tough conditions. But on they go. More later.



Sri Chinmoy starts a 50 mile race 1981

Photo by Bhashwar



Snehashila

My Earth Activities

*I respect greatness.
I love goodness.
I champion the right cause.
I listen to a pure heart.
I frighten the animal in me.
I enlighten the human in me.
I strengthen the divine in me.*

— Sri Chinmoy, excerpt from “Silver Thought-Waves, Part 2” (Agni Press, 1992)

It is a big day for Nidhruvi. She ran 113 laps yesterday and has just eight miles to make the half way point. She has the briefest of celebrations and continues on. For her, every mile past her previous longest distance of 1,300 is entering a new world of self-transcendence.

For part of the morning I ask various runners why it was that two days ago was so hard for the runners and their and mileage fell — and then why yesterday every single runner improved their distance.

Sopan had a tough day yesterday, but still managed to make 100 laps — which is more than he did the previous day. He says simply, “it just happens.”

Sarvagata had a good day yesterday as well. He ran 125 laps — 20 more than the previous day. He also cannot explain why it happened.

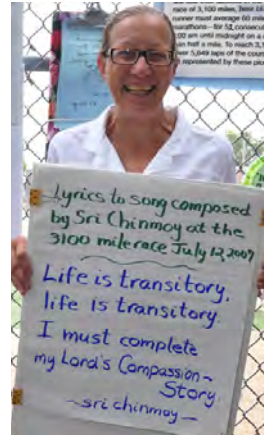
Pranjal completed 117 laps yesterday. When asked what he thought was the reason for the numbers going down one day and then up the next, he says,



Nidhruvi



Baladev



Sarita with the “song of the day” board

“It could be anything. It could be the weather. Yesterday it was cloudy all day.” As for the day before that, “it was so long ago, I forget.”

Baladev says, “Every day is different. Every lap is different.” Baladev increased his laps yesterday from 94 to 103. He says, “Every second is not the same second here. Everything here is infinite.”

“Yesterday was very good energy here. In the evening, a boys [music] group came and many people visited. It was energy for us.” Baladev believes that in the near future, “many more people will come. They will be walking, running, watching or something.” He says that the more people who come and visit help raise the standard of the runners. “It will be progress, slowly and steadily.”

He adds that this progress, “is not only about the runners — not only about us.” He then tells me a story that occurred the other morning “it happened in front of the school. I was walking and three or four very young boys were coming

towards me. One of them, who was maybe 10 or 11 years old, told me, ‘I am proud of you!’ It is a miracle — it was something.” He suggests that it is through little experiences like this that the Race reaches out and inspires people who, in turn, offer something unique and special of their own back to the Race.

Sarita says, “I am here for the whole 3,100 Mile Race and am grateful to help in my own little way.” In addition to taking daily counting shifts, she has come every morning just after 6:30 a.m. and joins a group of singers who have sung at the Race since 2006. She says that this year, “Enthusiasm Awakeners invited anyone who wanted to come and sing with them. So I was honored and happy to sing with them.” For the singing group and for the runners, Sarita writes out the lyrics to the song Sri Chinmoy composed on the Race Course on that day in 2007 onto a posterboard. She reads today’s lyrics:

*Life is transitory, life is transitory.
I must complete
My Lord’s Compassion-Story.
(composed by Sri Chinmoy at the
Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race on
12 July 2007)*

Sarita says, “It is so truthful. Life is transitory and you realize that at any moment it could be over. It is quite powerful, really. And to complete my Lord’s Compassion-Story? That seems like an eternal journey.”

BE NOT AFRAID

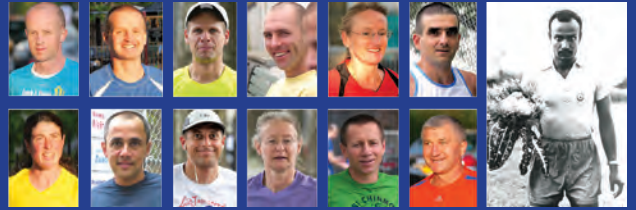
*Be not afraid of greatness.
Greatness cannot devour you.*

*Be not puzzled by earth-achievements.
They do not mark Immortality’s Life.*

*Be not afraid of anything.
Love everything.
But grow into one thing only:
God-Delight.*

— Sri Chinmoy, excerpt from
“Transcendence-Perfection”
(Agni Press, 1975)

A view of the 17th Annual



Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race

Significant Places

By Utpal
<http://perfectionjourney.org>
13 July 2013 (morning)

This is a shortened version of the article, please visit the website for the full version

Just a few weeks ago was the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. The battle took place 1-3 July 1863, more than 50,000 soldiers lost their lives in this great struggle that was the turning point of the American Civil war. Later that autumn, the American President, Abraham Lincoln,

Day 28

Four Weeks and Counting

By Sahishnu, 13 July 2013 (evening)
www.3100.ws/blog

Somehow the deft Dozen made it to four sevens of days (28) without any serious injuries except maybe to psyche or reputation, depending on the individual (your measurement may vary). To get to the point, eight runners made it past 60 miles, with the top guys holding serve and the rest doing as much as they can. Ashprihanal Aalto made it to 70 miles again (70.24), landing on seventy miles 12 of the last 14 days. He still is tired every night and never stays past 11:30 p.m., so right now his health is paramount. Atmavir Spacil and Vasu Duzhiy both topped 65+ miles, and the Austrian duo of Surasa Mairer and Nidhruvi Zimmerman continue to put up triple digit laps to lead the women. Tomorrow the weather gets a little hotter, leading into a very warm week approaching us. If the group can survive this week, they may make it to the end. Stay cool ye residents of hot American cities.

gave a short but immortal speech at the inauguration of the cemetery that was created there as the final resting place for all those who sacrificed their lives on its hallowed ground.

People from across the country have been making pilgrimages to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania for generations. It is a place in which history has indelibly etched its mark. Such locations have always been beacons to pilgrims, scholars, tourists and the curious. Of course, people make pilgrimages not only to places of historical importance, but we are drawn to many places of natural and man-made wonders.

Over the greater part of the year the Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race Course does not receive much attention or visitors. It has no specific name in which to distinguish it from countless other places of interest in New York. For much of the year it is merely a busy thoroughfare for students, teachers, and sport teams who use the nearby fields. It

is likely that most of those people know little of what transpires here from June to August each summer.

Yet it seems to me that gradually more and more people are finding their way here to this little sidewalk. They come for many reasons. None of which include an acknowledgement to a specific moment in history, nor to be inspired by its' great natural beauty nor to view a significant architectural wonder. Something deeper and intangible compels them to come.

This morning a young couple from Columbus, Ohio are visiting the Race Course. Sunshine and her husband, Jimmy, came to New York the other day to celebrate their fourth wedding anniversary and made visiting the Race one of their priorities. Sunshine is very animated as she talks, "I think what these runners are doing is absolutely extraordinary. It is hard to wrap your mind around 3,100 miles — physically, mentally, and even spiritually." She adds, "I want to experience what these people are experiencing. Get a small taste of what they are doing."

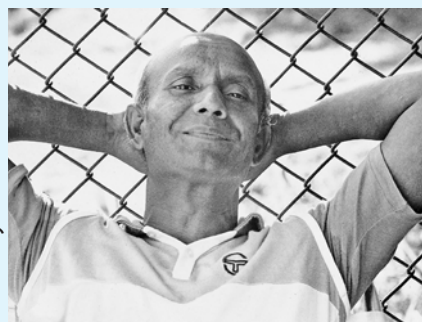


Photo by Shradha

Sri Chinmoy at Jamaica High School track

to watch what is happening. If necessary, it will illumine or transform what is happening. Again, if something positive is happening, the soul of the place tries to expedite the journey of the seekers.

— Sri Chinmoy, excerpt from "Sri Chinmoy Answers, Part 13" (Agni Press, 1999)

Question: Is there a soul-significance to the place where something happens?

Sri Chinmoy: Yes, when something very special happens, it has something special to do with the heart of the place or the place itself. If something very spiritual is happening, the soul is bound to be there and the place is bound to be significant. This is not the case for silly, ordinary, mundane events, but if something very special is going on at a particular place, the soul's divinity has to visit that place and stay there for some time



Jimmy and Sunshine



Yuri



Vasu

Both Sunshine and Jimmy have run the Columbus Marathon, but admit they are still very new to the sport of distance running. Of the 2-3 marathons the 3,100 Mile runners run every single day she says, "every day for 60 [52] days? It is almost impossible to imagine." She says, "Running is a part of who I am. It exists inside of me, I feel it in the marrow of my bones. It is hard to explain. It is such a simple act of one foot in front of another but it is so much deeper than that." She adds, "I do hope to run ultras some day."

Jimmy says they first arrived at the Race yesterday morning. They did a few laps, "and we stuck around a little longer than we planned. It is just a very welcoming environment here. We had different plans for yesterday but when you meet up with different people who are so interesting and so friendly and open. It is hard to move away from it. So we came back again last night and hung out until about 10:30 or so."

Yuri is looking stronger now since having such a problem with the heat. He says that he realizes now that he should have been wearing a hat earlier in the Race to protect himself from the sun. He feels that his strength has returned yet he is still unable to run at his usual speed. Regardless of whether he is having a good day or a bad day, he says, "Happiness is deep inside us and it gives you inspiration and strength. It is always the same."

When I ask whether he can see the finish line yet now that he is more than



Great Race helpers Vera and Tamara show off today's Race Prayer

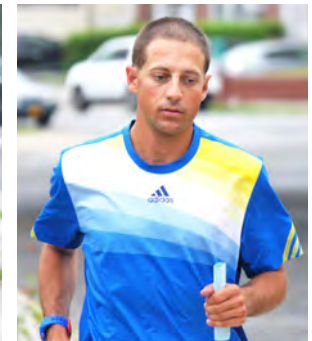
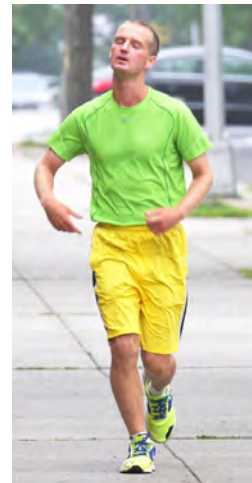


Surasa

halfway, he laughs then makes an interesting sighing sound. He then relates a story about a ultramarathon in Vinnitsa, Ukraine, "Vasu's mother came to the race and blessed the runners and I saw the finish line at that time. I felt this line deep in my heart. I did not see it with my eyes, but felt it with my heart."

Like all the runners here, Yuri has had to endure much. The sun, the heat, the blisters and also the feeling of being alone out on the Course with his problems. "It was very hard. But when I feel my oneness with Sri Chinmoy deep in my heart I have a most intense inspiration-experience."

Yuri tells me that he experiences a special feeling at the location where Sri Chinmoy used to visit on the Race Course. He says, "A warm and gentle strength is still there." He continues and says, "I prayed and prayed for many years to be in this Race, but I had no money to afford to be able to come



Above, Sopan shows off a new shirt

At left, Ashprihanal flying around the Course

here. Now I feel as though God has big Ears, like an elephant, and hears all my intense prayers. Now that I am here running I feel that God is now Smiling and Smiling at me."

*God does not want me
To think of what will take place
A thousand years from now.
He wants me only to think of today —
Nay, this very moment.*

— Sri Chinmoy, excerpt from
"Seventy-Seven Thousand Service-Trees,
Part 42" (Agni Press, 2005)

A view of the

17th Annual



Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race

Day 29

Prologue To Heat Wave II

By Sahishnu, 14 July 2013 (evening)

www.3100.ws/blog

On a simmering hot, sunny day in New York, the running track around the neighborhood became a testing ground for new hats, attained knowledge and skill in pacing the heat. As the HHI tended towards three figures, the group of 12 runners were led by Sarvagata Ukrainskyi who reached 68.05 miles. He sported a new straw hat that the surfing crowd have been seen in, as well as a doo-rag or two. He was followed by Ashprihanal Aalto who logged 67.5 miles in an assortment of bamboo headgear and Chinese rice paddy hats that are light, airy and protective. The distaff side went with conventional ball caps and cricket caps, resplendent with ice packets on the head and even on the wrist. Nidhrvi Zimmermann led the ladies with 62.01 miles. Everyone stopped to splash cold water on the face and neck, and tested the kitchen's drinks made with lime, peppermint, lemon and blended honey and tamarind. With five more days to go for this slow moving pressure system, the runners have reduced expectations but have highlighted hydration and salt replacement carefully. Stay cool...

Become A Better Instrument

By Utpal

<http://perfectionjourney.org>

14 July 2013 (morning)

This is a shortened version of the article, please visit the website for the full version

"It is going to be very interesting. I hope we survive it." Pranjal is talking about the relentless weather forecast today and the next 5 or 6 days.

It is as though nature is playing a cruel trick on the runners of the Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race. They have been battling the heat and humidity

off and on for the past four weeks, but now it will become one long, endless sauna. It is a weather pattern that happens predictably though every summer here and is something that any runner who has ever done this Race has had to deal with and find a way to overcome it.

The real adversary in this weather mix is the humidity. While many of the runners routinely experience high temperatures in their own countries they likely don't have the addition of such unbearable levels of humidity. With high humidity one's perspiration does not



The starting line on Day 29:
A good friend of the race has donated hats that he feels will help the runners better deal with the heat





Pranjal labours under the hot sun



Tanuja brings out snacks for the runners



Sarah moving and progressing towards a self-transcendence goal

evaporate and the body's natural cooling system doesn't function. Most of us simply head into the shade, sit down, and have a cold drink. But when you still have 1,347 more miles to go — like Pranjal — this is not a realistic option.

Sarah has began the Race with some foot problems and this morning she tries some old fashioned shoe sole repairs by adding paper towels. She laughs and says that she got the tip from Ashprihanal. "He said it was high technology. He rolls up bits of paper and puts it under his arch of his shoe. It is actually very good and it is very soft."

Sarah says, "I had some orthotics made for my heel injury before I came — but they seem to change something else in my posture. So then something else goes out. I don't like anything that will change your running style. I think it is too intense all of a sudden. Anyway, the paper towel seems to be doing well."

For the past week Sarah has known that completing the full distance of 3,100 miles before the Race ends on 6 August is just not possible. Instead, she has set her sites on simply continuing in the Race and finding self-transcendence ways that are unique and personal for her alone. She says, "I still get moments when I am disappointed. But then I think, 'it is my first [3,100 mile] race, and so whatever happens, happens.'" She adds, "There are moments, like last night and this morning, when the injury felt real good. So I have moments when I can run. I keep reminding myself how special this Race is. Whatever happens — it is a blessing to be here."



A little early morning humour

Sopan has an unusual dilemma. When he wears his orthotics his body alignment is corrected but it hurts his blister. When he doesn't wear the orthotic, his blister doesn't bother him but he looks almost as though he is crippled. "I can wear them but the blister has to heal first." Consequently, he says "My running has suffered so much. I fight so hard and by the end of the day I am still behind." He still managed 108 laps yesterday.

Sopan has had back problems for the past two years and he feels that the orthotics have helped correct the issue. His hips become level with their use. He is amazed at the transformation they bring to his running style. "It is huge. I can't believe it." So he is really excited when he is able to wear them.

He says of Ashprihanal, "he helps me a lot. We are really good friends." This morning they performed a very short

joke for the Enthusiasm Awakeners (singers who come out every morning). Sopan relates the joke: "The duck wanted to buy something and when I ask him what, he says 'Quackers'. So I tell him I have Quackers in my shop." Then, when Sopan then asks the duck how he will pay for them, Ashprihanal says "put it on my bill".

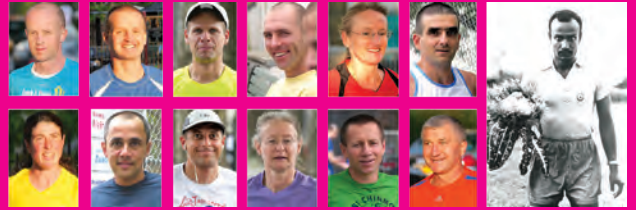
They both really enjoyed performing the joke. "It takes your mind in a different direction."

The straw hat he is wearing now he really likes because he can put ice under it. Luckily he says, "I don't mind the heat. I can take the heat." But the humidity and the rain and low pressure are another matter. "It makes you dizzy. You become so sensitive after being out here for so many days. You can feel it."

By always moving and progressing toward a goal, you not only become a better runner but you also become a better instrument of God.

— Sri Chinmoy, excerpt from "The Outer Running And The Inner Running" (Agni Press, 1974)

A view of the 17th Annual



Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race

Tree Of Life

By Utpal
<http://perfectionjourney.org>
15 July 2013 (morning)

This is a shortened version of the article, please visit the website for the full version

We don't know precisely when it pushed forth its first deep red bud or unfurled its first handful of leaves and felt the sun beckoning it to reach up and grow high into the sky. We can speculate, however, that some time in the early 1970s a tiny, spindly Japanese Maple

sapling was placed into a pot in a nursery somewhere in Connecticut. It likely was among many others neatly lined up in a long, straight row that stretched out across a field. Perhaps it grew there for many years, gathering strength from the earth and the sun and maybe even, ever so gradually, gathering some small sense of where it would one day

eventually grow. But we cannot truly speculate or divine that a tree sees or knows such things. But for this Japanese Maple a destiny was surely calling it. The passing of time would one day prove this to be true.

Then one day, in 1975, when it was mature enough to go out on its own, a gardener came by and selected it alone amongst all the rest. This Maple made its way to Queens and there, in a small brief ceremony, it was planted on October 11th. A date which now, these many years later, holds other poignant thoughts and memories for many of us.

Sri Chinmoy himself planted the tree that day. If you look ever so closely at the picture you can just make out a little paper sign that reads, "In Honor of Sri Chinmoy's 100,000 Jharna-Kala Paintings". An achievement that had actually taken place earlier that month on October 3rd.

No plaque marks this tree now to tell this story. Nevertheless, it has grown



Photo by Bhashwar / 11 Oct 1975

Day 30

A Month Gone By

By Sahishnu, 15 July 2013 (evening)
www.3100.ws/blog

Day 2 of the Heat Wave II (the sequel) had mid-nineties temps and nary a breeze but that did not stop the determined Sarvagata Ukrainskyi from running 68.6 miles before calling it a day. Seven runners passed 60+ miles including Ashprihanal Aalto and Atmavir Spacil, who also happened to pass the imaginary 2,000 mile mark. These two, plus Mr. Ukrainskyi, are setting the standard high, even in the grips of a heat-induced weather trauma for the city that never sleeps. Nidhruvi Zimmerman climbed to within two laps of being on pace, and is running well and inspired. After a month on the 'road' the runners are still chuggin' and it sure is inspirin'. More later folks.

Ashprihanal Aalto:

2000 miles = 29 days+02:06:07

Atmavir Spacil:

2000 miles = 29 days+17:40:08





The Japanese Maple tree bears witness to many activities, including singing and running



Nidhruvi



Sarvagata

stronger and more beautiful each of the 38 years it has been here.

It has been a silent witness to countless events — some great and small; some sad, no doubt; and, hopefully, many more that were joyous and wonderful. We know, at the very least, that for the past 17 summers it has been a bright sentinel on guard in front of the school as the Self-Transcendence 3,100 Mile Race passed back and forth on the sidewalk so close by — catching a brief gaze of the runners as they pass.

We do not know what Sri Chinmoy said that day as he placed his hands upon its leaves and offered it his own unique sweet blessing. Sri Chinmoy blessed and affected so many throughout his life and many, in turn, continue to reach out and inspire the world around it. This Japanese Maple, now so much more grand and beautiful, continues to inspire those who pass it by. Whether it be the students and teachers trudging back and forth to school or the twelve runners who circle around and around it again and again, each and every day.

The tree of life can never be separated from the tree of love. The tree of love can never be separated from the tree of realisation. The tree of realisation can never be separated from the tree of transcendental perfection.

— Sri Chinmoy, excerpt from *“Arise! Awake! Thoughts Of A Yogi”* (Agni Press, 1972)



Ashprihanal moves to the street to avoid the crowd of students who seem unaware of the great achievements of this great runner (maybe its the hat)



Ashprihanal has heard all the jokes but likes his “great hat”

Ashprihanal says that he has narrowed down his hat options to two. “I like this one and that one.” He has one that looks like a lampshade and he says that even though people are making fun of it he likes it. “It is good to have some joy.” Though after many days of chiding he says the comments are, “not funny for me anymore. But it is a great hat.”

Earlier today Ashprihanal crossed the 2,000 mile mark. It is the twelfth time he has completed this distance in this Race throughout the years. Without overstatement Ashprihanal says, “Twelve times. That is pretty good. Today I have got two-thirds done — one third to go. The really nice thing is when you have under 700 miles to go. Then you think ‘if I am close to doing 70 miles a day then it is like nine days more! Then eight days... then seven days... That is kind of nice.”

He tells me, “I am looking forward to doing some mountain climbing and

rock climbing. I would like to climb a few nice mountains. That is like my other goal. One goal

is to run these races and the other is to climb some Sri Chinmoy Peace-Blossom mountains. I like adventures, all my life I have liked adventures.”

Ashprihanal adds that “this block is becoming a familiar adventure” and “twelve years is a lot of one block” and that “nowadays, I feel like I need some change.” Nonetheless, he says, “I still love it. The thing is that here you make so much progress. It is a struggle — but it is good. Sri Chinmoy really liked this Race and he used to come here three times a day. It is a great place to make progress.”

*A single breathless act of surrender
Has granted him
A beautiful dream-tree,
A soulful truth-tree
And a fruitful love-tree.*

— Sri Chinmoy, excerpt from *“Twenty-Seven Thousand Aspiration-Plants, Part 4”* (Agni Press, 1983)

Days 21-30 ... see page 27 for Days 1-10; and page 49 for Days 11-20

please confirm these numbers with the official daily statistics at <http://3100.srichinmoyraces.org/3100-results-2013>

Runner (alphabetical by first name)	Day 21	Day 22	Day 23	Day 24	Day 25	Day 26	Day 27	Day 28	Day 29	Day 30	Runners per day average (Days 1-30)
Ananda-Lahari Zuscin	1194.74	1242.48	1299.56	1363.77	1417.00	1476.27	1520.72	1570.12	1617.31	1663.96	55.5
Ashprihanal Aalto	1435.11	1505.36	1576.15	1646.40	1712.80	1783.05	1853.30	1923.54	1991.05	2052.51	68.4
Atmavir Spacil	1401.09	1470.24	1540.48	1610.73	1676.58	1742.99	1808.84	1874.70	1937.26	2000.92	66.7
Baladev Saraz	1199.68	1246.87	1298.46	1354.99	1406.57	1463.10	1516.33	1575.06	1631.58	1690.30	56.3
Nidhruvi Zimmerman	1235.90	1297.36	1358.83	1420.29	1480.66	1542.68	1603.59	1664.51	1726.52	1787.44	59.6
Pranjal Milovnik	1337.43	1399.99	1465.30	1528.96	1591.52	1655.73	1718.84	1783.05	1845.61	1908.18	63.6
Sarah Barnett	1136.56	1188.15	1240.84	1280.90	1331.94	1382.98	1423.59	1471.33	1515.24	1564.63	52.2
Sarvagata Ukrainskyi	1376.39	1438.40	1510.85	1572.86	1629.94	1698.54	1753.42	1814.33	1882.38	1950.98	65.0
Sopan Tsekov	1241.93	1303.40	1365.41	1426.33	1476.82	1531.70	1586.58	1645.85	1703.48	1760.55	58.7
Surasa Mairer	1301.75	1363.22	1424.68	1485.60	1547.62	1609.63	1670.55	1731.46	1792.93	1853.85	61.8
Vasu Duzhiy	1392.85	1455.42	1516.88	1581.09	1644.20	1707.87	1773.17	1838.48	1902.69	1967.45	65.6
Yuri Trostenyuk	1348.95	1404.38	1462.55	1521.82	1580.54	1642.01	1704.02	1764.39	1825.86	1884.58	62.8

Total mileage for the 12 runners in 30 days: 22,085.35

- Day's top mileage, men
- Day's top mileage, women

Did you know?
There are more great photos
and recorded interviews
with the runners on the
web version of these pages!



Atmavir is one of two men who have reached 2,000 miles already in 30 days of running



Sarvagata takes a moment to greet a visitor



Baladev plays around



Feet have to be attended to



Vasu gets creative with his head-gear

Scenes around the Course ... so much more to do than just run



Sarah, Surasa and Nidhruvi sort out their shoes before the 6am start



Ashprihanal gives Sopan a helping hand



Two great runners from Vienna, Surasa and Nidhruvi



Sri Chinmoy seems to be happy that Ananda-Lahari is staying hydrated



Ashprihanal stretches his muscles upon arriving for the long day of running



Surasa also gets a helping hand ...



Baladev brings laundry to Rupantar who will arrange it to be cleaned



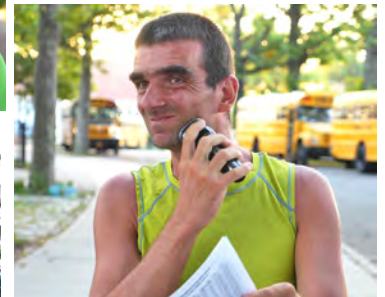
... and so does Yuri



Rijuta watches while Bhadra and Karabi find the right tools for their counting shift



Vajra and Vasu recite the Prayer of the Day



Pranjal wastes no time by shaving on the Course



Yuri and Pranjal signal to the counters across a crowded sidewalk



Samahita tends to the flower gardens



Nidhruvi shows off a faxed message of encouragement



Helpers Vasavi and Silvy