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## Local - Contra Costa Times

# 'Hugging Saint' runs huge relief effort

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*By Linda Davis* *By Linda Davis, CONTRA COSTA TIMES*

CASTRO VALLEY - While Indian spiritual leader Amma, known worldwide as "the Hugging Saint," directs relief efforts in south India's villages, her Bay Area followers work feverishly to ship thousands of pounds of medical supplies to the stricken area.

Volunteers and donations of supplies or cash are needed for the Indian tsunami relief effort, say followers of Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi or "Amma."

Amma is asking for help, but she has also pledged \$23 million to rebuild homes destroyed by the tsunami, the largest private relief donation in India, said Dayamrita Chaitanya, director of the M.A. Center in Castro Valley.