

GSC Times - Spring Newsletter



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GSC President's Message

Coming to America 25 years ago, I have some great memories of our Samaj helping make that transition a little bit smoother, a little bit easier. At the time, we didn't have Facebook or Twitter or WhatsApp like we do today, so the events our Samaj put together really gave us a chance to meet and see each other throughout the year.

A lot has changed over the years and our Samaj has grown since then, but one thing remains the same: we've maintained the traditions that bring us together throughout the year. We have a great foundation in place, and I am looking forward to keeping the tradition going, by putting together some great events with my committee.



My focus over the next two years is simple, and that is to bring the community together through the events we will put together during the year. We'll have fun, share a few laughs together, and enjoy each other's company.

We will continue to build on our values and tradition, help support the younger generation, and remain involved in the community.

We will accomplish these goals by helping each other, participating in cultural events and activities, getting involved

in the community by putting food drives together to help the needy and volunteering at the local mandir or partnering with other organizations that can use our help. We will work together, take it one step at a time, and lend a helping hand whenever needed.

Let's work together to not only help GSC succeed but also help our community succeed.

- **Keyur Ghayal**

Picnic Food Drive

Hunger is more prevalent now than ever in America. Studies show that 1 in 7 Americans rely on food banks to feed themselves.

As responsible members of our community, GSC will be hosting a Food Drive during the picnic in July to help

those in need. Please bring non-perishable food items that you'd like to donate to the picnic in July. These items can include canned vegetables, soups, meats, as well as dry cereal, whole grain pasta, rice, etc.

We have partnered with a

local food shelter that will accept our food donation. Let's all do our part and bring at least one item so we can lend our support to those who are hungry and need our help.

-**Keyur Ghayal**

Health Topic: American Stroke Awareness

What is Stroke?

A stroke, sometimes called a brain attack, occurs when a blockage stops the flow of blood to the brain or when a blood vessel in or around the brain bursts. Although many people think of stroke as a condition that affects only older adults, strokes can and do occur in people of all ages. In fact, nearly a quarter of all strokes occur in people younger than 65.

Key Facts of Stroke:

- Every 40 seconds someone has a stroke
- Leading cause of Disability in the U.S.

- 1 out of 6 people will suffer a Stroke in his or her lifetime
- Stroke is the #5th cause of Death in the U.S.

So what can we do?

Remember F.A.S.T.:

- **F**: face drooping
- **A**: arm weakness
- **S**: speech difficulty
- **T**: time to call 911

Be ready to spot signs and act by calling 9-1-1. This might help make the difference between life and death or between full recovery and permanent disability.

Despite the tremendous toll stroke takes, the vast majority of Americans do not think of stroke as a major health concern. And one in three Americans is unable to identify all the F.A.S.T. stroke warning signs.

We need to make more people aware that stroke threatens millions of American lives, young and old, male and female, from every background. At the same time, stroke is largely preventable, treatable and beatable.

- Hiral Gandhi



Community Service Day: Shree Jalaram Mandir Partnership

Gandhi Samaj of Chicago is excited to organize the annual community service day with a partnership with Shree Jalaram Mandir in Hoffman Estates.

We are looking for volunteers to provide their time and help the mandir in August, as they host the "Shrimad Bhagvat Katha" at the mandir.

The GSC CSD event will be held on August 14th.

Here are the event details:



We encourage members to sign up for this event on the GSC website and during Picnic. Additional information will be on Facebook and in the summer flyer.

Since a number of our members attend this mandir, this is a great way to help out and volunteer. Please reach out to committee members with any questions.

- Keyur Ghayal

Reflection on Diwali Program

Gandhi Samaj of Chicago hosted its 31st Annual Diwali Program on November 14th at Maine East High School in Park Ridge, IL. As I reflect back on the 2015 Diwali program, most of you would agree that this function was just as exciting as the ones that were hosted in the past. The event started with Social hour accompanied by Indian

Cuisine dinner and followed by our cultural program.

Cultural program touched everyone's hearts as imaginations of performers showcased their talents. Program started by a small prayer followed with American & Indian National Anthems. The children and adults of Gandhi Community

performed Classical and Bollywood Dance, songs and many other talents.

This function requires efforts from both team members as well as participants to make this event successful and enjoyable. Thanks to all of the participants in 2015, and we are looking forward to another great event in 2016!

- Bhumika V. Gandhi



Importance of Pooja Ghar/Prayer Room in our House

Most Indian homes have a prayer room or altar. A lamp is lit and the Lord worshipped each day. Other spiritual practices like *japa* - repetition of the Lord's name, meditation, *paaraayana* - reading of the scriptures, prayers, and devotional singing etc. are also done here.

Special worship is done on auspicious occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, festivals and the like. Each member of the family -

young or old - communes with and worships the Divine here.

Just as we would house an important guest in the best comfort, so too we facilitate the Lord's presence in our homes by having a prayer room or altar, which is, at all times, kept clean and well-decorated. To remind us that He resides in our homes with us, we have prayer rooms. Without the grace of the Lord, no task can be successfully or easily

accomplished. We invoke His grace by communing with Him in the prayer room each day and on special occasions.

Spiritual thoughts and vibrations accumulated through regular meditation, worship and chanting done there pervade the prayer room. Even when we are tired or agitated, by just sitting in the prayer room for a while, we feel calm, rejuvenated and spiritually uplifted.

– Roma Bhagat



Upcoming Indian Festivals

Important 2016 Dates:

- Sravana – Begins July 20th
- Nag Panchmi - August 7th
- Raksha Bhandhan - August 18th
- Krishna Janmashtami - August 25th

Sravana – Begins July 20th

Sravana begins on the new moon and is the fifth month of the year. *Sravan* is the fifth month of the Hindu calendar year. This is the 2nd month of *Varsha* (rainy) season. *Sravana* (jupaka) is considered to be a holy month

in the Hindu calendar due to the many festivals that are celebrated during this time.

Nag Panchami

Nag Panchami is celebrated in many parts of India on the fifth day after Amavasya of *Sraavana* month. The snake god *NAG* is worshiped. The last day of the *Shraavana* is celebrated as *POLA*, where the *BULL* is worshiped by farmers from Maharashtra.

Raksha Bandhan

The festival of brothers and sisters, is celebrated on *Sraavana Poornima* (Full Moon).

Krishan Janmashtami

It marks the birth of *KRISHNA*, and falls on the 8th day after the full moon. It is celebrated with great delight across the world.

– Roma Bhagat



Youth Corner: Youth Career Planning Seminar

On Sunday, January 31st, 2016, Gandhi Samaj of Chicago hosted its 2nd annual Youth Career Planning Seminar. The event was put together with the contribution from committee members and the many qualified professionals who shared their expertise and knowledge with us.

The purpose of this seminar was to educate, inspire and inform high school students and their families of career aspirations through planning, preparing, and organizing for their next stage in educational development. The seminar included students from Skokie, Evanston, Batavia, Geneva, and Schaumburg.

Overall, it was an informative event for our community.

In order to strengthen our vision, we constantly seek feedback to help maintain the success of our seminar. Please feel free to inform GSC committee of your suggestions!

– Hiren Ghayal



**Gandhi Samaj of Chicago
– A Non-Profit
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section 501 (c)(3) of IRS**

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Gandhi Samaj-Chicago

Comments/Feedback?

Write to us at:

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In Memoriam

Gandhi Samaj of Chicago acknowledges family members of our community who have lost their loved ones during the past 6 months (October 2015 – March 2016).

Thakordas Pardiwala (Husband of Taraben Pardiwala)
Passed away on – November 16, 2015

Thakorlal Chunilal Gandhi (Husband of Savitaben Gandhi)
Passed away on – January 16, 2016, Age – 78 years

Chandanben Devchandbhai Gajjar (Wife of Late Shree Devchandbhai Gajjar (Navsari))
Passed away on – March 31st 2016, Age – 92 years

Note: Please email information about your immediate family who passed away in Chicago to gandhisamajchicago1984@gmail.com or via our website in order to broadcast information to the GSC members in Chicago about funeral and besnu.

Matrimonial Advertisement – Vinay Mehta

USA - California based, currently on H1B visa, born and raised in Mumbai, son of Shri Bharat Mohanlal Mehta and Bharati Mehta invites matrimonial proposal for their son Vinay Mehta – Age 29 (DOB Sept, 23, 1986). Vinay has completed Masters in Telecom Engineering from NEU- Boston, MA and is currently working with reputed company CISCO Systems, San Jose, CA. He has been in US for the past 7 yrs. His elder sister is married and resides in Dallas, TX.

If interested, please send your daughter's biodata and pictures to:
Contact: bmehta60@yahoo.co.in OR vinaybmehta@gmail.com
Phone : +91 9321023224 (India) - Bharat Mehta
: 770-241-4182 (USA - Vinay)
: 404-862-5541 (Hetalben - Elder Sister)

GSC Donations

Diwali Donors

We would like to "Thank" our donors for their donations during Diwali Program and YCP Seminar.

1. Sunil Shah (NY Life)
2. Syed Hussaini (Wintrust Bank)
3. Jitendra R. Gandhi
4. Ketan Baman
5. Jayesh Pastakia
6. Jigar Parikh (Sai Saffron)

Donations for Picnic

As you know, we are dependent on donation from generous members like you for various items for Picnic and related events. Without your continued support, our events would not be as successful. Thank you!

This year we are looking for sponsors/donors for following items.

- Tea
- Ice-cream
- Kids Toys /Juice
- Soda

GSC Accepts Credit Card

We would like to "Thank" our members for their overwhelming support of payment via credit card on the website and at the Diwali venue last year.

A "Big Thanks" to all volunteers for their help during 2015 Picnic, Navratri and Diwali.



**Remember –
You can donate**

Online

too!