



Gayatri Gyan Kendra of Long Island

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A thank you note~

As editor of my last issue of the GGKLI newspaper I share with you mixed emotions. College is around the corner with lots of excitement and nervousness. Yet I am sad to leave my GGKLI family. I have had a chance to grow as a GGKLI student and then as a GGKLI volunteer. I want to thank everyone who made the newspaper club possible: the students, parents, and teachers. As editor of the Newspaper Club for the past several years I owe a great deal to Pragna Auntie and Pravin Uncle for the opportunity to share all the wonderful stories, news, students' achievements, and fun & games our students have worked on. I hope the newspaper club continues to stay strong and enjoyed by all. My time here as truly been memorable and I will miss my GGKLI family very much.

With love,
Priyanka Mehta

GGKLI's Summer Art Competition

By Prisha Arora

My name is Prisha Arora and I was involved in organizing the summer 'On-the-Spot' Art contest. A lot of hard work was put in to make this competition happen.

We started off with coming up with a design and structure of the fundraiser. I was in charge of making the flyers.

We coordinated with Manor farm, where the event was to be held.

The actual advertising part was the most difficult part. Two weeks before the contest, only ten people had signed up. At that moment, everyone was stressed not knowing if we would have to reschedule or even cancel the event.

Meanwhile, we had to arrange drinks and prizes for the participants. We went to an Indian grocery store - Maharaja Farmer's market. The owner of the store, Tony, generously donated crates of Mazza mango juice for the contestants and their families.

For the prizes, we were looking for sponsors to supply gift cards. After persistent calling and visiting various stores and restaurants, we finally found two locations that would provide the gift cards to us. Stop and Shop and Pf Chang's were kind enough to provide support our cause.

Now, it was about two weeks before the competition, August 6th, India Day. We distributed flyers at the India day parade in the hope to get more people to sign up. All the proceeds from the contest were to benefit the Manor farm, in Huntington, and were to be used for development of the farm.

The day of the fundraiser was the most hectic day. In the morning, we gathered all the things and packed into our car. Aside from that, people were still calling us to sign up for the art competition. We finally got there about two hours before the event was about to begin. Setting up was very hard on the hot summer day, but we managed to make it through with all the kind help we received.

The theme for the artists was "anything summer". All the participants displayed astounding artwork. During the 90 minutes that the competitors had to work on their paintings, friends and families were occupied with a sunflower maze, and many hiking trails at the Manor farm.

The judging procedure was another boulder we stumbled upon. Deciding what aspects the painting should be evaluated on was challenging. Our judges were extremely considerate to take their time out of their day and give their full attention towards this art contest. A senior local artist, Lilith Jones, Ranjan auntie and Shimona Agrawal were the honorable judges for the event.

In the end, this fundraiser was an exhilarating, joyous and a great learning experience and I encourage everyone to step forward to take their time to contribute to our community.



OUR AWGP CAMP EXPERIENCES

By Roshni Patel

For the past few years my sister and I have attended the All World Gayatri Pariwar Youth Camp. Overall, they have been great experiences and I wouldn't trade it for the world. I met many knowledgeable people and have learned many things. Dr. Chimayo Pandya and Dr. Pranav Pandya, are both global messengers of Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya's vision of bright future.

I have gone to three camps, each in different places: Wisconsin, New York and Canada. Each camp had a different theme. For example one theme was "Hum Badlenge, Yug Badlega: Hum Sudhrenge, Yug Sudhrega", which means that if we change ourselves then the world will also change and if we better ourselves then the world will better itself. Another theme was "To ask is the key", meaning that if we are curious and ask questions about life or overall experiences, we will succeed.

Each camp lasted three to four days, containing a different schedule for each person attending the camp. Overall, we were all taught the same ideas because the classes surrounded the theme of the camp.

My favorite part of the camp was when everyone came together into one big room and we all got to hear Dr. Pranav Pandya and Dr. Chinmaya Pandya share their knowledge and all of us got to ask questions about anything, including life itself. I was very happy to attend these classes because I learned so much and I was able to make so many new friends. I hope to keep attending these camps in the future with my friends and family.

By Chandni Patel

I have gone to three All World Gayatri Pariwar camps with my sister and cousin and it was an amazing experience. I learned many things, like being able to live independently and not have to rely on parents for help, and I have learned from the knowledge of Dr. Pranav Pandya and Dr. Chinmaya Pandya. Each year we went there was a different schedule given to everyone. My schedule usually consisted of two sessions of culture class and one session of a choice class, where I got to choose which class I wanted to attend. It was usually a class in a form of art, dancing or drawing. I was very happy to attend these classes because I learned so much and I was able to make so many new friends. Every morning we had to wake up early and attend yoga, taught by a professional yoga instructor. In the end of the day before dinner everyone usually gathered in big room where we all participated in Aarti performed by Dr. Pranav Pandya.

My favorite part about going to camp was having the honor to meet Dr. Pranav Pandya and Dr. Chinmaya Pandya, which is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Also, I, as well as the rest of the camp, were able to touch their feet before we left to show our respect towards them. I would never have gotten the chance to meet them if it wasn't for this amazing camp. I am truly grateful.



Innovation and Entrepreneurship Club: Inaugural Year

By: Sejal Gupta

A common man dreams of doing something big, while an entrepreneur makes that dream into reality. Do you want to be the next Steve Jobs or Bill Gates? Do you want to produce the next innovative product? Do you want to make new friends and work with them to create cool things? Innovation and Entrepreneurship Club is the place to be!



Last year, I founded the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Club. My goal is to spark creativity, innovation and let students think outside of the box. My purpose is to get kids, at an early age, to start thinking like an entrepreneur because I believe that kids, who start learning these skills at an earlier age, have an advantage over other students who didn't get the same exposure. It's never too early to start thinking like an entrepreneur!

So how did Innovation and Entrepreneurship Club begin? The year before, during Annual Day, I was watching all these other students, who opened up clubs, share their story. This inspired me to open up this club. Over the summer, with the help of my parents and other GGKLI volunteers, I decided what we would do. During club enrollment, I was hoping to get at least 10 students to sign up for my club. When I pitched my idea to parents and students, I ended up getting 45 students to sign up!! It was a huge success. The students, also known as entrepreneurs, were divided into three groups. Throughout the year, they were taught various topics; entrepreneurs learned how to build 3D structures from 2D pictures (with the use of KEVA planks), how to build bridges (from wood and straws), how the Stock Market works and they invested with virtual money into stocks, how to build circuits and how electricity flows through objects (with Electronic Snap Circuits), how to encode and decrypt codes with keys, robotics (with EV3, BB8, Little Bits and Arduino) and how to build their own blog. They also learned how a computer works through plastic cups and programming. The kindergarteners were able to learn similar topics to what the eighth graders learned and all students faced challenges, even the parents were puzzled!!!

This club not only allowed others to learn, but I learned a lot as well. Firstly, I learned that it takes a great deal of time and effort to create a lesson. Every Saturday before the class, I remember having to stay up until at least 12am just to get all of the lessons ready for the next day. Secondly, I witnessed how students learn in different ways. For instance, I remember teaching the cryptography lesson and some students understood the lesson visually while others had to use the cipher wheels on their own to understand it. Lastly, I, myself, learned many of the topics I taught, in much more depth. For instance, I knew a couple of things about circuits; however, during the discussion of this topic, I understood circuit building in a much more understandable way. I experienced so much through this club. By far, the most fascinating one was the way a child looks after he or she finally understands something that you taught. It is the best feeling to see the light go off and the way they say "oh I get it." It gives you satisfaction unlike no other.

Last year, I had a great time teaching the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Club at GGKLI. Entrepreneurs had lots of fun learning these topics with their friends. With this club, new friendships formed, laughter was in the air, smiles on faces and we had a great time! I know for sure I did! Everyone learned so much and I am looking forward to another great year. I want to thank all the people who volunteered to help make this club possible.



The Interview Corner

By Arjun Mehta

Parents and students who attend GGKLI know Pragna Patel as our Sunday morning moderator. Pragna Auntie, as we students call her, teaches Group 7 Culture, Group 7 Team building, and Story Time to our youngest students. This is my first year having her as my culture teacher. She makes our culture class very special since each class starts off with one of her inspiring stories. Every class I feel I learn something valuable or a life lesson.

You may not know that this is her 11th year here at GGKLI as a voluntary teacher. Outside GGKLI, she has been a teacher for over 28 years. She is presently a 2nd grade school teacher at Mills Pond Elementary where she has been for the past 10 years. Asked about her family she says: I have two wonderful daughters with Gurudev's grace, Bianca and Hannah. Bianca graduated from Duke and is now doing her masters at John Hopkins and Hannah is at Penn State. Himansu has been an amazing, supportive husband who quietly helps out with many things at GGKLI. Himansu's parents live with us and that helps my daughters to imbibe Indian Culture values in their lives.

Pragna Auntie recently took an amazing trip to a Himalayan Pilgrimage site. She shared some of her experiences with us in class. She even came home with a special gift for each of us- a book entitled: "My Life. It Legacy and Message" (The autobiography of Pandit Shiram Sharm Acharya).

I had a chance to interview her on her special travel abroad:

1. Auntie- Please share what was this trip about and what inspired you to go?

I was always fascinated by the Himalaya even when I was in school. I wanted to desperately visit the places in deep Himalayan mountains, as I knew the great yogis, rishi's, and saints live there.

This trip was part of special Sadhana shivir which was for 5 days where you contemplate on the deeper meaning of your life.

2. Where exactly in the Himalayas did you go and how hard was it physically to get there?

I went to the place called Munsiyari. Munsiyari is the name of a small town, a Tehsil and Sub Division in the Pithoragarh District in the hill-state of Uttarakhand, India.

It lies at the base of the great Himalayan mountain range, at an elevation of about 2,200 m (7,200 ft) and is a starting point of various treks into the interior of the range.

The journey itself was difficult as it takes two days to reach there from Haridwar. You have to travel on curvy mountains with narrow roads and steep mountains. Also, the trip from USA to Delhi to Dehradun to Haridwar takes up almost two days.

Art Club

By Shimona Agarwal

Pablo Picasso once said that "Every child is an artist," and he was right. I've been running the art club for a couple of years now and there's nothing more satisfying than seeing each student have fun and learn something new about art in each class.

During each class the kids learn to either draw or do a craft with step by step instructions. They've learned how to make origami balloons, create tie dye peacocks, draw Mickey Mouse, and much more. By doing these projects, the students increase their sense of fulfillment while having fun! Nothing is more exciting then to see their idea come visible on paper. They share their materials amongst each other which is a teaching in social skills in an indirect way. The club starts at 9:00 am in the morning before regular GGKLI classes start and in my experience I have always seen kids keen and excited to show their work later to their parents and friends. It is a club I am proud of and one that the students and I love since making art always brings a smile to our faces.

3. Where did you stay, how long you were you there, and what kind of accommodations and food did you have?

I stayed at Gayatri Chetna Kendra. All the walls in the Chetna Kendra facing the Himalaya are made of glass. From these windows you can get the view of Panchchuli peaks which are called the five fingers of Lord Shiva. During sunrise these mountains shine like silver and gold giving amazing contentment, serenity and peace. The rooms are beautiful made of special wood which would help to keep you warm during cool months. It had everything you need to be comfortable including attached bathrooms like USA with showers and hot water which is a luxury.

The food was so delicious. It was special diet you had to follow which was satvik without masala. We could drink special herbal drink called pragya pay and eat sprouted grains for breakfast without salt. For lunch there was fresh green vegetable, roti and rice and for dinner Dalits with vegetables in it.

4. Please describe a typical day from morning to night.

I was attending a five days saadhna Anushthan Shivir with 21 people. Two people shared one room. The instructions for sadhna was broadcasted through speakers installed in rooms.

We had a schedule which we had to follow strictly and we were asked to observe silence when possible so that you can focus more on your inner self. We had to wake up at 4:30 and you did Atma Bodh sadhana and you were guided by Jiji's instructions. You had reflect on the new day as a new birth and plan out your day. You had to write your thoughts in the diary. After that you had time to freshen up and come for Yoga. After that there was time to do Japa (Chanting Gayatri Mantra) facing the sun, meditation, listening to the lectures of Gurudev. At 10:30 it was lunch time and after that time to study good books and contemplating on those thoughts and reflecting on what you can imbibe in your life and how. Next there was time to volunteer and clean your room, ashram or the roadways. Next again there was dhyana, japa, lectures and then evening arti and singing bhajans and lectures by the group leader. Next there was dinner and time to do Tatvabodh Bodh sadhana.

5. Who else attended? Were there any young kids?

There were 21 other people from all over India. Kids are not allowed as this is for sadhana.

6. Did the experience change you and why?

Yes, you definitely come back with a unique experience and treasure the moments you spend there. I also came with some steps I need to take to make myself better and how I can help all the students that I have the good fortune to interact with.

The natural environment of this place gives an incredible experience of divinity. It gives an opportunity to do sadhna and to experience insight in an environment away from worldly clamor like Rishi-Munis. It helps to practice in order to endure living with nature's harshness. The feeling of being on top of the summit, gives realization of one's greatness and immensity.

7. Do you feel you met your goal on this trip?

Yes. Absolutely. I felt so close to God and nature there. I also contemplated on goals in my life and what I could do to achieve them.

8. Would you recommend this pilgrimage to others and why?

In absence of sadhna our life gets disturbed. This is the most suitable center for sadhna, where one can experience God in physical form. In Gita, Bhagwan ShreeKrishna has mentioned that amongst the physical objects, he is "Himalaya". In the Morning Meditation, Pram Pujya Gurudev gives instructions to meditate on Devatma Himalaya, which is visible from here. So yes, I would recommend this pilgrimage to others.

9. Thank you Auntie for sharing your incredible life changing experience with us. Perhaps one day we will be so lucky and blessed to share such an experience.

What message do you come home with after this experience that you want our readers to know?

The message I came home with was two fold. One for myself and how I can grow spiritually and the other was what I need to do. I want to empower all the students I work with to be the very BEST and take a pledge that no matter what they will follow the right path in life and not get attracted by the vices and will do everything possible to refine the self and then influence the society in a positive manner.



Auntie sent some beautiful pictures to share with everyone!



Kids Corner

Christmas



angel

candle



mistletoe

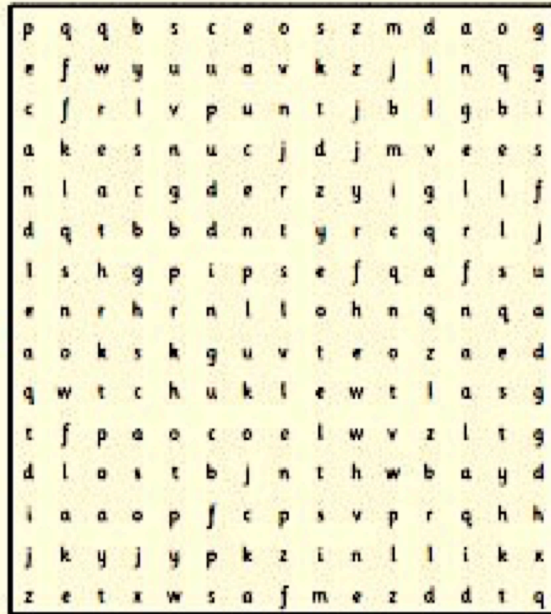
bells



pudding



snowflake



wreath

candy
cane



holly

WHAT
DO YOU
CALL
SANTA
WHEN
HE
STOPS
MOVING?

SANTA PAUSE!!

Spot the Differences!

There are 10 differences in total between these two pictures. Can you find them?

