



Gayatri Gyan Kendra of Long Island

Newspaper Editors: Priyanka Mehta, Hannah Patel, Shimona Agarwal and Jahnvi Arora

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Shanti Fund Festival

By: Jahnvi Arora

On January 30th, I had a great experience, along with sixteen of my peers, to present something at the Shanti Fund festival honoring Gandhiji and the work he did to help the Indians, and his non-violence movement. At this festival we learned non-violence through the eyes of many other religions and the varied ways they performed their presentation. Some religions sung songs, while others did short sermons. The GGKLI Drama Club had the pleasure to be able to represent the Hindus at the event. We had lots of fun there. All the children who performed did a fantastic job, as they all worked very hard for it. All of them performed a play entitled, ‘The Life of Gandhiji’, which showed the works and principles of Gandhiji. The children who participated in the performance



From Left to Right – Top to Bottom: Jahnvi Arora, Chandni Patel, Khushi Patel, Prisha Dass, Roshni Patel, Eva Surjan, Prisha Arora, Mahek Parekh, Arnab Surjan, Sruthi Potluri, Suchitha Channapatna, Ruchitha Channapatna, Kanisha Dass, Eesha Butani, Sidharth Rojinedar, Sanjaya Potluri and Reva Surjan.

learnt a lot from it. They not only learnt performing and improved their public speaking skills, but they also learnt more about their Indian culture and heritage. They realized the importance of non-violence and the impact it had on our culture. When we got to the Shanti Fund event we saw the different culture and the different heritages. We saw what peacefulness and non-violence meant for them. It really amazes me what these little children can absorb in such a short period of time. The exposure of new ideas and new religions was priceless. Having this opportunity at such a young age was truly an unforgettable experience. It gave us an irreplaceable gift – the gift of experience.

“Time is the most precious gift of life. If you love life, do not squander it in indolence.”
- Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya

Vasant Panchami Parva

By Hannah Patel

An Occasion for Rejoicing and Renewed Commitment - Gayatri Pariwar celebrates the Vasant Panchami as a spiritual birthday of its founder Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya. On the auspicious day of Vasant Panchami festival, January 18, 1926, a guru by the name of Swami Sarveshvaranand Ji - a great Himalayan yogi - appeared before him in astral body from the flame of the Dipaka (lamp) during his Gayatri worship. This sparked the revelation of the divine origin and purpose of his life which was bestowed upon him with the grace and guidance of his guru. The same lamp called AKHAND JYOTI has been lit continuously since then and is enshrined at Shantikunj, Haridwar at present. The next 24 years of his life were devoted to 24 Mahapurashcharanas -- each consisting of the rhythmic recitation (japa) of 2.4 million Gayatri Mantra with strictest of disciplines. There is no parallel to this kind of sadhana. At the same time, he also whole heartedly participated in the freedom struggle of India under the inspiring guidance of Mahatma Gandhi, while continuing with his altruistic activities for the good of the society and attending to the familial duties. Vasant Parva marks the advent of spring - surging forth of vibrant life in nature; which was lying dormant during the chilly, cold and constrictive winter. With the coming of spring the fields turn yellow with the blossoming mustard crop. The whole of nature is filled with exuberant life and laughter. In the cycles of nature's moods the joy and warmth of spring follow the bone breaking shivering cold of the winter. Nature expresses this joy in the form of multihued flowers. Advent of Vasant is a significant milestone in the cyclic journey of nature emerging from the drabness and darkness of winter to the dawn of spring. Vasant Parva is of special significance to Gayatri Pariwar. This is the holy day of Self-realization by our Guru Poojya Pandit Sriram Sharma Acharya on Vasant Parva of 1926 and we have been celebrating it as the Foundation Day of the Mission for the last Several Years. On this day lacs of Gayatri Parjan congregates at Hardwar to celebrate Vasant Panchami Festival at Shantikunj Campus with ZEAL and Devotion. Although this function is celebrated all over the world, at GGKLI we celebrated Vasant Panchami on February 2nd by doing collective chanting of ohm with Gurudev's voice. Next, deep yagya and Sarasvati Puja was performed by Mr. Pravin Kapadia and all the students whose birthdays fall this month, as representatives for the entire school. After the parva-pujan, all the students and parents offered "Gayatri Mantra" and "Maha Mritunjay Mantra" aahutis for the world peace and everyone's bright future. Mrs. Ratna Bhalla in her melodious voice sang Sarasvati Vandhana. Subsequently parijsans of Gaytri Pariwar sang Ek Tumhi Asdhar Sadaguru Bhajan to show their reverence for Gurudev, followed by the wonderful presentation on Janoi by Shrey and Shubh Thaker. There was also an informative power point presentation on Vasant Panchami. The students following the tradition of Vasant Panchami made an oath to do good service for the rest of the year by reading Satsankalps. Along with Vasant Panachmi, there was Gandhiji's Punyatheeti and Republic Day celebrations. Students enjoyed the exhibition that was presented on Sanatan Dharma by Culture Group 5 and the Republic day Parade around the Gym with the Indian flags.



Our Community, Our Responsibility

By Jahnavi Arora

Hero is a very vague word. When someone says “hero”, some may instantly think of the superheroes from cartoons, like Superman. Others think about great freedom fighters like Gandhiji or Nelson Mandela. However, I think about all the people who help our community, even if it is just picking up litter from the beaches. Everyone who helps out their society or other communities is a hero in my eyes. The number of the people who help out other people in the world, even when they themselves have a shortage of resources, it amazes me. For instance, many people give back to their society right at work. They may donate just ten or fifteen dollars a week, but it makes a difference. To us, if we donate ten dollars a week, we are not losing much. But, if we look at where our donations go to, the people receiving that contribution of ten dollars really benefit from it. The HTC (Help the Children) charity comes to many schools and offices asking for endowments that go to less fortunate place to help provide necessities like clean water and basic nutrition for kids. Many schools bring in this organization so that their students can feel the pleasure of donating money for someone less fortunate. Nevertheless, people who are on a strain of money can still give back to our community. These people can volunteer long hours to help make the world we live in a better place to live in for the future. *“Time is the greatest donation anyone can make,”* Sheryl Smith, co-founder of HTC, says. She is right, as everyone has time and we can all take out a little bit of time from our busy lives to help out our world. There are so many places where you can give back. If you love socializing with people, go to a nursing home by your house and just spend an hour or two playing games with the people there. You may not realize it, but just being with them and talking to them makes their day so much brighter. You are having fun while helping other people and putting a smile on their face. You can also use your talents when you want to volunteer. Many children and parents love to cook, so why not go to a soup kitchen to make your recipes there. The Ronald McDonald House lets children come in and cook or make crafts for the patients who have to stay there, since they have to go to the hospital across the building. Many schools bring their students that participate in the Friends for Change club to the Ronald McDonald House. It is definitely an unforgettable experience. If your school does not offer it, you can go with a bunch of friends outside of school and just schedule an appointment beforehand. It really makes you feel good. Sometimes, it is not always about you getting the latest toy or watching the new show on TV; sometimes, you feel better giving back to the community. *“Every foot has its mark on the world,”* Walt Disney.

Shivratri has come to manifest the divine form of God Mahakaal and bestow on seekers several boons. This is not an ordinary festival. This is a very rare conjunction in which those who do fasting and prayers. Those who fast on this day satisfy me and the effect of fasting is more than offering made to me in the form of bathing, clothes, flowers, incense etc. In order to benefit from this festival we should understand the subtle aspects of this festival and fasting.

The spirit behind fasting-

There are two aspects of fasting

1. Literal meaning of fasting - Withdrawal from diet. But important point to note is that the diet here is not just food stuff. The intake from outside into our system through our heart, mind, intellect and senses is all part of food. Thus fasting means not only restrain from food stuff but also imaginations, desires and thoughts of the material world.
2. The second aspects is being close to God and this closeness we can get only by reflecting on various aspects of God.

Thus the usefulness of fasting on Shivratri is when we restrain from any external intake through our body, senses, mind, intellect and focus on the various aspects of Lord Mahakaal.

Here are few subtle aspects of Shiva –

- He is manifestation of supreme consciousness
- Trident - is a weapon to destroy anger, greed and lust knowledge
- Snake around the head – Accept danger and make it useful
- Crematorium signifies detachment and fearlessness from death
- Third eye – Vision and faculty of critical thinking
- Garland of skull signifies fragility of human body
- Drum is source of creative energy
- Bull represents hard work

Uttarayan **By: Priyanka Mehta**

Gujarat is vibrant with the Kite festival which is celebrated with colors of joy, colors of life. This kite flying festival is also known as Uttarayan. It is celebrated all over Gujarat but the excitement is high at Ahmedabad, Surat, Nadiad and Vadodara. All over the State, in the month of January, the serene blue sky is covered with colorful kites. It looks splendid and since morning to evening the sky remains dotted with vivid splashes of color with kites in a variety of hues, shapes and sizes. In the morning, children enjoy competing with others to how high their kites can go but at night, children will tie lanterns to their kites. This creates a lovely image in the sky. Hopefully, this festival will go on for many more generations.



Birthday Sanskar News **Ikshu Pandey**

The birthday celebration on January 25th at our home was an awesome experience for our family and friends. We loved learning about the 5 elements: fire, air, earth,

water and sky. During the pooja, Pravin Uncle, Poornima Aunty, and Pragna Aunty answered all of our questions and explained us the significance of a coconut in the pooja and how it contains all five elements. At the beginning of the pooja we invited all of the Gods to come into the pot and bless us. We chanted various mantras which made my mind feel calm. The continuous chanting made the air feel pure. At the conclusion we thanked the Gods for coming and blessings. All of my friends, including my sister Kshan and I, liked taking oaths. We are keeping our oaths about less electronics, writing in our religious diaries, and controlling our tempers. We all made new friends and learned a lot. Thanks for making our birthday celebration so special.

મહાત્મા ગાંધી

ગાંધીજી આપણા દેશના મહાન માણસ હતા.
તેમણે મૂળ નામ મોહનદાસ ગાંધી હતા.
તેમણે પિતાનું નામ કશચંદ ગાંધી હતા.
તેમની માતાનું નામ પૂતળીબાઈ હતા.
ગાંધીજીનો જન્મ સૌરાષ્ટ્રમાં આવેલા પૌરબંદરમાં
સને ૧૮૬૯ના ઓક્ટોબરની બીજી તારી થયેલો.
તેમના સમયમાં ભારત પર અંગ્રેજો વલમ કરતા.
ગાંધીજીએ તેમનો સમય 'સત્યગ્રહી' કર્યો,
'સ્વદેશ' મેળવ્યું - ભારતને આઝાદ બનાવ્યો.
ગાંધીજી હંમેશાં સાચું બોલતા, સાચું આચરતા.
સંતની પેઠે સાફ જીવન જીવતા.
લોકો તેમને 'સંત' કહેતા, 'બાપુ' કહેતા.
ગાંધીજી સત્ય, શાંતિ અને આદર્શોમાં માનતા.
જગત આજું એક જ કુટુંબ પેઠે જીવે
તે માટે તેઓ કાફલો કોઈને સમજાવતા.
તેમણે તેમણે આજું જીવન દેશના ભલા માટે ગાળ્યું.
૩૦મી જાન્યુઆરી, ૧૯૪૮ના રોજ તેઓ શહીદ બન્યા.

By: Ria Shah
Gujrati 4

Art Club

By Shimona Agarwal

Pablo Picasso once said that "Every child is an artist," and he was telling the truth. So this year at GGKLI we started an art club. This art club takes place before classes start and provides an exciting opportunity for kids to learn how to draw and expand their knowledge on art. During each class the kids learn to draw something with step-by-step instructions. They've learned how to make the God Ganesha and Diyas for Diwali to Santa Claus for Christmas time. Furthermore, the children learn drawing tips on how to improve their drawings and ways to use shading techniques in order to create more realistic images. Not only does this class teach students, but it also increases their confidence and self-satisfaction and sense of fulfillment. There's nothing better than to see the image they are making come true on paper.

"The clock of life is wound but once, and no man has the power to tell just when the clock will stop, at late or early hour. Now is the only time you own. Live, love, toil with a will. Place no faith in time. For the clock may soon be still"

Code of Conduct for Children: A code of conduct is introduced here keeping average conditions of a middle class family in mind. If children in each home follow this, good progress can be expected compared to the present situation. The code of conduct is presented here:

(1) Daily routine: Early morning children should get up before sunrise and say their prayers while sitting in the bed – with or without folding their hands. It may be for 5 to 7 minutes, expressing our gratitude towards almighty God for creating us and requesting Him to bestow upon us the courage and strength to perform act of kindness, to help the weak and the needy, and never to harass anyone, to accomplish knowledge by studying hard, adopt our cultural values and serve our society, elders parents and teachers.

(2) Respect to Parents: After completing prayers, children should bow down their heads before the feet of their parents and elders to seek their blessings.

(3) Water Intake: After washing your mouth and cleaning your teeth, children must drink water on an empty stomach. Water kept overnight in a glass or bowl of copper, is consumed on the next day in the morning. Copper ions with minute electric charge get dissolved in the water, which is good for internal cleansing our body.

(4) Body purification, Toilet and Bath: Then comes the daily routine of cleaning our body internally and externally – brushing teeth, washing your face and taking a bath. Due to modern civilization, now a days our children are habituated to clean their teeth with various types of toothpastes commercially available in the market. Some of them contain chlorophyll, but actually this useful chemical is present in large quantity in natural neem and babul '*datun*' which is greatly beneficial for our teeth. Chewing '*datun*' gives exercise to teeth and strengthens gums, the juicy liquid released thus helps control throat infection and prevents cough. On the other hand, the soap used in toothpaste is harmful in the long run. However our purpose here is to say that teeth should be properly cleaned everyday morning. Taking a bath daily and preferably with cold water also should be made a habit of each child. It is better to use warm water instead of avoiding bath due to fear of cold water. It is a wrong belief that cold water causes cold and cough. Such sickness is caused by indigestion and constipation and not by cold water bathing.

(5) Exercise, Yoga and Breathing: Doing some exercise daily should be compulsory for children. Anything can be selected from – walking, jogging, swimming, running, doing sit-ups or pull-ups, Yogasanas, Pranayam or Suryanamaskar according to own choice and comfort. The exercise may be short and simple but regularity and continuity are very important. In a way, Suryanamaskar (bowing down to Sun in systematic steps with stretching body) is not only a perfect exercise, but also a means of worshipping the god Sun.

(6) Breakfast: Then comes breakfast, which should be easily digestible and nutritious but without fried or spicy items. Milk is the best choice. Breakfast served after completing prayers and exercise is a subtle message to children that reward and joy follows only after performing duty and hard work.

(7) Study at home: After breakfast, a child must sit at least for one and a half hour for homework and study.

(8) Preparing for school, Lunch time and going to school: After homework, children should get ready for going to school. Clothes or uniform should be clean, hair neat and tidy, nails cut, all books and writing accessories well-kept in the schoolbag. Then child should be served lunch – simple and nutritious, but not necessarily spicy and tasty. A child should learn to prefer nutrition value of food over mere taste pleasing the tongue.

(9) Evening Sports: It is essential to develop habit of playing sports in a large group in an open ground at least for an hour in the evening after school hours. It is a good exercise in itself and also cultivates team-spirit in children, leading to healthy social relationships and successful group activities in future.

(10) Sleeping: A child must be asked to go to bed early – preferably before 10 PM. The benefits of “early to bed and early to rise” should be explained to child. Children must clean their teeth, wash their face and hands, splash water on their eyes, wash their feet up to knees, prior to retiring to bed. In the bed, before sleep, they should say their prayers again like morning, with a sense of gratitude towards god.

This code of conduct is presented as an ideal, subject to necessary changes based upon the age and education level of the child, family circumstances, surrounding atmosphere and individual requirements.

Op-Ed: Sunday Mornings at GGKLI Prakash Narayan, PhD

Some 23 years ago, when I had first set foot into this country, Sunday mornings were spent with Charles Kuralt who brought Americana home with his program "Sunday Morning". He had the most soothing of narratives and sincerity of delivery. And there was so much to see and learn! The great American train ride, life on Main Street in Small Town USA, the flora and fauna of Casper, WY, Mark Twain's journey down the mighty Mississippi and corn country Nebraska were all delivered to our living room starting at 9 AM. From my perspective, those Sunday mornings were precious and educational and gave me an abundance of reasons to have immigrated to this great country. I even found a sense of comfort and security in this routine and almost required it. Charles Kuralt is long gone and in these 23 years, I have traveled most of America.

For the past several years, I have been spending most every other Sunday morning at GGKLI. And there is so much to see and learn! Just as I sought out Americana during my formative years here, I now find a need to reacquaint myself with all that I left behind to come here. Seeing these students in turmeric colored tunics chanting Om Mitraya Namah and following their preceptor's instructions takes one back to the land of the Trivenisangama, the Gurukuls of Northern India and the Peethams of Kanchi and Sringeri. The Yogasana repetitions they go through increases circulation not only in their somatic structures but also in their cerebral quarters. It sets the tone for the remainder of the day. It builds camaraderie, unity and discipline. It is all good.

The culture classes of GGKLI reminds me of the debates at and between Oxford and Cambridge. These 9, 10 and 11 year olds are full of questions.....questions that even the instructor is sometimes hardpressed to answer. Is the cycle of birth-death-rebirth, the same as The Oscillating Universe Theory-- a cosmological model that combines both the Big Bang and the Big Crunch as part of a cyclical event? Is relativistic space-time so curved that time runs in circles - Kalachakra? Are the different Avatars akin to existence in parallel universes - the Multiverse Model? If God is ever-present i.e. never born or never to die, pray, why do we observe Ganesh Chaturathi and Krishna Janmashtami? Much like the Bohr-Einstein debates during those Solvay conferences, these students counter and query at every turn!

What is right and what is wrong? I will never know. But does it even matter? Because one thing is for sure. As Louis Armstrong crooned, " I hear babies cry.....I watch them grow. They'll learn much more.....than I'll never know. And I think to myselfwhat a wonderful world". For perhaps in a similar forum, on some Sunday morning in the distant past, an Adi Sankara, a Chanakya or a Swami Vivekananda raised a questioning hand.

We enjoyed our trip to India this past Christmas break. My 10-year old was reading Hindi road signs!

Eating Healthy By Dr. Nita Mehta

Eating is very important for our lives. The healthy foods we eat help our body to grow, think, move, sleep, and fight off germs. But some foods can actually hurt our bodies. Follow these tips below to make sure you are getting enough of the foods your body needs to do its job well:

Eat the rainbow: A fun and tasty way to make sure you are eating enough fruits and vegetables is to eat as many different colors as you can at each meal. Carrots, blueberries, avocados, and red bell peppers are all different colors and are all good for your body. Help your parents the next time you go grocery shopping to pick out the most colorful fruits and vegetables.

At school: There are many options to choose from in the lunch line at school, some of them are healthier than others. Try to choose fruits and vegetables instead of French fries or chips. For drinks, grab water or fat-free milk instead of soda or juice. It may be hard to make these changes, especially if your friends are not but you will be keeping your body healthy and will feel much better!

Snack Attack: After a long day at school you are ready for a tasty snack! But before you reach for that bag of chips, think about one of these healthier options instead:

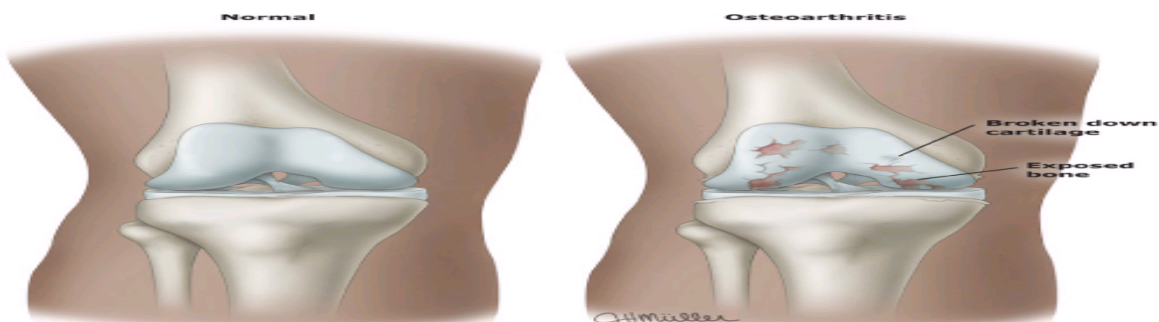
----- Instead of chips or crackers, grab a piece of fruit or veggie sticks

----- Instead of cookies or cake, grab lowfat cheesesticks or unsweetened, lowfat yogurt

By making healthy food choices you will feel better and play better. So start making healthy choices today. Your body will thank you!

Osteoarthritis Summary By Priyanka Mehta

On December 15 2013, Dr. Kamini Shah came to our school, Gayatri Gyan Kendra of Long Island, to talk to the parents, teachers and students of group 6 about osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis is inflammation of the joints and is often seen by doctors in the patients knees, hips, lower back, neck and fingers. This condition is seen mostly in females over the age of 40 and is hereditary. Another big risk factor is obesity and muscle weakness. This is why it is very important to stay fit and be healthy. The basic rule is to eat fewer calories and to increase physical activity. The goal is to have about 1,200-1,500mg of calcium a day. Food like cottage cheese, milk, and yogurt are high in calcium. Cheese and juice also have a good amount of calcium but can be good in proportions. You never want too much of anything. Because of osteoarthritis, there can be an immediate and serious result of cartilage breakdown. To help with pain many people think about therapy and medications but others think about surgery. Overall, to avoid osteoarthritis you should be very cautious about staying healthy and eating foods with a lot of calcium. Thank you Dr. Shah for teaching us that motion is lotion.



News | Schools

Elwood Students Selected for LI String Festival

Posted by [Amanda Lindner \(Editor\)](#) , January 10, 2014 at 02:31 PM



[More](#)

Devin Lee (left) and Rithika Narayan. Photo by Elwood



A dozen students from the Elwood School District have been selected to perform in the prestigious Long Island String Festival Association's Honors String Ensembles in January and February.

Selection to a LISFA ensemble is a highly competitive process, based on superior scores at the annual New York State School Music Association (NYSMA) solo festivals and school music instructor recommendations.

The recognized students include James H. Boyd Intermediate School fifth-graders Devin Lee (string bass) and Rithika Narayan (viola); Elwood Middle School students Elizabeth Choi (violin), Emma Mayette (violin), James Paik (cello) and Annie Song (cello); and Elwood-John H. Glenn High School string players Kelsey Hackett (viola), Derek Lee (double bass), Tyler Song (violin), Lukas Shrout (viola), Rebecca St. Paul (violin) and Eun Sung Suh (violin).

Rithika Narayan, Group V, GGKLI was performed at LISFA, 2014. She plays the viola.

Student Scientist Applies for Patent

Brian, a junior at Commack High School, worked with Prakash Narayan, PhD, VP-Preclinical Research at Angion Biomedica, to develop a novel therapeutic for Polycystic Kidney Disease. This disease is hereditary, can affect children and adults, and currently

necessitates kidney and/or liver transplantation.

As part of his project, Brian also evaluated a panel of biomarkers to determine their prognosticative value in disease outcome. Brian's work has resulted in a patent application.



Dr. Prakash Narayan is working with students across LI preparing them for LISEF-INTEL-ISEF.

Indian Gods and Goddesses

J R W A I S H I V A M K U P D
D T A L F A X S X L R B N A R
Y U A M M R R Q E I X I H Y S
L K R H M A T D S N J U S R M
U H A G J S C H N B A G I U G
M R E K A W N M T I W G V S I
B D A R B A K Y W W E G H W R
Q W C I Y T E S E O E P D Z R
S I T A I I C U T L A A H A S
A W R E H K D R F A L X D Z T
U C Y F N Z G V P X J H R B M
I N A M U N A H I M A G N A G
U D P A W Q M O Q I J M G Z O
G B N A U Z H F Y R G V X L A
M G U A P Y W O S T J N U Z N

BRAHMA
GANGA
KALI
RADHA
SHIVA

DURGA
HANUMAN
KRISHNA
RAM
SITA

GANESH
INDRA
LAXMI
SARASWATI
SURYA

TRY THIS!