

ESPAÑOL

FRANÇAIS

Amidst its differences, humanity very often finds itself working as one. Examples of cooperation, generosity and selflessness touch the heart, and the differences fade. In its pages One World One Humanity brings highlights of the association between Shri Ram Chandra Mission and UN DPI

Email: un.info@srcm.org**Inside December 2010**

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One World One Humanity



Photo: SRCM Oceania

On the occasion of the United Nations International Day of Families on May 15th, 2010, Shri Ram Chandra Mission organised outreach events in its meditation centres and ashrams all over the world. Members of SRCM, family, and friends participated in commemorating the day in multiple cities in **Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Austria, the United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa and the United States.**

In observing the International Day of Families, one of the objectives of the United Nations is to "strengthen and support families in performing their societal and developmental functions and to build upon their strengths in particular at the national and local levels....". In observing the International Day of Families, SRCM used the occasion to focus on the UN's theme of the impact of migration on families around the world.

As an estimated 214 million people have migrated to other countries in search of employment, the stability and fulfillment of families is more difficult to achieve and maintain. SRCM outreach programs provide ideas on how to create love and harmony in one's life and family, and how prayer, inner reflection and contemplation can assist one in becoming more open and responsive to the needs of others. During the programs, participants were invited to meditate upon a non-denominational prayer-meditation for human integration. ‡

Sahaj Marg Around the World

International Day of Families, Europe



Photo: Saarbrücken Centre

In Europe, Shri Ram Chandra Mission centres in Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom organised outreach events on the occasion of the International Day of Families.

In Saarbrücken, Germany, Family Day was celebrated on two days! On May 14th the Family Day was commemorated at the local Kindergarten. Approximately twenty-eight children and eight teachers participated in several activities centered on the theme of family. After a short personal introduction about what is UN Family Day, the children were asked to name family members, using finger puppets to signify them. Besides the usual responses, the children named their aunts, great-grandparents, and even dogs and cats as family members. Then the children made paper families (a family chain) and all the families were displayed to-

gether. They looked at the globe to find the countries from which they came and to understand that families sometimes move to different places. The children were then asked to name the things that families need and the children drew the objects they named. They discovered that love covered most all needs! At the end all children prayed silently for a few minutes for love to fill all hearts.

On May 15th SRCM members from nearby centres in Germany and France attended a day long program commemorating Family Day at Saarbrücken. Participants listened to talks on the theme of Family, and later played a group game called 'passing-the parcel,' where each had to read a fact about the UN to learn more about the UN. Afterwards, some of the participants and children went to meet the neighbours to wish them a happy family day and to

give them flowers, candies, flyers and greeting cards that the children had made.

In Berlin centre, about thirteen adults and nine children commemorated the day with songs and games for the children and a presentation and discussion for all. In the group there were young people who had grown up in a "patchwork"-family, and there were participants who had migrated from other countries. They all shared their experience of family and what a unique gift a family is. In the end, everyone agreed that family is not limited to blood, but is an attitude which can include all human beings.

Other centres that participated in commemorating the International Day of Families in Europe include: Vienna, Austria; Hamburg, Germany; Mönchengladbach, Germany; Edinburgh, UK, and Manchester, UK. ‡

Sahaj Marg Around the World

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, North America



LEFT: On March 21st, 2010 the Clearwater, Florida Centre for Sahaj Marg hosted a public meditation to observe the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It was held at the Town 'n Country Regional Library in Tampa, Florida. Those who attended welcomed this opportunity to participate in a world-wide endeavor meant to encourage tolerance among all peoples.

In 1966 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed March 21st the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and in doing so called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination. On March 21st people across the globe will engage in activities promoting equality and tolerance in accordance with the ideals and objectives of the UN Charter.

Across North America, Shri Ram Chandra Mission centres and their members (abhyasis) organized and participated in informational and prayer events, commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination with thoughtful discussions and heartfelt prayers.

In San Jose, California approximately one hundred practitioners viewed a presentation of slides about the UN day, and the complementary relationship between SRCM and the UN charter. After the slide

show, those present sat for prayer-meditation for about ten minutes. Similarly, in Baltimore, Maryland about twelve adults and eight children participated in commemorating the UN day. While the children were busy with games, adults discussed reading material focusing on human integration and togetherness to dispel discrimination of any kind in the world. In Toronto, Canada, the UN commemoration included a recitation of the speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. entitled, "Loving Your Enemies," as well as a slideshow presentation, and thirty minute prayer-meditation.

Many other centres in North America also participated in commemorating the UN day on March 21st. These centres included: Caledonia, MI; Indianapolis, IN; Detroit, MI; Bowling Green, KY; Cleveland, OH; Seattle, WA; Portland, OR; Denver, CO; Phoenix, AZ; Arcata, CA, San Francisco, CA; Santa Cruz, CA, and Victoria, B.C. †

Sahaj Marg Around the World

International Day of Youth, Oceania

Youth, A Time for Promise and Effort



Photos: SRCM Oceania

On the United Nations International Day of Youth, SRCM centres in Australia and New Zealand organized outreach programmes under the theme: 'Youth, a Time for Promise and Effort' with a prayer/meditation session, group games, songs and stories by children, youth and adult presentations on the theme.

This year's International Day of Youth was a particularly important day for youth around the world. In December 2009, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/64/134 proclaiming the Year commencing this International Youth Day (12 August 2010) as the International Year of Youth.

In line with the theme for the International Year, the theme for this year's International Youth Day is **"Dialogue and Mutual Understanding"**. The choice of theme reflects the General Assembly's appreciation of the value of dialogue among youth from different cultures as well as among different generations.

The following centres were involved in commemorating the day in Oceania: Brisbane, Sydney, Perth, Melbourne, Auckland, and Wellington . ‡

Sahaj Marg Around the World

International Year of Youth, India

2010 Annual All-India Essay Writing Event



An initiative of Shri Ram Chandra Mission (SRCM), the All-India Essay Writing 2010 event will be organized in educational institutions across the country. Every year through the All-India Essay Writing Event, SRCM attempts to reach out to the youth, in the sure knowledge that the future rests on their slender shoulders.

The United Nations is observing the year 2010 [August 2010 to 2011] as International Year of Youth and, in commemoration of the same, the theme for the essay event this year is Youth: A Time of Promise and for Effort.

Youth is a period of immense promise, provided it is backed by commensurate effort. It is a time pregnant with opportunity, and yet ridden with dangers at every step.

While the academic system is doing an excellent job in preparing young minds for challenging futures, in an increasingly competitive world, there is a pressing need for the youth to equip themselves with the moral and spiritual fibre necessary to counter the pitfalls. Through this initiative SRCM seeks to draw attention to the need for character formation and balanced existence to go hand in hand with education and career orientation – the only way to ensure that tomorrow's world will be led by capable and balanced individuals.

There are three categories of participation, and students have the freedom to express themselves in the following languages: English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu.

Category 1 [Classes 6 through 9]: Character Protects Life

Points to Ponder:

P.B. Fitzwater once said, "Character is the sum and total

of one's choices." What then is the surest way to choose rightly?

Youth is a period in life ridden with temptations that interfere with one's ability to tell right from wrong. Character is the wall that youth must build around itself to protect against the onslaught of temptation.

Category 2 [Classes 10 through 12]: Freedom Does Not Mean License, but the Wisdom to Choose What Is Right for Oneself

Points to Ponder:

Freedom, a word often misunderstood, has long been the crux of the conflict between generations. Since time immemorial, youth have appeared to advocate change through an unconditional license to have their way, often appearing, in the process, to undervalue the importance of control and guidance.

Can freedom be viewed independent of responsibility? What then is the true meaning of freedom when viewed from the perspective of responsibility towards oneself?

Category 3 [Undergrad and Postgrad]: From Ambition to Aspiration, From Acquiring to Becoming

Points to Ponder:

Ambition, and its predominant theme of acquisition, is being touted as the new ideal of an increasingly materialistic world. Prescribed as an indispensable prerequisite for 'success', it has long erased the virtue of aspiration from the minds of our youth.

Characterized by a subtle, yet firm, will to achieve or become, aspiration advocates the pursuit of excellence as opposed to mere success.

Can ambition and aspiration be seen as diametrically opposite manifestations of the soul's need to evolve? Which one then truly defines the human spirit? ‡

Lalaji Memorial Omega School Joins UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network

In 2010, the Lalaji Memorial Omega International School (LMOIS) was granted the affiliation to the United Nations' Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) by joining the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet). LMOIS was founded and is managed by professionals with spiritual backgrounds provided by Shri Ram Chandra Mission.

In UNESCO's preamble it is stated, "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed; That ignorance of each other's ways of lives has been a common cause throughout history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war..."

In order to translate the ideals further mentioned in its preamble into concrete action, UNESCO launched the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) in 1953. ASPnet is a



Photos pages 6, 7, 8: Omega School Website

global network of some 7,900 educational institutions in one hundred seventy-six countries (ranging from pre-schools and primary to secondary schools and teacher training institutions), who work in support of quality education in practice.

The project started out at the grassroots level with thirty-three schools in fifteen countries.

Driven over five decades by a growing number of enthusiastic and creative teachers committed to reinforcing the humanistic, cultural and international dimensions of education in view of world developments, this modest initiative has now developed into one of the world's largest and most unique networks of schools.

ASPnet is essentially a network of committed schools engaged in fostering and delivering quality education in pursuit of peace, liberty, justice and human development in order to meet the pressing educational needs of children and young people throughout the world. »

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Lalaji Memorial Omega School Joins UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network

ASPnet schools are 'navigators for peace' and agents for positive change and serve as laboratories of ideas on innovative approaches for quality education for all.

They aim at translating the four pillars of education for the 21st century -- learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together -- into good practices of quality education.

ASPnet cooperates with a broad range of institutions, UN agencies, the private Sector, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), or research institutions.

The Lalaji Memorial International Omega School's vision statement states – "Omega strives to produce youngsters who are balanced, with soul, mind and body working in unison, with the soul guiding the mind in its activities and the body acting under the guidance of the mind".

This vision is sustained by a dedicated management team and teaching staff that invests efforts and ideals in the Value Based Spiritual Education Programme (VBSE), which permeates every level of work and life on the campus.

The VBSE programme is the raison d'être of the school and is at its very core. It has established its framework on the eight values adopted by the UN in the "Learning to be" programme as core values for all human beings, everywhere. They are universal and hence apply to all humans irrespective of all possible discriminations. The LMOS has added Spirituality as a value to this list

and calls these the nine gems (Navratnas) of its VBSE programme:

Sensitivity and Creativity

Self-awareness and Self-Management

Truth and Wisdom

Health and Nutrition

Peace and Justice

Love and Compassion

Citizenship

Environment Morality

Spirituality

The School on its part believes that if these values are properly imbibed, they have the potential to transform students into good and responsible citizens for the future.

These values are transmitted to the children first and foremost by providing role models in the form

of teachers and staff and also by project based learning, seminars, group discussions, films, school clubs, scouts and last, but not least, personal experience. The goal is to make sure that the values become the fundamental and unconscious guiding principles of the lives of the children. The school curriculum includes this value based spiritual education at all levels as much in the classrooms as out of it. This ongoing exercise that continues for all the students throughout their stay in the school also includes research programmes and further training for the staff.

An example would be dealing with the value of Health & Nutrition. At the earliest stage, the children are called upon to make sure they are clean by washing regularly their hands and feet, brushing their teeth, and having their daily showers etc. At a later and higher level they are shown the need for hygiene with a healthy mind in a healthy »



Lalaji Memorial Omega School Joins UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network



body. Then, as they grow older the science and environment teachers work on issues such as- What constitutes health? What is the importance of nutrition? What is good and proper nutrition? This also expands into regular exercise/fitness programmes included in the school curriculum such as the practice of Hatha Yoga. The children are also given instruction on the nutritional value of various foods and students of older age groups often participate in making the menus in the kitchen. The farthest reaches of the programme deals with physical health and other forms such as mental health and spiritual health by introducing the importance of meditation/prayer.

The school regularly participates in activities such as UN video conferences on various topics – both for students and teachers. Among the school's various environment conservation oriented programmes are some future projects such as: Pilot

biogas plant ; Manufacture of vermi-compost from leaf and other waste; Re-processing kitchen vegetable and food waste; Solar lighting of avenues, campus perimeter, corridors and other non-essential areas; Solar pre-heating of input water for kitchen and laundry boilers to save diesel fuel; Solar water heaters for hot water in the dormitories; and Sewage and kitchen waste water treatment.

The school aims at developing various pilot projects in the future of which the students are the driving force and major actors. The ongoing quality enhancement at the academic and the extra-curricular levels and the enthusiasm it generates is truly catching. One just needs to visit the school's campus to instantly feel the vibrating energy that grips you while you bask in the unique serenity of the spiritual atmosphere that lies beneath.

By participating in the ASPnet program, the school may be able to spread the very important and pioneering work of VBSE by infusing it into national and international networks. The possibilities are opening up as the world sits up to take notice of the unique vision of education that started in the heart of spiritual teacher Shri Parthasarathi Rajagoplaachari and that he transmitted as the very foundation on which the school was created. This vision is fostered with the love of many who work hard day in and day out to make it a reality in the years to come. ‡

The school did not have to make any particular efforts to “fit” into the framework of the ASPnet school model. It is already working on a parallel plane with ASPnet – the coming together of the two was but natural and can prove to be of mutual benefit in the years to come.



ENDING HUNGER IS NOT A DREAM. IT IS ACHIEVABLE.

That's why it is unacceptable that **1 billion people** still live with **chronic hunger**.
But for things to change, political leaders need to make fighting hunger their priority.

The **1billionhungry project** by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is a movement to finally "blow the whistle" on hunger – letting the world know that enough is enough.

Join the online campaign to get world leaders to act on hunger.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?
Sign the online petition at
www.1billionhungry.org

SPREAD THE WORD!

The more signatures on this petition, the stronger the pressure on politicians to act!

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS, 2011

15 MAY, INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES

12 AUGUST, INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

21 SEPTEMBER, INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

20 NOVEMBER, UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY

10 DECEMBER, HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE, CANADA, EUROPE,
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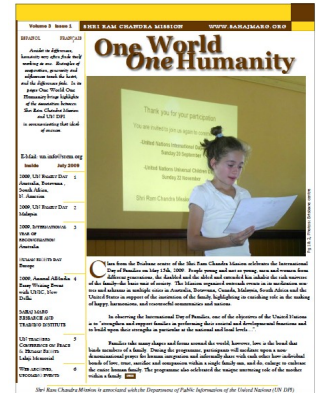
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