

Hindu Mandir Executives Conference (HMEC) - 2009

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Hindu Mandir (Temple) Executives representing 111 Temples and Hindu Organizations from more than 25 states of US and Canada converged in Lithicum, MD, a suburb of Washington, DC, to attend the Fourth annual Hindu Mandir Executives Conference (HMEC), from September 11, 2009 through September 13, 2009.

The temples and Hindu organizations were represented from British Columbia-Canada, Hawaii, and California on the West Coast to Florida, Carolina, and New-England-States on the East Coast including many states in the heartland of America.

This extremely successful fourth annual HMEC-2009 was another step in the development of network and relationships between Mandir executives to meet the goal of creating a cohesive and focused Hindu-American community with Mandirs as its nucleus. The participants were focused on developing programs to provide leadership to nourish, protect and sustain Hindu Dharma in North America.

Participation by several large Hindu organizations like Art of Living, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Arya Samaj, BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, Chinmaya Mission, Gayatri Pariwar, ISKON, Yogi Divine Society, Kauai's Hindu Monastery, JKP and JK Yog, Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Sikh Center of Virginia, Devotees of Narayani Peetam and Sadhu Vaswani, and Hindu temples all over North America made HMEC an inspiring experience for the attendees.

The Mandir executives represented a wide cross-section of the Hindu community. These attendees, who numbered over 250, were physicians, scientists, businesspersons, homemakers, engineers, etc., by profession besides being temple executives. They displayed a deep commitment in fulfilling the spiritual and social needs of Hindu-American community and an urge to create a legacy for the next generations that they can be proud of.

The group was diverse in terms of age, race, generation, as well as national origin. HMEC 2009 had a strong participation from the youth. Conference had some parallel sessions for the youth representing temples from across the nation. Pooja, Shaily and Jemin representing 'Shri Mangal Mandir' in Silver Springs, MD, were happy to have met youth just like them and said, "We gained new perspective within our own religion, we learned things that we can implement in our Mandirs and help our community"

Addressing the temple executives from across the country, Swami Dayananda Saraswati of the 'Arsha Vidya Gurukulam', who was the keynote speaker, emphasized that the Hindu Mandirs are "forms or manifestations" of tradition that can be handed over to the next generations. These 'forms' are very important and the next generations should be made aware of these to preserve ancient traditions. Swami Mukundananda of JK Yog talked about the Application of Management Science in

Mandir development in his inaugural address.

Hindu Mandir executives collectively deliberated on the evolving social, religious, cultural, spiritual, and next-generational needs of 2.5 million strong, confident, diverse and vibrant Hindu-American community. Dr. Michael Busch of the Bramhananda Saraswati Trust mentioned, "It is very inspiring to see the depth of understanding and devotion to the Vedic tradition of India. The cohesion and cooperation among all the temples to strengthen the enlightenment of Vedic knowledge in North America is encouraging."

Hindu perspective of SERVICE was discussed through ideas shared by Anju Bhargava of the 'Hindu American Seva charities' and Divya Selvakumar of Hindu NGO, 'American Hindu World Service (AHWS)'. Hindu-Jewish dialogue was continued through presentation by AJC.

This conference was striking in its use of Multimedia presentations. A multimedia video presentation by Dr. Michael Busch of 'Brahmananda Saraswati Trust', IA, on 'Maharishi Vedic City' was awe inspiring for its effort, ideals and objectives. Another moving presentation was made by Mrs. Cathy Wenuk a devotee of 'Narayani Peetam' of Sripuram Golden Temple and its beautiful soul-nourishing environment and surroundings.

Houston, TX ran away with the honor to hold the 2010-Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference(HMEC), after a tough competition between many cities which were interested in replicating this years' success and grandeur of 2009-HMEC. Dr. Sharma Tadepalli, of Meenakshi Temple, Pearland, TX, while accepting the honor of holding the next conference in Houston said, "HMEC is uniting Mandirs while

resolving issues and challenges facing the Hindu community. We want to unite temples in Texas and create a united front of all temples in Texas".

In the concluding session of the Conference, the delegates agreed on a series of Action items which emerged as a consequence of the deliberations and presentations:

- Hindu Seva Diwas: Conduct Seva(service) activities in large number of Mandirs on a single chosen day.
- Develop software and e-services for Mandirs. Apply readily available state of the art software technology to streamline routine Mandir operations.
- Develop Training Camps for Hindu Ambassadors in Mandirs, training Mandir adults & youths on essentials of Hindu Dharma and Hindu society, so that they can effectively articulate the richness of our traditions to larger public.
- Distribute Hindu Text Book Supplements to US School Districts on the history of India prepared by Hinduism Today.
- Develop Samskar Manual for Young Couples. Write a clear, simple and attractive book on Vivah Samskar.
- Establish Hindu Mandir Youth Network in USA.
- Establish Hindu Mandir communication channel, through Hindu Mandir News Letter. The delegates also agreed, and unanimously passed the following resolution for consideration of their temple's boards, in the concluding session of the Conference

Resolution:

We the delegates of the Hindu-American Mandirs at HMEC will help in all material ways possible to accelerate the restoration process of Hindu heritage sites world over. In particular, we appreciate and whole heartedly support Dr. Animesh Sinha efforts in preserving and restoring the sites of Braj.