



Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh USA

Annual Report

2018-2019

205
LOCAL
CHAPTERS -
SHAKHAS

105,752 AT **104**
SURYA NAMSAKARS
SCHOOLS

1768
TEACHERS AT
GURU VANDANA

35
HINDU YUVA
UNIVERSITY CHAPTERS

Message from HSS USA President

Namaste,

On behalf of HSS USA, I would like to wish you and your family a Happy Vijaya Dashami and the upcoming Diwali celebrations! I am happy to share our annual report and the ongoing progress of our work.

This year HSS USA is completing the 30th year since its formal incorporation. It is delightful to observe the consistent growth of our work in terms of shakhas (local chapters), states, families involved, and active involvement of our second-generation youth. In addition to conducting shakhas and inculcating Hindu values, HSS has remained active in socially responsible activities through our various Sewa projects.

We are working closely with the Hindu University of America to develop a curriculum on the diverse topics from Hindu Dharma and philosophy. We are expanding the concept of Vivekananda House on university campuses to promote activities and fraternity among Hindu students. While continuing our support to Bhutanese community empowerment, this year our volunteers organized a successful national Bhutanese Youth camp.

To commemorate Guru Nanak Dev Ji's 550th birth year, our volunteers visited and offered services in Gurudwaras, and also paid tribute during events like Vijaya Dashami and Guru Vandana.

Our prayer for Vishwa Dharma and Vishwa Shanti is the beacon that guides us in our virtuous work. Let us continue to keep its essence in our minds and continue to serve for the welfare of all.

- Dr. Vinod Ambastha
Sanghchalak, USA (President, USA)



Teenagers Camp in North Carolina



HSS Sports Day, New Jersey



Indiana Ghosh Varg (Band)



Bhutanese Youth Camp

VIJAYA DASHAMI 2018

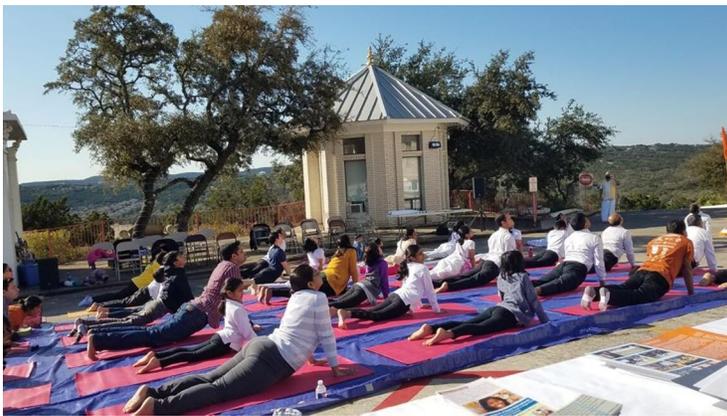
Vijaya Dashami is one of the six utsavs (festivals) that HSS celebrates nationwide. HSS USA was founded on this auspicious day in 1989.

HSS Shakhas collectively celebrated Vijaya Dashami at a regional level. This year, Vijaya Dashami was celebrated by 177 Shakhas in 36 metro cities, with 4,229 HSS volunteers (women and men, of all age groups). They exhibited various skills that they had learned during regular Shakhas throughout the year. This includes Yoga and exercises, pyramid formations, group games, songs, and shlokas, followed by intellectual discourses by HSS speakers as well as eminent guest speakers. These programs were attended by over 7,200 guests.



Vijaya Dashami at Bay Area

SURYA NAMASKAR YAJNA 2019



Surya Namaskar Yajna at San Antonio, TX

This year was the twelfth annual Surya Namaskar Yajna (SNY), also known as Health for Humanity Yogathon. SNY was conducted this year from January 12 to January 27, 2019. Events were held in 200 cities. Elected officials, including New York state Senate, governors of Arizona, Oregon, Pennsylvania, New York, South Carolina, and Virginia, and 55 mayors from across the US proclaimed and actively supported the Yogathon. This year HSS focused primarily on reaching out to schools, teachers, and students. Throughout the United States, 104 schools and 14,890 students participated in the Yogathon. At Pocantico Hills School, in Tarrytown, NY, the principal, teachers, and parents appreciated 10 Yogathon sessions and invited HSS to train other community members during the 'One World Evening' event on January 29th, 2019.

HINDU UNITY DAY

Hindu society is unique in that it is composed of diverse practices and cultures. HSS organizes an annual Hindu Unity Day and invites other Hindu community organizations. It is an opportunity to get to know each other, network, and explore ways to work collaboratively for broader community causes. This year Hindu Unity Day was organized by HSS chapters in British Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Washington, and Texas. Some places also celebrated Hindu Unity Day by organizing sports events.



Hindu Unity Day at Chicago

ADVOCACY DAY

HSS Volunteers actively participated in an Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill organized by the Hindu American Foundation (HAF). Volunteers visited the offices of more than 100 members of congress and interacted with their staff. Additionally, US representatives and senators attended a special event which gave an opportunity to share information about the Hindu American community, our activities, and our vision.

SUMMER VISTARAK (SUMMER INTERNSHIP)

Young volunteers during summer break participated in several HSS activities from the local to regional levels as Summer Vistaraks for one to three months. Summer Vistaraks helped HSS in various projects, such as community outreach, organizing summer Hindu Heritage Camps for children, database updates, etc. This year seven students were Summer Vistaraks.

GURU VANDANA - TEACHERS APPRECIATION DAY

During the months of May and June 2019, HSS organized Guru Vandana providing a platform for students to honor their teachers and to acknowledge their contribution in the society. This event was organized at 68 Cities nationwide where 1768 teachers were honored by over 1000 children and attended by 8000 people. At several place school principals, school superintendents, as well as local Mayor, City council members participated and appreciated in the event. During the ceremony, children show how deeply they respect their teachers by honoring them in traditional Hindu way and in return requesting their blessings.



Guru Vandana, Maryland

RAKSHA BANDHAN 2019



US Rep. Scott Peters, 52nd district of CA

HSS volunteers continued Raksha Bandhan outreach nationwide and tied rakhi to first responders in the community, as well as local, state, and federal elected officials. The concept of Raksha Bandhan as Universal Oneness Day to celebrate community togetherness is welcomed everywhere.

All Shakhas celebrated Raksha Bandhan. Volunteers tied rakhis to police officers, firefighters, and mayors in more than 30 cities. Congressman Bill Foster from IL, Congressman Scott Peters from CA, and Assemblyman Steven Choi from CA were called upon at their respective offices and volunteers tied rakhi to the elected officials and their staff.

SEWA - SERVICE TO HUMANITY

As a part of all round personality development of an individual, Sewa manobhav (service-oriented mindset) is inculcated in HSS volunteers through active engagement in service activities in their local communities.

Nearly 150 chapters in 29 states have conducted a variety of service activities based on local needs. Our volunteers organized environmental and public health-related projects like adopt-a-highway, tree planting, cleaning of public spaces, Diwali food drives, tutoring students from schools in underprivileged areas, backpack and school supply drives, and winter coat collection drives.

The result of this volunteer transformation manifests as a continued drive to develop innovative ways to help the surrounding community. HSS volunteers have started activities like a subsidized book fair for a school in an underprivileged part of the city, helping transport extra fresh produce from the farmers market to food desert parts of the inner-city, running a good behavior associated rewards based toy store in an underprivileged school. HSS volunteers from New Jersey actively took a lead role in a Sewa Diwali project implemented by 1,000 volunteers of 23 local Hindu community organizations. They collected 17,500 pounds of food that was distributed to the needy from 12 NJ townships.

Our volunteers have been recognized by numerous awards like 25 Women Leaders of Peoria IL, Common Place Academic Innovation Award at Peoria, IL, volunteer spotlight for Schools of Wheels in Carmel Indiana, as well as Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy Award.



Highway cleaning sewa project in Michigan



HSS, Peoria, IL

BHUTANESE YOUTH CAMP

HSS volunteers from Indiana, organized the first national Bhutanese Youth Camp. 37 youths from 9 cities participated in this camp. Inspired from the activities, 3 new Nepali language shakas started, Harrisburg PA, Reynoldsberg OH, and Raleigh, NC.

HINDU DHARMA AWARENESS WORKSHOP



Hindu Dharama Awareness by HSS PA

Senator Katie Muth of the Pennsylvania State Senate invited HSS volunteers to conduct a Hindu Dharma Awareness Workshop. Rep. Melissa Shusterman and staff from Senator Tim Kearney, Rep. Joe Webster, and Rep. Matt Bradford's offices also attended this workshop. The workshop focused on Hindu belief in diversity and acceptance. The overarching theme of the presentation was that "The world is a family," and topics of unity in diversity, respect for natural resources and creation, and community service were covered. The HSS volunteers and state officials also discussed multiple ways that HSS can support community outreach, advocacy, and service initiatives.

SANGH SHIKSHA VARG

Sangh Shiksha Varg is an opportunity for HSS to inculcate leadership and organizing skills in the volunteers to help run and strengthen the local chapter, as well as help the organization to develop local social impact projects. In 2019, across the country, a total of 13 SSVs were held and 325 eligible volunteers were trained.

VIVEKANANDA HOUSE

After the initial success of Vivekananda House in a leased house, HSS Hindu YUVA at Iowa State University, successfully raised funds and purchased a house at the beginning of 2019. This house will be used in part as a Hindu Student Center and a private floor will be used for accommodation as necessary.

HINDU YUVA RETREAT



NorthEast Hindu Yuva Retreat

Hindu Youth for Unity, Virtues, and Action (Hindu YUVA) organized a retreat at Arshavidya Gurukulam in Saylorsburg, PA for 35 university students and 45 working professionals in April 2019.

AWARDS TO HINDU YUVA

Hindu YUVA at Iowa State University and its advisor Dr. Arun Somani received "Outstanding Commitment to Diversity Award of the Year", and an "Outstanding Student Organization Advisor" by the Students Activities Center of Iowa State University for their dedication and enrichment to the Iowa State University Community.

At Ohio State University, Hindu YUVA was the recipient of three awards: Kaplan Humanitarian Award, Outstanding Diversity Program, and Boehm Holistic Wellness Award.

In February, an annual YUVA Sangam was organized in Austin, TX. A total of 48 yuvas took part in the YUVA Sangam. Both retreats provided an opportunity to network and to share experiences.



SouthWest Hindu YUVA Sangam



Hindu YUVA at Ohio State University

