

Indo-American News

READ US ONLINE at www.indoamerican-news.com | Published weekly from Houston, TX

7457 Harwin Dr, Suite 262, Houston, TX 77036 • PH: 713 789 6397 • Fax: 713 789 6399 • indoamericannews@yahoo.com

Circulation Verified by
CIRCULATION
VERIFICATION
COUNCIL



Come Play With Us! : Kids at VVM Playground Opening Ceremony

BY PRAVEENA LAKSHMANAN
HOUSTON: On Sunday, March 1, Vallabh Vidya Mandir (VVM) celebrated their milestone event of successfully installing a new playground for children. The event was attended by nearly 300 individuals including adults and children, who joyously took part in the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Fighting the winterchill, children and their parents participated in the cultural ritual- Bhoomi Pujan and the ribbon cutting. One could sense the excitement that each child had to participate in the ceremony. Children could not wait for the official ribbon cutting to start playing. Four little kids inaugurated the playground by cutting the ribbon.

VVM believes that the cultural heritage can best be passed on to younger generation if they are educated to take pride in four areas: Bhajan (worship), Bhojan (food), Bhasha (language), Bhushan (dressing). Keeping these objectives in mind VVM has devel-



Tulsi Parikh cutting the ribbon at the playground opening ceremony along with Phalguni Kikani - Chair Person, Vallabh Vidya Mandir.

they have made an attempt to bridge the (Generation) Gap by arranging events where senior citizens pass on their wisdom and youngsters express their contemporary thoughts.

Soon after VVM opened its doors to the above mentioned initiatives, the idea of play ground was initiated for several reasons.

One of the reason was to keep children occupied and provide them

prove the overall ambiance of the facility to make it more inviting to younger generation.

Suresh Patel, Phalguni Kikani, Rajendra Patel and Devendra Desai were VVM members involved in the playground project. "We investigated and found twelve reputed suppliers. Subsequently, we invited proposals from four of them. Finally after

comparing their bids we selected Game Time to supply and construct our playground", said Patel.

The playground has a high quality outdoor playground equipment. It has facilities for children of all age groups. The playground equipment is meant to provide children with a fun and interactive environment.

It has two play structures one each for 2-5 years age group and for 5-12 years age group. It also includes swing sets for toddlers and older children. In addition, the playground possesses rockers (in the shape of whale & dinosaur) which can be used by two children at a time.

Costing around \$ 75,000, expenses towards the installation, the playground was funded by over 100 families with contributions ranging from as little as \$51 to \$ 5001.

Anish Patel Foundation donated Basketball system. Shalin Patel donated for Volleyball system and court development. Pankaj Assar of Fourway Travels donated largest amount (\$5,000).

Kalpesh Mehta, Ashwin Patel, Ramesh Parikh and Nikul Patel were the highest bidders for the sponsorship of the ribbon cutting ceremony by four little children.

Some of the challenges the committee faced was that of the space allocated. Since the space allocated for the playground had unique di-

mensions (long and narrow tract), the committee did not have the luxury of placing equipment as we pleased informed Patel. Careful consideration was given to safety and code compliance. With slight reorientation of equipment and relocating component we could overcome all construction obstacles, he added.

Meeting organizational objective



Left to Right: Kids Riya Shah, Laksh Parikh, Keshav Shah and Tulsi Parikh inaugurated the play structures at the playground opening ceremony.

of raising funds took six months. This challenge was overcome by regular publishing and e-mailing progress reports to potential supporters and explaining the project in a face-to-face meetings, added Kikani.

The VVM committee thanks the community for the extended support provided and looks forward to community participation in upcoming events.



Children play at the newly opened VVM playground

oped an educational curriculum along these lines for children and adults. VVM arranges an annual show where students display what they have learned during the school year. One other major initiative by VVM is that

playing and exercising opportunities between classes, says Suresh Patel, Vice Chairman VVM and Chairman, VPSS.

Phalguni Kikani, Chair Person, VVM adds, we also wanted to in-



Little Komal enjoys her first ride in the new playground