

# Newsletter ~ Vallabh Vidya Mandir ~

Publisher – VVM

Volume Number 2

Issue Number 1

Date: January 2006

## An Expression...

The celebration of New Year is the oldest of all holidays. It was first observed in ancient Babylon about 4000 years ago with the first New Moon. The beginning of spring is a logical time to start a new year. After all, it is the season of rebirth, of planting new crops, and of blossoming. January 1, on the other hand, has neither astronomical nor agricultural significance. It is arbitrary.

The Babylonian New Year celebration lasted for eleven days. Each day had its own particular mode of celebration, but it is safe to say that modern New Year's Eve festivities pale in comparison.

The Romans continued to observe the New Year in late March, but various emperors continually tampered with their calendar that soon became out of sync with the sun.

Julius Caesar, in 46 BC, established the Julian calendar. It again established January 1 as the New Year. But in order to synchronize the calendar with the sun, Caesar had to let the previous year drag on for 445 days.

Although in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD the Romans continued to

celebrate the New Year, the Catholic Church had remained opposed to the festivities all through the Middle Ages. January 1 has thus, been celebrated as a holiday by Western nations for only about the past 400 years.

Usually people make a wish for the New Year. This year, make no wish. Let 2006 celebrate us. If it wants to bring us nicer things, let it.

Most times we are lost in celebration. However, when we let time celebrate **us**, we are a witness amidst celebration. To realize our full spiritual nature is to experience the fullness of life. Fullness of life is experienced when a person is devoted to serve the people, the country, and to God himself. *A true devotee is like a good watch: open face, busy hands, pure Gold, and full of good works.*

Service is the ability to direct every single thought, word, and deed as an offering to God; it is an act of worship.

When we reach out and try to interconnect with our fellow men and women, we are celebrating God's creation. It also shows that we care, love and serve that being. There is a dire need to apply this extension

and expansion to the entire world as in the concept of "the world is one family".

*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.*

*Phalguni Kikani*

## ...VVM Update

I would like to once again thank all of the incredible volunteers, parents and students. Your combined impact is immeasurable! During the Holiday season our Vidya Mandir participated in toys and gift drive for the needy families. It was an act of service. We were able to collect \$122.00 in cash and 44 sets of toys. This was our first step towards teaching children the importance of selfless service. Ordinary people become "extraordinary" because of their commitment to serving. Through selfless service men and women transform their life and make lasting contributions to society. They exemplify the words of Gandhi – "when you surrender completely to God as the only truth worth having, you find yourself in the service of all that exists. It becomes your joy and recreation. You never tire of serving others".

*Phalguni Kikani*

# Newsletter ~ *Vallabh Vidya Mandir* ~

Publisher – VVM

Volume Number 2

Issue Number 1

Date: January 2006

## Well begun is only half done !!!

Year 2005 has come to a glorious end for Vallabh Vidya Mandir. In 2005 we got legally organized, opened our bank account and got recognized by IRS as a 501 (c ) (3) - public charity qualifying us for tax-deductible contributions and started receiving financial support from individuals who care for education and character building values VVM strives to impart.

In 2005, our education program that was envisioned some time ago came to fruition with the help from Phalguni Kikani who joined us with a deep sense of commitment and provided us with necessary leadership. We have been able to interest about 150 students in our education program offering over fifteen different courses taught by over twenty dedicated volunteer teachers. Attracting interested students, earning trust of parents, securing commitment from caring teachers, and obtaining financial backing from generous contributors have helped us march forward. This is a good beginning. But it is only a beginning...

We have yet to broaden our scope, scale greater heights and achieve a great deal more before we can say our efforts have paid off and our goals reached. This will take patience, careful planning and persistent efforts on our part. *Are we ready for that?*

Let us move on with confidence in our ability and finish the unfinished tasks with grace from Lord Shri Nathjee.

Wishing you all a happy, peaceful, healthy, fruitful and prosperous 2006. Jay Shree Krishna.

*Sureshbhai Patel*

## Special Thanks...

- To our front desk staff - Nisha Shah, Pinky Desai and Mita patel and our ever-ready helper Sanjeev Dave.
- To our Substitute teachers. **Cooking** - Harsha Mithani and Sohani Shah. **SAT**- Dr.Jitendra Kikani
- To Surendrabhai & Kailasben Patel for contributing \$25,000 and inspiring others. It helped us raise an additional \$35,000.
- To our dedicated **SAT** teacher Anilbhai Shah for making a \$5,000 contribution with matching grant from his employer *Global Santa Fe*.

- To our dedicated **Religion** teacher Rashmibhai Desai for contributing his time and funds to build \$6,000 worth of cabinets for the VVM library

We express our deep gratitude to all these generous supporters.

## Announcements

- Kids Yoga-workshop on 22<sup>nd</sup> January at 12 PM. Please encourage your children to attend.
- Skin-Care workshop on 5<sup>th</sup> February at 12:00 PM.

## Up Coming Events

*Family dinner night –*

*January 21, 2006*

(Please purchase your tickets from the front desk on the 8<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2006)

*VVM Annual Program –*

*April 22, 2006*

### **Attention:**

- If you are not receiving e-mails, please inform at kikanis@earthlink.net