



Newsletter ~ Vallabh Vidya Mandir ~



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An Expression...

In today's modern society significant importance is placed on "education". When we think of education, we think of classrooms, books, computers, teachers and we see math, chemistry labs and history assignments. But "education" is a lot more than mere class work and schooling. True education is the one that prepares us for life's journey, provides a balanced outlook, and allows us to live a happy life. True education is not just to help us achieve a rich livelihood or have skills but it is a lifelong learning.

An appropriate education should include nurturing the spirit as well as the mind. An educated person learns to live a dynamic, wholesome and a contented life. Education is a tool that helps us bring out our talents, discover our essential nature and learn the purpose of our life.

As Swami Jyotirmayananda said "to be educated, in more profound sense, implies to be able to develop your human potential and higher values, to be able to handle your mental stress, to be able to

live with people with adaptability, and to develop the divine qualities of the soul: humility, goodness of the heart, compassion, selflessness. If these qualities are lacking, one is not educated."

The capability to handle challenges in life measures our education level. There are people who do not hold high degrees but can handle challenges and stress of life, they can keep calm in adversity, have a mature judgment in difficult situations, and can advise others. Such people radiate a sense of comfort and inspiration to others. I believe these kinds of people are 'truly educated'.

According to Hindu *shastra*, there are four purposes in life: *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha*

Dharma is the basic purpose of life and the pillar of education. A conscious mind and clear righteousness towards life is *Dharma*. Whatever we earn, must be based on *Dharma*. If *Dharma* is not part of our learning, our education is not complete. The guideline in an ideal educational system is, to promote harmony and goodness in people. Swami

Jyotirmayananda says, "One should never step beyond the principles of nonviolence, truth, and purity. Greed, violence, and passion must not be given license, but are to be controlled."

VVM Annual Show

**Sunday May 17, 2009
(3:00 pm to 5:00 pm)**

Open to Public

Bring Family & Friends

The second purpose of life is *Artha* or financial status. Earning money with a basic grounding in *Dharma* helps us live a balanced life. This *money or artha* helps towards self – improvement, a means to help society by performing good deeds.

The next purpose in life is *Karma*. Developing a healthy social relationship is part of a good education. Our education system should prepare us to adapt and adjust with different people, personalities and live in harmony. It makes our life rich and vibrant. Putting aside one's ego to help other people is the most profound aspect of education.



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Moksha, liberation from this earthly life is the final and ultimate purpose. Swami Jyotirmayananda says, “*In this stage the knowledge that you gain is known as Para Vidya*”. The Upanishad say there are two types of Vidya or Knowledge: Apara and Para. Apara is the lower or relative knowledge, the knowledge that helps us in our daily life. When we practice concentration and meditation, and are guided by a guru, then we discover a knowledge that brings about a complete fulfillment of the urge to know. Para Vidya is that knowledge.

Para Vidya is an attainment where all educational systems culminate. One develops virtuous qualities like humility, patience, sincerity, and simplicity. One becomes self-dependent and flows out of himself in service to humanity and thereby communes with God. These are the highlights of true education.”

I hope we are able to create such an environment for our future generation. Often it is said that parent’s are children’s first teachers. In that sense, it is our primary job to teach a child his or

her alphabet, numbers and how to read and write. Actually, the virtue of *being* a parent is to be a teacher in the course of children’s daily experiences of life.

Parents can teach the values through modeling, through cautioning and through our interactions with other adults and children. We teach sensitivity, or insensitivity, tolerance or intolerance, patience or impatience, self-discipline or impulsiveness, empathy or judgmentalism, and a vast array of emotions, as we face life’s daily challenges.

Parents can teach organizational skills by their working style around the house while cleaning and sorting. They can teach math while cooking via measuring and estimating. History and geography can be taught while conversing about family heritage. No classroom lesson on mountains, valley, cities, oceans, desert, and forests can be complete without the knowledge children gain while driving or traveling. We can help children become open to wonderful world of science by taking advantage of what we come into contact with on a daily basis. We

can teach biology when we answer their many questions about animals and plants.

We can see that as parents we have a serious responsibility for our children’s complete education. Swami Chinmayananda says “*Never can children’s education be complete unless we impart in them a true appreciation of the eternal values of life.*”

Phalguni Kikani

New School Year

2009-2010 Academic Year
begins on **Sept 13, 2009**

**Registration Dates –
Aug 23rd & Aug 30th**

Mark your Calendars

More Details To Be Announced

The March is On..

As per plans, on a sunny but a cool noon of Sunday, March 1, 2009 Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the new playground took place. Over 300 adults and children attended the ceremony. The event was emceed by Raseshbhai Dalal.



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After the chanting of Purushottam Sahastra Paath, elaborate religious ceremony was performed by Shri Viratbhai Mehta in which Dhruv Patel and Pratik Gandhi participated. This was followed by short speeches by Sureshbhai Patel and Phalguniben Kikani. At the suggestion of a few attendees, sponsorship for Ribbon cutting was bid. Four highest bidders were – Kalpesh Mehta, Ashwinbhai Patel, Rameshbhai Parikh and Nikul Patel. Their bids plus other spontaneous donations helped us raise over \$5,500 on the spot. Ribbons for the playground for 2-5 years age group were cut by Tulsi Parikh (daughter of Manish and Ami Parikh) and Laksh Parikh (son of Manish & Krishna Parikh) and the ribbons for the playground for 5-12 years age group were cut by Keshav Shah (son of Rajiv and Nisha Shah) and Riya Parikh (daughter of Vinay and Sonal Parikh). Immediately after the ribbon cutting anxious children jumped on the slides and swings, on risers and climbers, on Dinosaur and Whale to try variety of play activities. The excitement was in the air. Pleasure on the young faces was noticeable.

After the ceremony the guests moved to Vallabh Hall. A delicious Mexican meal prepared by Vallabh Hall volunteers, including Virendrabhai Patel, Naynaben Patel, Harshaben Patel and Rajendrabhai Patel was served. Soft instrumental music played by Akshaybhai Shah filled the air.

The festive occasion ended with feelings of joy and satisfaction on part of the donors and children, their parents and grandparents. The event was well covered by Indo-American News.

Few remaining minor improvements to the playground will be implemented in the near future. All parents are requested to monitor the children while they are playing to ensure their safety and proper use of expensive playground equipment.

We thank all the donors who generously contributed for the playground and the protective sturdy fence. We will appreciate a contribution of \$101, \$151 or \$251 from all the parents who chose not to contribute until now. Now that you have seen what has been created for all the children, please come forward and support the

project generously. It is a small sacrifice to make for the long term pleasure and physical fitness of our children.

Sureshbhai Patel

..Final Day

The Last Day of School is

May 17th, 2009

Pls make a note





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Carnival 2009...

Vallabh Vidya Mandir's second annual carnival was celebrated on Saturday, March 28th, 2009. This was even more enjoyable and more successful than the previous year's - despite the original date being postponed.

This year's carnival was filled with more games and activities than last year. There was no entry fee so everyone could attend and enjoy viewing the festivities and the fun. There was a small charge for unlimited enjoyment of activities. Many of the popular attractions were present again and there were

a few new exciting additions. There were two rides that were favorite among the young children: the pony ride and the train ride. Many young ones enjoyed sitting on the backs of the miniature horses as the animals galloped around like a merry-go-around. Other little tykes found pleasure sitting inside the caboose of the little train. The "train conductor" towed two wagons filled with excited children behind his train.

The bit older and more daring children exhausted themselves with the Moonwalk and the RockClimb, which were two large inflatable activities. They just jumped around in the Moonwalk, refusing to allow even a moment to relax. The carnival committee introduced the RockClimb in this year's function - which was an instant favorite, also. The kids climbed the inflated wall and then simply slid down.

Many young boys and girls enjoyed themselves at the CRAFT CORNER. Some painted their names on a visor. There were quite a few that visited the face painting booth to get colorful art drawn on their cheeks and hands. In another booth, kids could make



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photo frames and adorned it with gems, glitter, and stickers. There was even more anticipation at the mehndi booth where many young girls waited patiently to get the palm of their hands decorated with intricate and traditional designs. Some girls also made bracelets out of the strings and gems.

A variety of games offered plenty of entertainment and prizes throughout the nearly five hour event. The Ring-toss game was one of the favorites where the individual who tossed a ring around a soda bottle actually won the soda bottle. Other activities included the basketball game where the young ones would be awarded prizes for getting the basketball in the basketball net. One other favorite game was the ping-pong ball toss where the participant won a prize for getting the little ball in the cups. There was also a game where you had to find coins in a stack of hey.

Everyone had a merry time watching the children play while getting being entertained with two very talented young DJs. They played a mix of Bollywood and

American pop-culture songs throughout the event.

Children were not the only ones enjoying themselves VVM's Carnival 2009. While the children filled their hearts with joy with the variety of activities at the event, the adults filled their stomachs with the delicious food. The menu included such American carnival favorites, like roasted corn, nachos, pizza, cotton candy and sno-cones. But this function would not be complete without our Desi favorites, like bhel, pav bhaji, and home-made guava ice cream.

Raseshbhai Dalal ended the festivities with his gratitude to all the volunteers - both young and old. He thanked the Texas State Trooper who provided the security and the young DJs that provided the musical entertainment. He also thanked the sponsors - their financial backing made it possible for much of the activities. He introduced Mr. Alan, the representative from Continental Airlines - the GOLD sponsor for the event. Sureshbhai Patel presented VPSS memento as token appreciation to major sponsors for their contributions.

Let us not forget the other volunteers who worked behind-the-scene to make this Carnival 2009 a success. The carnival organizing committee comprised of several sub committees (Facility Management – led by Rajiv Shah, Prerak Shah and Bijal Shah, Finance & Sponsorship – led by Ashish Vyas and Manish Parikh, Games & Activities – led by Krishna Parikh, Nisha Shah and Rachana Shah, Advertise & Marketing – led by Phalguni Kikani, Food & Beverages – led by Naynaben Dalal) who spent many hours to plan the various components of the event. They arranged for the security, the sponsors, the equipment, the food, the activities, and prizes. They dedicated many hours running around and purchasing the supplies to allow the attendants of the carnival to enjoy the musical entertainment, the games and activities, and the food.

We also need to thank the individuals and the companies that supported the carnival with their financial contributions. Many members gave personal donations along with their time. Continental



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Airlines was the Grand Sponsor. Sattelite4U, the installer of Dish Network, was the Gold Sponsor. And Fourways Travel was Silver Sponsor.

Please join me in thanking all the individuals and entities that helped make VVM's Carnival 2009 a great event and a great success. If you had the opportunity to attend the event, you already know how much fun it was. We all hope you will encourage your family and friends to join us again at the next celebration. With participation from all of us, we can make Carnival 2010 even better.

Manish Parikh

