

ANNUAL REPORT AT GENERAL BODY MEETING 2004
Bharatiya Temple of Lansing
December 5, 2004

Dhiraj N. Shah, Chair, Board of Trustees

Dear Friends:

Namaskar and Jai Jinendra.

On behalf of your Board of Trustees and our two priests, Sharmaji and Shastriji, I am happy to report to you that the state of our temple continues to be very good. Throughout the year we have provided you regular updates to keep you informed of the temple's progress. This is our closing annual report.

- Our religious and spiritual activities have continued. The monthly pujas, havan, lectures and seminars by spiritual leaders, peace prayers, and celebration of religious festivals all continued as before. Festivals like Mahashivaratri, Ramnavmi, Ganesh Chaturthi, Durga puja, Satyanarayan puja, Mahavir Jayanti were celebrated. This year several other festivals like Vara Lakshmi puja, Gokulashtami midnight vigil, special Saraswathi puja for children were performed as well. Also, for the first time in our temple, Padmavathi-Srinivas Kalyanotsavam was celebrated on Vijayadashmi day. Bhoomi puja was performed for building the necessary additions. Lectures/seminars by scholars like Bodhanandji, Harishchandraji, Meenakshi Devi were held. The Arya Samaj has continued to be very active and has regularly scheduled activities. The 'Choti Diwali' celebration started last year was very well attended by young families and children. The Mahalaxmipoojan was performed at the temple and very well attended.
- During the year several cultural programs were organized very successfully at the temple. 'Savitri', a dance drama by Sangeeta Kar, was performed during Navaratri festival. Like last year, the mega cultural Diwali program was held at Okemos High School auditorium. The hall was packed to capacity. Many volunteers helped to make it a very successful event and for that we thank each individual volunteer. The two individuals mainly responsible for coordinating and managing the event were Paula Gangopadhyay and Chandrakant Khiroya. Both deserve to be commended for their extraordinarily hard work and skillful management of their respective responsibilities.
- Temple Treasurer Smruti Shah will give the detailed financial report but let me just say a word about her. Smruti is extremely capable at what she does and she is doing an outstanding job as a Treasurer. Financially, the Temple has done very well in recent years. We are meeting our monthly expenses and overall adding to the treasury. In effect, we are on auto-pilot for the Temple's

annual normal operations. Our challenge is to build the necessary additions so that our Temple is complete and, we have a nice and adequate facility that can meet the growing needs and activities of our community. We firmly believe that we have the means and resources in our community to embark on this project. We must now gather the will to proceed.

- Our services in the Greater Lansing community like Soup Kitchen, Meals on Wheels, Food Bank have continued. Our participation in Unity in Community activities and Interfaith prayer services has continued. Several new initiatives like coordinating visits to individuals in the assisted living centers, and 'Anubhav Mantap' (a discussion series on various topics with Hindu perspective) started this year. Our participation in these activities helps create goodwill for our entire community. The volunteers who contribute their time and monies in these efforts deserve our special compliments. I want to take this opportunity to commend the new chair of the Community Services Committee Loki Naga. She is working feverishly to take this activity to a new level.
- Our last year's initiative to offer puja and other service reservation requests through the internet was implemented early this year. Since the service is not being utilized much, we will need to increase awareness about this service.
- The education class activity has increased significantly. We currently have Youth, Bal Vihar, ShishuVihar (a new initiative this year by Loki Naga for 4 to 6 years age group children), Tamil (a new initiative by Suseela Umakanth), dance, and Gita classes on a regular basis. Besides the Gita classes, Dr. Raju also conducts various other class sessions in Hindu scriptures. We thank Dr. Raju, Rajiv Das, Carla Guggenheim, Shashi and Preeti Karve, Loki Naga and Suseela Umakanth for their commitment and dedication. The students in these classes are learning very important lessons about our religion, philosophy, and values. The future of this Temple lies with these students. We want to assure that in building the necessary additions a proper emphasis is placed in designing the space for these classes. This emphasis cannot be compromised.
- Broadening the base of donors and volunteers – currently there over 1000 families on our mailing list. About 10% of these families are either life or annual members. While we have tried to increase membership and this year we even had a Membership Desk at the Diwali program, our efforts thus far have not been very successful. On the positive side, our revenues and donations from non-members has continually been increasing. Analysis of last year's revenue reveals that the member/non-member split is about 40/60 i.e. more monies came from non-members than members. Every family in our community should share some responsibility in maintaining and supporting this temple. Each one of you can help by talking to your friends or neighbors in support of the temple, and asking them to donate and become members.

- Our plans for building the necessary additions are on track. The Site Plan was submitted to Meridian Township within the last couple of weeks. An architect has been retained to draw the construction plans. If all goes well in the approval process and if we have the pledges for 50% of the projected costs, the construction will begin early next year.
- Finally, your Board would like to thank all members, donors, volunteers, devotees, and of course both our priests for the continued support of the temple. It is this support that keeps our temple a vibrant and thriving place that it is.

On a personal note, I want to first thank all members of this Temple for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Board member for the last six years. I also would like to thank each of the Board members for trusting me to serve as the chair for the last two years. Serving with friends at the Temple was a privilege and the work very gratifying.

Thank you for your attention and God bless.