

ANNUAL REPORT AT THE GENERAL BODY MEETING
Bharatiya Temple of Lansing
December 3, 2006

Smruti A. Shah, Chair, Board of Trustees

Dear Friends,

As we approach the end of the year 2006, the memories of the events that occurred during the year remain fresh and will continue to be cherished in the history of the Temple. The events of 2006 started to unfold as soon as the 2006 Board convened on January 1, 2006. The board's decision regarding the phased approach to expedite the process of raising and collecting funds for the Temple Completion plan created major debate. Several Town Hall meetings and a Special General Body meeting were arranged. As a result, resolution 2006-1 was approved leading to the phased approach.

In the first four months of the year, the Board met numerous times for planning and preparing for the Town Hall and the Special General Body meetings in addition to the biweekly board meetings. This placed an extra strain on the Board members. Due to the intelligence, diligence, devotion, hard work and team effort of each Board member as well as the members of the community, we were able to successfully plan and complete the Navagraha Prana Pratishtha celebration in a short time.

Navagraha Prana Pratishtha celebration was a grand event. Hundreds of devotees participated during all three days, June 30 - July 2 2006, of Navagraha installation and consecration ceremonies and cultural programs. Various committees were formed and over one hundred volunteers worked very hard, especially from April through June 2006. The community was enthusiastic and energized. For me personally, as I am sure for you too, it was an unforgettable event of life. Following the Navagraha Prana Pratishtha, daily Mandala Puja was performed for 48 days for the newly consecrated Navagraha Devatas. I take this opportunity to proudly report that the attendance in the Temple has increased since then.

Our regularly held religious and spiritual activities have continued during the year with the same vigor. The first Sunday satsang, the third Sunday Havan, the fourth Sunday Jain puja and monthly Satyanarayana puja have all continued as before. In addition, throughout the year devotees had the opportunity of participating in many religious events. These included Lodhi, Pongal, Makara Sankranti, Maha Shivaratri, Holi, Ugadi/Gudipadava, Arudradharshanam Tulsi Krit "Shri Rama" Charitmanas Reading, Mata Ki Chowki, Janmashtami, Ganesh festival, Ramanavmi, Dassera, Srinivasa Kalyanam, Karwa Choth Puja, Laksharchana Puja for Lord Vishnu, Skanda Shashti, and Gita Jayanti. Navaratri and Diwali celebrations were colorful. Ras Garba and Lakshmi puja respectively were major highlights of these two festivals.

Another FIRST this year was the 'Durga Puja' celebration, an inclusive event with every one from the community participating. It was the first time a Durga Murti was brought into the temple for worship and will be used in the years to come for worship on Durga Ashtmi day.

A few new weekly religious programs were introduced to our ongoing activities: Shri Rudram Chanting on Tuesdays, Srirama Bhakthi Deepika on Thursdays, and Vishnu Sahasranamam recitation on Saturdays are now weekly activities in the temple.

Many cultural programs including several dances, music performances, discourses etc. took place during the year. Among them the major events: four dancers from the visiting Ragamala Music and Dance Theater of Minneapolis demonstrated some of the Bharatanatyam moves and talked about the dance form and culture; and discourse by Swami Bodhananda on the topic of "A Conversation with Krishna: Five Spiritual Questions of Arjuna."

Financially, we have increased the puja revenues and membership revenues compared to the last year. However, the general donations has held fairly steady. The Navagraha Prana Pratishtha event generated new \$126,500 revenues and assisted in collecting old pledges in the amount of \$46,000. These monies are placed in a separate bank account and temporarily restricted for upcoming construction and capital improvements. The temple established a line of credit for \$50,000 with the Fifth Third Bank to support operational expenses, if needed. However, we have not needed to use this line of credit. Our Diwali fundraiser raised new pledges in the amount of \$39,000 to be collected in the next five years.

Our participation in social activities for the Greater Lansing community like Soup Kitchen, Meals on Wheels, and Greater Lansing Food Bank have continued. Sundari Rajan and Minesh Mody coordinate the 'soup kitchen' activity, Chandrakant Khiroya coordinates the 'Meals on Wheels' program, and Jai Jaglan and Bidhan Redey coordinate the 'food bank' drive. I, on behalf of the Board, sincerely thank all of the volunteers who contribute their valuable time and money towards these efforts.

The participation in educational activities has increased significantly. Bal Vihar class coordinated by Shashi and Priya Karve now has fifty youngsters and youth class coordinated by Lakshmi Subramanian and Leela Mohan has ten youths. In addition, Dr. C. Adinarayana Reddy is conducting a weekly Gita class with approximately twenty adults attending. Beginning this summer, Wholistic Physical Therapy is offering a free daily early morning yoga class at the Temple coordinated by Chetna Desai and Susan Bamford. We thank these individuals for their commitment and dedication.

During the year 2006 our annual membership has also increased. We encourage you to continue to be an annual member or reach the \$10,000 threshold to become a life member and participate actively in temple activities. Your contribution and involvement in the temple's day-to-day affairs is very important for the temple's future.

As in the previous years, we had organized visits from various student and community groups to learn our culture and religion. The visitors and the Lansing media have commended us in general. Requests for visits have significantly increased, demonstrating a general curiosity and appreciation for our religion in the Greater Lansing area.

This year's Diwali program was a great success. Around eight hundred devotees attended the program. We extend our sincere thanks to all the participants, choreographers, volunteers, and

specially Paula Gangopadhyay for coordinating and emceeding the event. We tried something new in terms of dinner outsourcing. We have identified some aspects that we will improve next year.

Looking ahead/Goals: The community's plans for completing the temple must continue. With the Navagraha Prana Pratishtha we have started to raise necessary funds so that the construction can begin. Additional work needs to be done. Your support is critical in that effort. The need for Temple completion was identified four years ago. The completion includes necessary Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, a permanent Yagnashala, additional bathrooms, a full kitchen facility, and classrooms. The more we wait, the more the construction cost will increase. It is essential to proceed forward quickly without losing precious time.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each member of the Board for their dedication and hard work. This Board has been cohesive, constructive, and each member has worked very hard to keep this temple running smoothly. Their efforts were instrumental in this year's very successful results. I feel privileged to have been a member of this team.

Finally, I wish to express my thanks to all of you for your support and friendship. Your trust has helped me to serve as the Treasurer for six years and as the Chair this year.

Thanks!!