



Om bhur bhuvah svah tat-savitur varenyam
bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo nah
prachodayat

Editor: Arjun Mehta

Contributing to this issue:
Priya Manucha and Kreena
Totala

Visiting Gayatri Chetna Center of New Jersey

Spring 2017

It has been another amazing year here at GGKLI. I am excited to be the new editor of the GGKLI newsletter. I welcome all written contributions from all students.

This year has been filled with lots of great learning and wonderful activities. Some which are written in this newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading about them.

Wishing everybody a wonderful summer and I am excited to see all of you in the fall.

~Arjun

This December ten students from Group 7 were invited to Gayatri Chetna Center in NJ as guest speakers to teach 150 students at their Balsanskar shala. We tried to pass on our knowledge and experiences to the students there. There was also a presentation to the parents, *Drugs in America*, from Nita Auntie. Students included Shrey Thaker, Shubh Thaker, Arjun Mehta, Jahnvi Arora, Prisha Arora, Priya Manucha, Ikshu Pandey, Kreena Totala, Shimona Agarwal, and Adiram Marisetti. We thank our parents and our teachers who spent the day with us in NJ. Several of our students shared their experiences:

Reflection by Kreena Totala: *Words cannot express how deeply I am honored to have been part of such a wonderful event. It was fascinating to visit another Gayatri center and see the similarities. We met other volunteers from their center. They were very friendly and welcomed us with open arms. They had their own mandhir and different classrooms. It felt wonderful standing in front of the children and giving back to them the knowledge and values that we have gained. My group spoke about the importance of unity, selfless giving, and team building. We did arts and crafts, showed them videos, and played teambuilding games. We also did a skit to learn about the importance of working together as a team to put on an amazing performance! I have learned a lot through working with my friends and ensuring all went well. It has helped me realize how many good morals GGKLI has given to me; so much so, that I was able to impart this goodness onto young children and hopefully guide them in the right direction. I am forever thankful to GGKLI for the knowledge I have gained; and also for making me become a much better person. Before, I would never fathom speaking in front of so many children. Now, GGKLI has given me the support and confidence to make this possible. I am so grateful for this excellent opportunity GGKLI has given me. Thanks to Pragna auntie and all others who helped arrange this invaluable experience for us.*

Reflection by Priya Manucha: *My group and I gave a presentation to the younger kids. We taught them about teamwork and seva, giving without getting anything back. To emphasize teamwork I read the story of The Enormous Potato. The story starts with a farmer who planted a potato, however, he can't seem to get it out of the ground, so he calls his wife, his daughter and all of his pets to help him, and at last they get the potato out of the ground. So I created masks and the children acted out the story as it was told so they could really get the feeling of teamwork, and have all the other kids engaged. The experience was incredible. It was a lot of fun giving our presentations and partaking in this trip.*

Reflection by Arjun Mehta: *Going to New Jersey to teach other members of our GGKLI family was an honor for me. From the moment we entered we were greeted with a warm welcome from everybody from the students to the teachers. Shrey, Jahnavi, and I presented to group 4 where the students were between the ages of 10-13. My topic was Time Management. Time management is a very important topic for the students to hear about because schools put more and more work on us and we have to learn to juggle between school work, sports, music instruments and lots more. This creates too much stress even at our age. I presented ways to stay organized, work more productively, use new technology apps and tools, as well as making time to have fun! I hope we will have other opportunities to share our experiences with other GGKLI communities.*





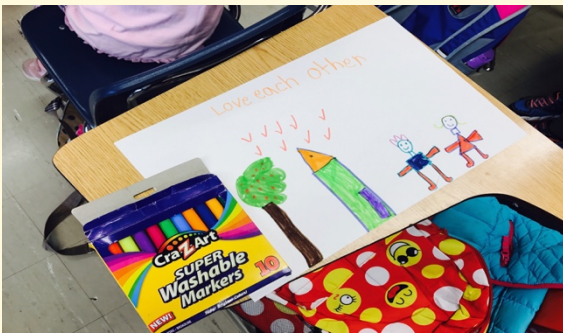
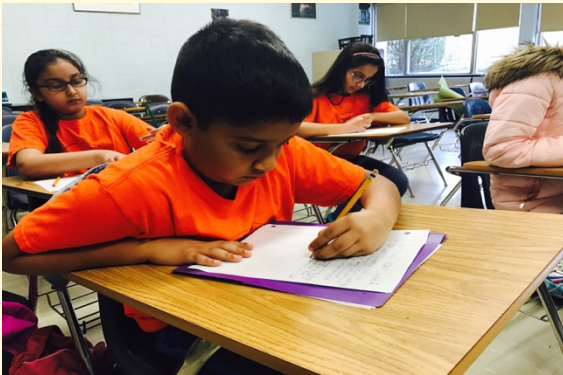
National Youth Day

Bal Sanskar Shala of AWGP had announced a worldwide drawing and writing competition entitled “YUVA Unstoppable.” This children's competition was to honor our youth on National Youth Day which is on Swami Vivekananda’s birthday.

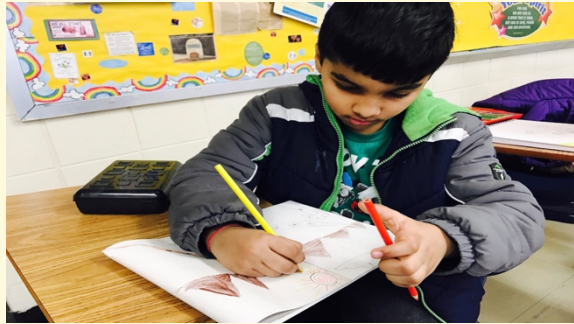
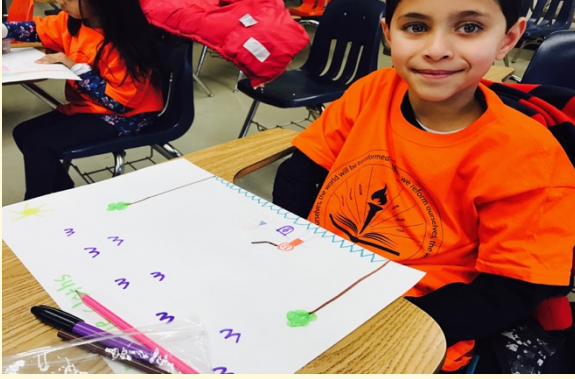
On Sunday, January 8th, 2017 all students from GGKLI participated in the competition. Groups 4 and above chose between writing an essay or writing a poem. The essay writing theme was, “How can I contribute to the betterment of my family, society, and the world?” The theme of the poem was, “Youth and it’s worth.” It was an opportunity for young people to think about what changes we can make to better our nation. Our younger students participated in the art competition where the theme was “How can I help make this country better using the values I learnt at Bal Sanskar Shala.”

On that cool brisk morning, all students were ready for the competitions. They came in with their art supplies and writing utensils. The young artists were ready to draw lovely pictures. As from the photos attached some students looked serious. Other students looked excited. Some thought for a while putting together their thoughts, some wrote notes first then wrote their paragraphs, and others wrote page after page without taking a pause until the bell rang. They were all giving their best. We congratulate all the winners!

Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.
~ Mahatma Gandhi



Do not judge me by my successes. Judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.
~ Nelson Mandela



Youth Pledge Day With Special Guests

Pledge day was a special GGKLI program when the students of Culture group 7 stood up and took a pledge publicly in front of our peers, parents, and teachers never to take drugs, never to drink alcohol and find ways to hold true to higher morals and ethics. We vowed to be true to ourselves and to our environment. For this event our special guests were Simon Dennis and his colleagues Elizabeth, Karen and Claudia.

Simon is an entrepreneur and the founding director of the Center for Transformational Practice where he practices sustainable living and conducts educational and spiritual programs. The group reside in Vermont and came to visit us for the special GGKLI pledge day.

Simon spoke about making change for the better. He stressed the importance of bringing inner transformations and a consciousness shift of our work for justice and sustainability.

After spending ten years creating and leading his program called COVER, Simon became deeply inspired by the All World Gayatri Pariwar and the idea of simple living. Following this passion, he spent a year in India writing "Thought Revolution," a book about that movement and the Simon 's philosophy and vision.

His program offers meditation retreats, workshops and discussion groups. There are two-day meditation retreats which focus on themes such as reflection, creative expression and social change.

He shared what we students and parents can do to sustain our environment. Great examples included reducing plastic bottle use, reducing garbage waste, cultivating skills, conserving our resources, and growing our own food. We incorporate these types of good examples as part of our pledge to conserve and preserve our Earth.



In Health News...



This year we had other guest speakers. **Dr. Jayeshkumar Makavana** is a specialist in Internal Medicine. His wife Vandana auntie is a Gujarati volunteer teacher and his children are a part of the GGKLI school.

His talk was about the adult medical problems of diabetes, obesity, hypertension, cancer and osteoporosis. The adults learned that 1 in 11 patients in the US has diabetes! We learned in order to prevent diabetes it is important to lose weight, eat healthy foods, exercise, and see your doctor regularly.

Obesity has become an epidemic in America. Doing resistant exercises and burst exercises helps to burn calories. Eating more fruits and vegetables is important than processed foods.

We learned that sitting is the new smoking! So we need to move more.

He spoke about how high blood pressure can cause strokes and heart attacks. To avoid this Dr. Makavana recommended weight loss and decreasing our salt intake.

To stay healthy we need to see our doctors to make sure our immunizations are done on time and screenings for cancer and other health conditions are checked.

Thanks to Dr. Makavana for all the great information!

Another guest speaker was a returning speaker, **Dr. Kamini Shah** who presented a lecture to our GGKLI parents.

Dr. Shah is a rheumatologist who treats arthritis, autoimmune diseases, pain disorders affecting joints, and osteoporosis. There are more than 200 types of these diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, gout, lupus, back pain, osteoporosis, and tendinitis.

She presented many pictures of these patients with various conditions and how to treat them. She told us what ways we could protect our bones. We learned why eating calcium rich foods was key to preventing bone loss.

She stressed the importance of moving our bodies through exercise, yoga or tai chi. We need to reduce our stress by mediation, prayer, deep breathing, and yoga. Dr. Shah stayed after to answer many parents's questions and to demonstrate various tai chi movements to do daily to stay flexible. Thank you to Dr. Shah for teaching us about the world of rheumatology and how we can stay strong and fit!



Farewell

Lastly, we say a bittersweet goodbye to our graduating students who will be starting college in the fall. We will miss Shimona Agarwal, Roshni Patel, and Priyanka Mehta. They have contributed great service to GGKLI over the years. We wish them the very best!



CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES OF 2017!