

July 2, 2017

Dear HCCNA Devotees,

It is my distinct honor and privilege to have the opportunity to serve as the President of Hindu Cultural Center of North Alabama (HCCNA). I took over this responsibility about two to three months ago and I am reaching to you all for your support, cooperation and involvement. This is the only temple in the Huntsville area that provides a full range of religious and cultural services. The temple was founded in 1995. We started from the old temple building and slowly moved into the new building around 2005. The temple has come a long way since then. The interior has nearly been completed and exterior work has been ongoing slowly as funds become available.

A new executive committee and a new board has been constituted. There are some issues and challenges such as low attendance and finance. We have lost some of our staunch supporters and we need to bring them back. The new Executive Committee working with the Board, has already initiated some new initiatives such as modernization of the facilities. A cleanliness campaign has been started; we are compiling donor list and recognize all past donors, build hall of fame/plaque and inscribe names of people who contributed but were forgotten, updating emails and addresses etc. etc. are some of the challenges, we take on this responsibility.

We are a community of over 700 to 800 Indian families in the Huntsville area with scientists, engineers, IT professionals, doctors and business owners. If we all were united we could finish this project much sooner. We could be from North, South, East or West back home but please do not forget here we all are Americans. So, let us rethink, sit down, resolve our differences and let us regroup under one banner. Please remember that political climate is changing in this country. It does not help us if we are fragmented into smaller groups.

HCCNA was founded in 1995 we just celebrated its 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary. The temple has installed deities from every corner of India and HCCNA truly is a "Savajana Mandir". The temple has a very rich architecture, very majestic and looks so elegant when you see it from a distance it stands out. It has slowly but surely evolved into a beautiful place of worship with several religious and spiritual activities, ongoing every single day. It took the dedication, sacrifice, commitment and hard work of many of us. Many of our devotees have given substantial sum of donations and time. We respect their contributions and honor their sacrifices.

We have a worship hall that holds well over 400 devotees but some days we don't have more than a dozen devotees so we need to reenergize, build momentum and build trust and encourage devotees to visit the temple more often. We have community hall downstairs with a state of art sound system and commercial kitchen for social functions. You can also rent the community hall for special family functions. Please sponsor poojas which are held on Saturdays and Sundays on family occasions such as birthday, anniversary, graduation, retirement, weddings, promotions, baby shower or any such family celebrations. You can pick any occasion and sign up at the front desk.

The religious committee chair is Mrs Pushpa Sahu and food committee chair is Sudarshna Thakur. Other committees are currently being formed and will be announced and fully functional in few more weeks. We need more volunteers, if you have time even few hrs./ week that will be good. Volunteering helps make new friends, connect with people, build relationships and learn new skills. So, this is a win-win situation.

A suggestion box has been installed on the first floor (opposite to the elevator). Your input is very valuable. Please drop in a note with your ideas, comments and suggestions. If we are doing good

then also please let us know. Suggestions can be anonymous but if we put your name we will make sure you get a response back.

I am also appealing especially to the younger families who have moved to the Madison area. I suspect many of you may not even know there is a Hindu temple in the vicinity. So please spread the word to your family and friends. We have families coming from as far out as Muscle Shoals and Florence, we appreciate their dedication. The temple is not only a place of weekend worship but also a place of peace, prayer, meditation, religious education and cultural enrichment. The temple provides a quiet place of worship, meditation, relax, socialize and a great outlet for people who come from India to visit their families.

The temple has two wonderful full-time priests, Pavanji (Tel. [256-585-4948](tel:256-585-4948)) and Pandhaji (Tel. [256-479-5361](tel:256-479-5361)). They are highly qualified and well versed in all Hindu scriptures with years of experience in performing all poojas and ceremonies. Priest services are also available to devotee homes. Temple is open 7 days a week. We have yoga classes, language classes, Vedic heritage, Bhagwad Geeta, and meditation classes on weekends.

We are looking for people who can play harmonium, dholak and tabla on Sundays keertans. If someone knows, please call me or any of the members on the executive committee. HCCNA is trying to form collaborations with other local Indian organizations such as HIA, BalVihar, Bengali Society, Gujrati Semaj, Telugu association, HICPA, Swami Narayan Temple and Asha Kiran in supporting each other.

Finally, I am urging the entire Indian community to join hands, forget past small differences and support this temple. I would like to see the temple bustling with people. If there are any suggestions we will incorporate them. We all came from the same land. This is only temple in Huntsville and nearby areas. Let us work together and make this venture that we Indians can be proud of and walk tall. We will be setting a good example to our children and future generations of our identity, heritage, Hindu traditions and values.

Any questions, comments or suggestions please give me or our vice president Dr. Krishnan Pillai ([256-225-2212](tel:256-225-2212)) a call or send an email anytime.

Best Regards and God Bless you all.

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