

Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre of Auckland

Annual Report for the Year 2018-2019

I have pleasure in presenting a brief report of our Centre's activities for the year ended 31st March 2019.

Membership: The membership at the end of this financial year stood at 127, an increase on last year. While I thank the members for their interest, I cannot emphasise enough the importance of them coming forward voluntarily with their subscriptions in time. Subscription revenue forms an important part of our income, hence your cooperation will be appreciated.

Finance: A full and detailed audited Financial Report will follow this report. You will see that our finances are healthy. However, as we expand, our financial needs will also increase. I am grateful to all those who are regularly contributing and encourage others to consider joining in with whatever they are comfortable with.

The flat continues to bring us an income of \$22,000 per year, but bear in mind that this will stop once that flat will be occupied by the resident Swamiji, which we are hopeful will be soon, and our activities will also expand.

We will soon set in motion the process of obtaining resource consent from the Auckland Council to have the Centre property declared a place of community gathering. Once this happens, we will be able to make necessary additions and development to the property to enable us to add to our existing activities.

We therefore need to start building up our finances from now so that we are ready to face the situation when the time comes.

10th Anniversary Celebrations: In December 2018 we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the acquisition and occupation of our property in Arawa Street, New Lynn. At our invitation Revered Swami Adibhavanandaji of the Ahmadabad Centre graced the occasion by his presence along with Swami Tadanandaji of the Fiji Centre.

Program for the weekend commenced with informal meeting with and talks by the visiting Swamijis on Friday evening. On Saturday morning we had a yoga and meditation workshop for beginners at the Otahuhu Community Hall that was addressed by Swami Tadanandaji.

In the evening we invited our friends, supporters and well-wishers, together with representatives of other similar organisations and our devotees to a cultural evening, talks by the Swamijis and

dinner at the Blockhouse Bay Primary School auditorium. The function was well attended and enjoyed by all.

On Sunday morning we had the Puja to install a new Shrine, talks by the visiting Swamijis, followed by Prasad-lunch for all present. This occasion was also well patronised.

The highlight of this occasion was the installation of a new Shrine in the Puja room, a new Library stand, and a fresh restock with new and latest books, CDs, and Mission publications costing about \$15,000.

Together with renovations done last year, the Ashram looks very impressive now.

Activities:

Daily Arti: A vesper service is held daily at 7 pm. Presently, 7 families have undertaken this responsibility. However, I repeat my previous request to others who can spare some time to come forward and join these 7 families by attending whenever it is convenient to them. This is important, as on rare occasions when one of the committed family is not able to fulfil its responsibility, the burden is passed on to one of the remaining families.

Satsangs: Regular Satsangs are held every second and last Sundays of each month from 11 am to 1 pm followed by Prasad-lunch. I am grateful to the members who have voluntarily undertaken to read and speak on the various books we study. Once again, I encourage all members to attend regularly and take part in these programs.

One other aspect to which I wish to draw your attention is our new stock of books. We have purposely kept them at very low prices just to encourage everyone to buy and read them. They can also become a good item of gifts, particularly for the young ones. I hope everyone takes advantage of this.

Other Celebrations: All special occasions celebrated by the Mission are also observed by us. During the year we observed the birth anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda. We also observed Kalpataru Day, Shiva Ratri, Buddh Purnima, Guru Purnima, Durga Puja and Christmas Eve.

Charitable Undertakings: Through the kind sponsorship of our regular supporter, Fashion Biz Ltd., we were able to donate to the Auckland Starship Children's Hospital 900 high quality polar fleece jackets for distribution among needy children patients. This was much appreciated by the Starship Children's Hospital Trust.

Charitable undertakings are an important part of Mission's activities. Keeping in mind this spirit of service, I strongly urge the members to seriously consider allocating some part of our time, efforts and funds towards worthy causes. There are several areas, particularly affecting children, where we can invest our resources. I urge the committee to look into it.

Swamiji's Visits: During the year under review, we had the pleasure of visits by several Swamijs from various parts of the world. Swami Kripamayanandaji from the Toronto, accompanied by a group of devotees, visited us on his way to Australia. We hosted them at the evening Arti and dinner at the Ashram.

After the inauguration of the new Brisbane Centre building, we were visited by Swamis Yuktatmanandaji (New York), Rajeshwaranandaji (Sri Lanka), Dhruveshanandaji (Bangladesh), and Vireshnandaji (Sydney). They were accompanied by Swami Atmeshnandaji from Brisbane, who took them on a tour of South Island before attending our Satsang.

Swami Tadanandaji from Fiji, who is now overseeing our activities here, continued his regular visits. He presided over 2 weekend residential retreats in April and August, 2018, and a day long retreat in March, 2019. All these retreats were well attended and the participants benefitted from them. He was also a speaker at the International Yoga Festival in Auckland.

Affiliation to HQ: Regrettably, there has not been any progress in our application for affiliation with the HQ, and the appointment of a resident Swamiji for our Centre.

The response to our latest enquiry is that the situation remain unchanged, that we are on their short-list, and they will keep us informed as and when there is any progress.

Appreciation: I wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has assisted and supported this Centre.

I would like to single out our Secretary and Treasurer Kumaran Ramakrishnan and Jai Lal for their hard work throughout the year, and in particular during our 10th anniversary celebrations.

I also thank all Committee Members, and indeed all our members, friends, well-wishers and supporters for their continued participation and support. Please continue with your good work.

I wish everyone a successful coming year.

Harish Kumar Sundarji

President