



## Shishukunj USA launched in Atlanta, Georgia

By Mahadev Desai



Shishukunj (a Sanskrit word meaning Garden of flowers) with an apt logo (Let Every Bud Bloom), was established in a global setting. Its roots were established in India in 1940 and in East Africa in 1955 and with a stronger establishment in London, U.K. in 1976. Just like the budding flower, all three locations are still flourishing today. Shishukunj has now

arrived to USA. It is a registered charity, primarily an institution dedicated to the welfare and cultural development of children, run entirely by volunteers for the benefit of children. It provides a healthy environment rich in positive values which will allow the hidden potential within each child to flourish. Shishukunj lineate in three focused areas: Shikshan (Education), Sewa (Charity), and Baal Pravuti (Child Welfare).

Objective of Shishukunj, is to provide a platform for children to “bud” in safe and enriched environment run by the children for the children. Parents play an important role of vitality by ensuring an active role in their child(ren)’s participation. Of course this includes driving children to/from their center of activity. Under Baal Pravuti, children come together to learn cultural languages, play traditional Indian games, physical exercise drills, listen to spiritual discourses and recite prayers. They also celebrate festivals like Christmas, Diwali, Navratri, holi; learn fine arts like playing musical instruments, Indian classical and folk dancing, skit plays, singing and painting. Under Sewa, Children are exposed to humanitarian needs of the world. They participate in special projects and field trips to places where there might be a need to perform sewa work. The primary goal is to “think globally, act locally”. Under Shikshan, the child’s knowledge is expanded by participating in organized debates, listening to invited guest speakers, and thus prepare them for the community/society at large. Shishukunj has an international wing formed in 1991 which carries out innovative outreach programs to relieve poverty, distress and illiteracy in community at large. It initiates projects like marathons, stages plays, musical concerts, organizes walk-a-thons, Sports competitions, etc. to raise funds to carry out humanitarian projects. It helps children affected by natural disasters like earthquakes, and helps blind, deaf, mute, disabled and poor children, adivasi (tribal) children, and children in orphanages with food, clothing, accommodation, and tuition. It sends medical equipment, wheel chairs, walking frames and sticks, hospital beds, audio-visual aids, school furniture, computers, at various locations in India, Africa and now in USA too.



Shishukunj has proven as a timeless entity where all the above helps a child to be confident, compassionate, self-reliant and broad minded who respects people of other races and faiths. It nurtures the child to be ready for the Society at large.



On the auspicious sunny morning of Sunday February 1, Shishukunj USA, Inc. which has been incorporated in the State of Georgia, on January 23, 2009, was officially launched. The three office-bearers, Harshadbhai Shah (President), Bharatbhai Kerai (Treasurer) and Gopalbhai Ghadhada (Secretary) in-acted the birth of Shishukunj USA. All three has wealth of experience in organizing Children' activities. Harshadbhai has previously organized numerous children functions including for Gujarati Samaj Youth and IACA Youth in Atlanta. He, with his family support ran a Baal Pravuti center at Hare Rama Hare Krishna Temple. Also, he has encouraged children's sporting activities by creating an organization called "Asian Sports Foundation" where they could participate in tournaments in Golf, Tennis, Bowling, Chess, Caram and other sports. All three office-holders are selfless, dedicated, committed and enthusiastic volunteers who have immense love and welfare of children at heart.

On February 1 , in front of an idol of Lord Ganesha, Bharatbhai Kerai welcomed all guests. Shreya Shah ( on behalf of all children) lighted the diyas and recited invocation prayers to Lord Ganesha. The attendees then joined in singing Shishukunj main prayer song, 'he Prabhu anand data' followed by slokas and bhajans to the accompaniment of harmonium, tablas and manjira. A minute's silence was observed to respect the

memory of pioneers and icons of global Shishukunj Organization - Indubhai Dave, Prafulbhai Shah; Vallabhbhai Patel, and Devchandbhai Shah; Gopalbhai then briefly narrated the aims and objectives of Shishukunj USA, Inc. Harshadbhai commented, “ Shishukunj has now officially been established in the USA. We will initially operate a Sewa center and organize a number of planned charity activities, and projects in due course. Also a bigger challenge in promoting the organization in the USA will be met with a marketing and fund-raising activities. In the meantime, Gopalbhai will begin the paperwork to apply for Federal non-profit exemption status. “In short, we would aim to create an environment conducive for the holistic development of the child-an environment rich in positive core values, such as loyalty, honesty, justice, love, faith and respect. Holistic development encompasses mental, physical, spiritual, social and emotional development” .

The program was concluded with aarti, and a delectable luncheon.

For more information about Shishukunj, please visit the website [www.Shishukunj.net](http://www.Shishukunj.net)