



Gayatri Gyan Kendra of Long Island

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Navratri By Kavya Rao

Navratri is a festival dedicated to the Goddess Durga. The word "Navratri" means nine nights in Sanskrit. This festival is celebrated for nine days, with each day worshipping a form of Devi. Navaratri is celebrated in many ways throughout the world by Hindus, and is also known as *Garba-Dandiya*, *Ramlila*, *Golu* and *Durga Pooja*. The tenth day of Navratri is also known as Dasara. Many people fast for the nine days and worship the goddess. Some may perform Garba raas and Dandiya raas to celebrate the occasion of Navaratri. For many South Indians, Navaratri is a time to invite friends and family for prayer and to show Kolu, an arrangement of various dolls and figures. The Goddesses Lakshmi, Durga, and Saraswati are celebrated for three days each, and gifts are often exchanged. Many Indians exchange gifts in the form of sweets, clothes, and miniature idols.

Navaratri is celebrated annually on the new moon between September 15 and October 15. In India, the primary theme is the celebration of truth and good over evil. In GGKLI, we celebrated Navratri with dandiya. Many people dressed in fancy kurtas, chaniya cholis, and sarees. The different culture groups- including teachers, parents, and children- joined together to celebrate this occasion and danced in circles with joy.



"Time is the most precious gift of life. If you love life, do not squander it in indolence."
- Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya

Diwali

By Ritvik Chilakamarthy

Diwali is the most important festival that is celebrated in India. Also, known as Deepavali, it is the festival of lights. Deepavali means rows of lights, since "avail" means rows, and "deepa" means lights. Diwali originated in ancient India as a harvest festival, but is now celebrated for the spiritual victory of light over dark.

Diwali is celebrated at around the month of November, though the date changes each year. The date of Diwali is decided by the moon and position. Diwali is a Hindu festival, though all Indians, regardless of religion, celebrate it. Hindus worship goddess Lakshmi on this day. Diwali is celebrated for many reasons. One is the return of Ram, Sita, and Lakshman from their 14 year exile. It also celebrates the killing of Narakasura by Krishna and his wife, Sathyabhama. It also celebrates the Kauravas being defeated by the Pandavas in battle. But they all share one theme: the triumph of good over evil.

Diwali is also associated with lights and fireworks. The lights can be deepas, candles, or even modern electric lights. The lights attract goddess Lakshmi to our home. If she comes, our lives will be very prosperous. These lights represent finding light in darkness. This does not mean just light, but spreading knowledge amongst ignorance, love amongst hatred. Diwali is also famous for its fireworks. Everybody enjoys the fireworks! Whether it is the small sparklers or the grand rockets, there's something for everyone! Just be sure to be safe!

Diwali also brings together family and friends. In this time, people buy sweets, clothes, jewelry, and lots more. Family and friends come together to exchange gifts and sweets. It is a very happy time of year.

Here at GGKLI, we also celebrated Diwali. Children made diyas in their culture classes. We also met in the auditorium to learn about the festival and receive sweets. Diwali is a very important festival in India where family and friends bond together to celebrate the power of light over darkness.

POP QUIZ!! BY ARJUN MEHTA

1. With which puja is Diwali associated?

1. Laxmi puja
2. Ganesh puja
3. Kartik puja
4. Durga puja

2. What is the literal meaning of Deepavali?

1. Row of lights
2. Light of Knowledge
3. Festival of lights
4. Spreading light and cheer

3. What event from Ramayana does Diwali symbolize?

1. The birth of Rama
2. The killing of Ravana by Ram
3. The return of Rama and Sita to Ayodhya after 14 years
4. The marriage of Rama and Sita

4. In what way do people celebrate Diwali?

1. By throwing water on each other
2. By lighting fireworks
3. By wearing new clothes everyday
4. None of the above

ANSWERS:

1. 1
2. 3
3. 3
4. 2



Swami Nikhileswarananda visits GGKLI

By Roshni Patel

Swami Nikhileswarananda is the head of the Ramakrishna Mission, started by Swami Vivekananda, at the Vadodara Center in Kolkata. Swami Nikhileswarananda graduated with a degree in Chemical Engineering. On September 27, 2015 Swamiji came to our Gayatri School along with Ms. Arunima Sinha and Dr. Bhadra Shah. Ms. Arunima Sinha is the First Female Amputee to climb Mount Everest. They all came to speak to us about a variety of different things.

The one story that Swamiji told us was about a lioness and her cub. He told us that there once was a lioness, holding a cub in her stomach, who was just walking along in the forest. Suddenly they ran into some sheep, which were on other side of the street. She wanted to cross the street. The only way to cross the street was to jump over the fence, which she did. While she was in the air her little cub had fallen out and the lioness had died. The cub landed in the center of the flock of sheep. Since the cub had neither mom, nor dad he began to follow the sheep and he also started to imitate them by doing and saying whatever they did. One day a big lion came over to the little cub, who was also growing older, and the lion told the little cub, "why are you imitating the sheep you should be saying ROOOAAARRR! But instead you're saying BAAA BAAA!" The big lion took the little cub to the nearest lake; when the little cub saw his reflection in the water of the lake the little cub became scared and realized that he wasn't a sheep and that he was a lion.

This story has great meaning to it. This story is saying that you are who you hang out with. In other words if you have friends that aren't the right friends for you then you will become just like them, but if you have friends that are encouraging and worthy of having you as a friend then you will become exactly like them. The bottom line is that you have to wisely choose whom you want to be around and whom you don't. You want the best influence on you, not the worst.



Ganesh Chaturthi By Shimona Agarwal

Ganesh Chaturthi is a 10 day Indian festival celebrated in honor of Lord Ganesh on his birthday. Lord Ganesh is the son of Lord Shiva and Ma Parvati. Ganesh is also belovedly called Ganapati, Ekdanta and Vinayaka.

Lord Ganesh is the symbol of prosperity, wisdom and good fortune. He is also considered as “Vigna Harta” – one who removes all obstacles. Ganapati is the overseer of auspicious beginnings and is the beloved deity of all. Lord Ganesh has the unique distinction that his name is invoked before any other God’s name in any prayer service. He received this as a blessing from his parents. The significance of Ganesh Chaturthi lies in the way people attach themselves with all their love and faith to the care and pampering of the all-embracing Lord Ganesh. It brings people of all religion, creed, caste together.

JOIN A CLUB

There are so many amazing and creative clubs offered at GGKLI. There are many classes including vedic math, art club, drama club and many more. There is a new club starting called music club. We need a minimum of 10 kids to join to start the club. One of the best-known music teachers on LI is going to conduct this class. Instruments like the piano and tabla will be taught as well as singing Bhajans and songs. Students will have to bring in their own instruments and there will be a nominal fee per class, which will be conveyed to all after input is given. If at any time you are interested in any club feel free to ask any questions at the front desk.

People celebrate it with great devotion all over India and it is the most decorated festival in Maharashtra. People invite Lord Ganesh in their homes by bringing the murtis of Him and praying. Sweets are a common offering- as it is believed that Ganesh loved moduks.

During, the last day of the pooja, Vinayak is sent off with great respect and fanfare to be immersed in the water, his way back to his home.

In GGKLI, we celebrated Ganesh Chaturthi with great devotion. First we started with Ganesh Arti. We then saw a movie which the story Lord Shiva asked both of his sons to circle the world and the first one to do so would be the winner. While Kartikaye went to circle the world, Ganeshji went around his parents and said they were his world. The beautiful concept was re- enacted by GGKLI students and parents. Parents were made to sit with their kids and the kids went around them as a mark of respect and of acknowledgment. It was a moment filled with peace, love, affection, and respect.

Nap Time

Who says naps are just for kids? Adults can reap the benefits of a mid-afternoon snooze just as much as kids. Sleep experts say the work benefits of napping depend on the person and how much time you nap for. Too long or too short can make you groggy. Experts recommend a 10 to 30 minute power nap. It can give a boost of energy to get through the rest of the workday, as well as many other benefits...

- **Relaxation**
- **Reduced fatigue**
- **Increased alertness**
- **Improved mood**
- **Improved performance, including quicker reaction time and better memory**

But napping is not for everyone. Some people can't sleep during the day or have trouble sleeping in places other than their own beds. Napping can also have negative effects, such as:

- **Sleep inertia.** You might feel groggy and disoriented after waking up from a nap.
- **Nighttime sleep problems.** Short naps generally don't affect nighttime sleep quality for most people. But if you experience insomnia or poor sleep quality at night, napping might worsen these problems. Long or frequent naps can interfere with nighttime sleep.

To get the most out of a nap, follow these tips:

- **Keep naps short.** Aim to nap for only 10 to 30 minutes. The longer you nap, the more likely you are to feel groggy afterward.
- **Take naps in the afternoon.** The best time for a nap is usually midafternoon, around 2 or 3 p.m. This is the time of day when you might experience post-lunch sleepiness or a lower level of alertness. Also, naps taken during this time are less likely to interfere with nighttime sleep.
- **Create a restful environment.** Nap in a quiet, dark place with a comfortable room temperature and few distractions.

After napping, be sure to give yourself time to wake up before resuming activities — particularly those that require a quick or sharp response.



Happy napping!

~ Dr. Nita



When to call 9-1-1

9-1-1 is the number to call when you need help in an emergency! An emergency is when something happens and you need the police, firemen, or an ambulance. If you see your neighbor's house on fire, that is an emergency! If someone falls down and is badly hurt, that is an emergency too! But, if your cat is stuck in a tree, that is not an emergency. 9-1-1 is not the number to use if you just need help from an adult or for pets. 9-1-1 should only be used in a real emergency and never as a joke!

What to do When 9-1-1 Answers

Here are some tips to help children remember what to do when they are on the phone with 9-1-1:

Remember to **stay calm** and **speak slowly**.

Tell the 9-1-1 call taker **what's wrong** and **where** you need help.

Speak up **loud and clear** when the 9-1-1 call taker asks you questions.

Stay on the phone until the 9-1-1 call taker tells you to hang up.

Reminders

- No matter what happens - *Stay Calm*.
- Never program 911 into your automatic dialer (phone memory). You're not going to forget this number and accidental 911 calls are more likely with auto-dialers. If someone calls 911 and doesn't speak, emergency services must still be dispatched.

How parents can help their kids

Help Children Identify an Emergency. Older children can usually detect problems; however, smaller children may need parents to demonstrate or explain. Parents should explain and teach what emergency situations qualify for the use of 911.

Practice. Practice sessions are very effective with helping children grasp the concept of 911. Before dialing, make sure the phone is unplugged so as not to accidentally connect to a live operator.

Home Address. Training children in the use of 911 can save a life. However, it helps if children also know their street address. While teaching children the basics of 911, parents should use this an opportunity to teach children their home address and telephone number.

To avoid children panicking and forgetting the numbers, parents might include a post -it by the phone with 911 boldly printed

Vaishnav Temple of New York and Indo-American Senior Citizen Center of New York arranged a South Asian Diabetes Expo, sponsored by American Diabetes Association, on Sunday, November 1st, where a large number of people took advantage of free consultation provided by several doctors and health care professionals at the Vaishnav Temple Community Hall.

Doctors practicing in different specialties, which included dermatology, endocrinology, ophthalmology, rheumatology, cardiology and many more provided their voluntary services including blood pressure and A1C blood tests. Heavy traffic of people was observed seeking eye examination conducted by one of our GGKLI parents, Dr. Nita Mehta, Associate Professor of Ophthalmology, Stony Brook University, and her team of four ophthalmologists. Likewise, a stream of people with joint problems had lined up to see Dr. Kamini Shah, Rheumatologist.

Two of our own GGKLI students, Priyanka and Arjun Mehta volunteered, along with many other volunteers, at this event to help doctors with examinations, as well.



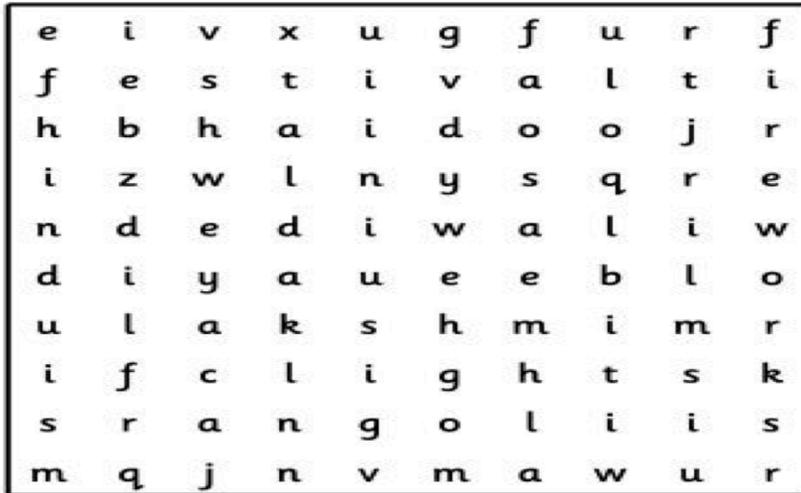
2015 HEALTH FAIR



Diwali Wordsearch



*Kids
Corner
By Arjun
Mehta*



Bhaidooj

Diwali

diya

festival

fireworks

Hinduism

Lakshmi

lights

rangoli



DIWALI CHALLENGE

1. What is the name given to the first day of the Diwali festival?
 1. Bhai Dooj
 2. Dhanteras
 3. Antarawali
 4. Narakasur Chaturdashi
2. In which Hindu month does Diwali fall?
 1. Chaitra
 2. Ashwin
 3. Phalguni
 4. Ashaada

ANSWERS:

1. 2
2. 2