

Dear Devotees,

Hare Krishna!!!

Please accept humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!!

Hare-Krishna-Hare-Krishna-Krishna-Krishna-Hare-Hare-Hare-Rama-Hare-Rama-Rama-Rama-Hare-Hare

Bhakti Vedanta Swami Prabhupada has advocated how to live a peaceful life based on the vedic wisdom of simple living and high thinking. Cow Protection and stewardship of Mother Earth are at the core of such a simple living for the followers of ISKCON. For the last several years, Vedic Cultural Center (VCC) has been promoting Srila Prabhupada's vision under the dynamic leadership of HG Hari Vilas prabhu.

With your enthusiastic participation, VCC has successfully hosted the 8th edition of Ananda Mela, the largest Indian Festival of Northwest on July 29th and 30th. Putting together an event with 20000 visitors, 5000+ volunteer hours, 400+ volunteers, 50+ activities is no mean feat. An event of this size, scale and impact is something even big corporations can only dream of. Accomplishing this with great ease is a highly commendable achievement for a non-profit organization like ours

The real secret of this success is all of you...The Team Anandamela !!! . Under the dynamic leadership of HG Harivilas Prabhu, scores of volunteers have come together to help make Anandamela happen. **A really heartfelt thanks to each and everyone of you who has participated, volunteered and contributed to the success of Ananda mela !!**

Since its inception, the key mission of Ananda Mela has been to showcase and promote authentic *vedic culture, arts and wisdom* in an effort to preserve them for the benefit of the current and future generations. All your efforts have contributed tremendously towards accomplishing this mission. Apart from the cultural impact, HG Harivilas Prabhu has envisioned Ananda mela to be a social demonstration of community building through cooperative team work. The success of Anandamela year after year is a true testament of this spirit. The conduct and service of our volunteers has inspired so many people to join forces with us over the years. We are extremely fortunate to have such sincere and dedicated volunteers as part of Team Anandamela!! Thanks again from the bottom of our hearts for your time.

Many of you must be craving for the highlights from this year's Anandamela. There are so many stories to tell, so much feedback to reflect upon, so many pictures to share and more importantly so many people to thank. I will give this unenviable task a good crack, knowing fully well that I will miss some key names or omit some well received activities. I seek your help to fill in the gaps and share your own experiences from this year's Anandamela at the post event blog.

POST EVENT BLOG : <http://anandamela.org/blog>

The theme of this year's festival was **Vedic Village** with special focus on Krishna's favorite, **Mother Cow**. We had so many displays and activities about the significance of Mother Cow and the many ways in which we continue to benefit from her and hence the necessity to protect her. Through these displays and activities, we have rekindled peoples interest in vedic wisdom and life style. Vedic Wall, Agnihotri, Cow puja, Cow pen, Krishna & Cow, milking the cow were some of the favorite activities. A lot of visitors showed interest in the health benefits of indian spices, enjoyed making their own rotis and learnt a lot about the various cow products and their significance. A lot of this knowledge, that is seemingly lost even in people of Indian origin can be revived through this type of exposure. This year, at Vedic Village we focused heavily on promoting the activities our kids are routinely partaking at VCC. The Bhimsen boys club and Blossom Girls club have organized fun activities to engage kids in vedic arts and crafts. In a generation where gadgets and legos have taken over kids interest, it is essential to realize how kids can have more fun in many other ways. We have started on new interactive activities such as puppet shows and pottery this year. You will see more of this in coming events. Another highlight is our handicrafts baazar. With special items imported from India, the items on sale were each unique and attracted a lot of visitors. Our team of preachers were ready to give a holistic view of all the activities to the visitors. Apart from sharing the vedic wisdom, they have distributed 275 Srila Prabhupada books and have enrolled 80 new people into Vedic University. Finally, the processions of Lord Balaji and Lord Jagannath along with the melodious kirtan performances on Vedic Stage rounded up the full range of activities in Vedic Village.

The Stage performances this year were highlighted by Mayapuris on both days. For those who think thought kirtan cannot be heart pumping..this is our answer I guess. The high energy that Mayapuris brought to the stage had everyone awestruck. Some of us have attributed the high attendance for the tear down to the adrenaline rush from Mayapuris Sunday evening performance. Then we had DJ Anjali enthraling the audience with her orchestra followed by Aloha Bhangra. While the day time performances were seemingly from local talent, no one could tell the difference in quality. We had so many top class artists eager to perform at this year's festival and they all really came prepared. Thanks for their efforts, both Ganga and Yamuna stages had great shows on through out both days.

We had a wide range of vendors with various shopping opportunities and learning initiatives this year. We have had more than 70 vendors setup booths this year. This is by far the largest presence and speaks for the profile of our event. The vendors were happy to give away coupons in exchange for onstage announcements.

And finally ofcourse, people associate Anandamela with a great variety of delicious Indian food. I bet there were a lot of over fed tummys...who can resist such a variety. Chole puri, pakora, chaat, manchurian, pav bhaji, biriyani, idli, rasmalai, mango lassi and even sugar cane juice. Who can ask for more..Hope you all enjoyed a bite of each as well.

Our support teams have done tremendous job this year to ensure all bases are covered. A special mention to the hard working setup and tear down teams, the Vedic Village team for bringing the theme alive, the stage coordination team for bringing excellent programming, the volunteer coordinators and the welcome team ensuring information is properly relayed and finally the food booth leads for satiating everyone's appetite. Our special thanks also to our contractors including the stage, sound technicians, videographer, photographer for capturing our event, our electrician Tony for setting up the power, the help crew for working tirelessly on both the days and finally City of Redmond for working with us to host this event. Our immense gratitude goes to our stage sponsors Srinivas Kasam Prabhu and HG Harivilas Prabhu, our grant sponsors Experience Redmond, 4Culture and KUOW and many others who have financially supported us for this festival.

Thanks again for being part of Anandamela. Hope you had a great time. We greatly appreciate your dedication and continued support for our events.

Your humble servant,
Sai Marella on behalf of
Anandamela Organizing Team.

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Blog post : <http://anandamela.org/blog/>

Photos : <https://goo.gl/photos/CdJ9SGwpCVBGYxUdA>