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CONNECTION

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jai Shree Krishna,

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Our community has celebrated Diwali in all corners of the US despite being in the worst economic time our country has gone through since the great depression. Diwali is a time of joy and sharing, and once again I'd like to wish a Happy Diwali and New Year to all of you.

It's been five months since we took over, since July 12, 2010. As I've said before, the LPS of USA has one goal and one goal only: to pass on our colorful culture and rich heritage to our new generation and generations to come.

I, along with many of my board of directors, went on what we call, a road show in four states, starting from Jacksonville, FL.; to Fort Walton, FL.; to Tallahassee, FL.; to Mobile, AL.; and finally on to Lafayette, LA. During our trip we met wonderful Leuvas along the way. We really appreciate and enjoyed their hospitality. We went to small town hall meetings as well as a sizable regional meeting in Lafayette, LA.

Folks let me tell you the enthusiasm we saw in these meetings was amazing! All across the board we saw one thing in common... our kids!!!! I guess LPS Of USA's goal is on the right track. During the tour we have received 30 lifetime memberships and some annual memberships.

To achieve our goal we need funds and as I have said before our LPS of USA is lacking in that department. So we have launched a profit sharing program with MLS Direct Network, Inc. which processes the credit card for hotels, motels, restaurants and gas stations through Chase Bank.

Here is how the LPS of USA program works. Our members get the best rate in the market for credit card processing and in return MLS will donate a portion to LPS OF USA. LPS will give 25% of the fund it receives from MLS to our scholarship foundation, 50% will be put away in cash reserve account where only interest will be used and the last 25% will be used for current operating account.

With over a decade of being associated with LPS of USA, I have seen the association grapple with severe financial crunch. So we want to make sure we have huge cash reserve for long term sustainability. We have one more profit sharing program coming up with a hotel insurance company. Jayesh Patel and I are working on the final contract with the company and we will introduce the program shortly.

I need your help to make these programs successful. You must at least give these vendors a chance to earn your business. You will find the ad in this magazine.

Our youth committee has a ski-trip coming up in Ohio. Please refer to our website for further information. Moreover, LPS of USA board has approved to revamp our website and create the matrimonial tab on the website. During my travels, many of you had asked me to do something in this area, for our youth. Sunil Patel will be taking care of it in next 30 days.

All our members should have received our beautifully done LPS of USA calendar by this time. I must compliment whole heartedly to Nayan Patel (Puna Gaam) for the great job he has done with the calendar. As many of our members are waiting for new directory, we have geared up our team to create one as well. All our members will receive a letter with user name and password, so make sure to edit your own profile on our website by March 31, 2011. All members will have to edit their own profile on the website as it is not practical for us to do that.

We have set tentative dates of July 28-30 2011 for the LPS of USA National Convention in New Orleans, LA.

As JFK said, please don't ask what LPS of USA has done for you, ask what you have done for LPS of USA. "TEAM WORK"

Bharat (Bobby) Patel
Gaam Pathron
Oakland, CA
President
LPS OF USA 2010-2011

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Message from WEB Committee Chairman,
Sunil Patel

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Mahendra Patel TX, Samir Patel TX, & IT : Suresh Patel FL

Dear Members,

Jai Shree Krishna

This year, I have the honor to serve on the WEB/IT committee along with a team of Board Members. We realize that in today's world, web sites have become a popular source of information for many organizations. Our website, www.lpsofusa.com was created several years ago by our current webmaster, Mukesh G (Mikie) Patel of Downey, CA. Since then, Mikie has continuously dedicated countless hours in managing the database. IT committee along with Mikie is currently working on re-creating the website to give a fresh new look and provide resourceful materials for members of all ages, particularly the youth!

Each member's User ID and Password will soon be mailed to all members along with instructions to upload their personal bios. The Personal bios will be guarded with a high end security program. The new website will have a matrimonial link which will allow eligible young adult members to login using their personal User ID and Password to view bio data's of other eligible young adults. This will be only on a permission basis. The new website will also have youth corner with links such as News, Photos, Events, and Achievement Currently, we have chosen group of youths that are assisting with beta testing.

As with all other sites ours is only as good as its content. So on a national level I am asking you to send us information on events that you feel will be of interest to our members. I am talking as small as kindergarten graduations to as big as college graduations, first birthdays to sweet sixteen to fifty to hundred year celebrations. As large as our population is and as great achievers we are, our web site should be flooded with information. If you can do this for us, we promise you our web sites hits will increase significantly.

These are only a handful of items the possibilities are endless. As always we welcome all your comments and suggestions. Please send them and any information for the web site to info@lpsofusa.com.

Jai Shree Krishna

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Hitting the right notes

A great mix of music, dance and culture served as the colorful backdrop of northern California's Diwali meet!

The LPS of Northern California held their annual Diwali event on November 13, 2010, with a foot-tapping cultural program that saw over 1,200 attendees. Leuvas from all over northern California, between the ages of five years and 66 years, participated in the event, presenting 16 different items. The variety of performances included singing, karaoke, traditional garba, film dances, bhanga dance and traditional folk dances.

The evening began with a social hour where traditional Diwali snacks were served to all guests. The cultural was followed by Gujarati dinner. The organization managed to collect close to \$15,000 of sponsorships/donations.

Several sponsors/vendors were recognized for their support, during the event. Three members received awards for Community service: Naranjibhai V Patel (Varad) (San Jose), Rambhai B Patel (Kharvasa) (San Francisco) and Thakorbbhai L Patel (Zer Vavra) (San Jose).

The evening concluded with a raffle of prizes donated by vendors/sponsors. Some of the prizes included hotel-spa packages, flat screen TVs & an iPad.



LPS BOD meet at Atlanta Georgia Town Hall

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The Many colours of LPS of USA!



12 days, 19,500 feet, and 32 miles later...

Nisha Patel, 26, recently completed her journey to the holy Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarovar. She shares her story with Leuvas across the country...!

I decided to embark on the Mount Kailash/Lake Mansarovar Yatra in May of 2010 after graduating from law school. I envisioned it being a great release after sitting for the Illinois Bar Exam at the end of July. Yatra means a Hindu pilgrimage to a holy place associated with Hindu epics such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana.

According to Hinduism, Lord Shiva and his wife Parvati reside at the summit of Mt. Kailash. Lake Mansarovar, sitting at almost 15,000 feet above sea level, is not just the highest fresh water lake in the world, but is also a symbol of purity. In the Hindu religion, it is believed that one who drinks from the lake will go to the abode of Lord Shiva after death and one who bathes in the lake will be cleansed of all his/her sins committed over a hundred lifetimes. The following is a brief account of my three-day trek around Mt. Kailash.

Day 1

“Good morning didi! Chai? Coffee? Tea?” The morning began like any other, greeted by our trek leader Prem offering us our choice of breakfast drink. We quickly dressed and packed our bags to begin our three-day trek around the holy Mt. Kailash. Everyone met at the lobby of the local hotel we were staying at in Darchen, the base camp for Mt. Kailash. Our group was ready to go in their hiking gear after stomaching breakfast at such a high altitude.

Despite being sleep deprived and not having a shower in a few days, everyone’s faces were beaming with excitement. We were about to embark on the journey of a lifetime. We loaded into our land cruisers and after traveling for close to an hour, we were dropped off on an open plateau at the foothills of Mt. Kailash where we would begin our pilgrimage. We excitedly hopped out of our land cruisers and began to prepare our luggage and hiking gear for the trek. Hiking shoes, check! Rain jacket, check! Water bottle, check! Hiking stick, check! Daypack, check! We were all set to go! Our bags were loaded onto the yaks, and those who would be completing the pilgrimage by foot began to hike, while those who would be riding by horseback mounted their horses and followed shortly behind. There was very little chatter as we began our journey. We were soaking up the beauty of the mountains that engulfed

us; rocky terrain beneath us, waterfalls and cliffs surrounding us, and clear blue skies with the occasional cloud above us.

Everyone anxiously awaited our first view of the great mountain. Holy Kailash! There it was, in all its glory! A breathtaking, snow-capped Mt. Kailash. We were at Lord Shiva’s doorstep.

Day 2

“Good morning didi! Chai? Coffee? Tea?”



Nisha A Patel of Cincinnati, Ohio., Gaam Surat, daughter of Arvind and Sangita Patel

After a restless night at a guesthouse located in the middle of the mountains, we awoke before dawn. I turned to roommate and friend Lina groggily asking, “Is it already time to get up?” It’s as if we only went to sleep a couple of hours of ago when in fact we had gotten a full night’s worth of rest. As we both rustled through our huge duffle bags for our flashlights, our breakfast arrived. I had a warm bowl of oatmeal thinking I needed all the energy I could get for the most important day of the climb. Today we would climb to our highest elevation at 19,500 ft. The trek would be treacherous, proving to be the most physically and mentally challenging obstacle I’ve ever been faced with. We began our trek, single filed, lead by our trek leader Prem.

Hiking stick in hand, we marched forward as we approached the most spiritual place on our journey thus far, Dolma La Pass at 19,500 ft. It was no easy feat reaching this elevation. As followed in Lina’s footsteps, we took twenty steps, then rested for a few moments. Twenty more steps, and we rested again. Again and again, until we finally made it! We sang, we shared our inner most thoughts, and we encouraged one another until we reached the top. I felt every emotion from sorrow to exhilaration.



I was saddened that I was physically and mentally exhausted and we still had many more miles left to trek today. Exhilaration set in from the thought that I had finally done it. After months of preparation, I had reached the top of the world. What an accomplishment! After stopping for a photo op, we had to begin our trek down almost immediately, as it was not safe being at such a high altitude for an extended period of time. Next stop: Gauri Kund; another important Hindu pilgrimage site where it is believed that Lord Shiva’s wife goddess Parvati used to bathe. The sparkling, emerald green water made it easy to believe that goddess Parvati once bathed here. As we moved on from Gauri Kund, and trekked further down, the day only became more difficult. The terrain changed from small stepping stones and rocks to enormous boulders made slippery by the now falling rain and light snow.

There was no time for twenty steps and a few moments rest. Sundown would be here before we knew it. We marched on. At the bottom of the climb down from Dolma La Pass we had a few minutes to rest at a tent. Here, we met up with the rest of the group, including my parents, who had climbed the mountain by horse. I’d never been happier to see my mom and dad’s smiling faces. They had done it. They had conquered as well.

As we trekked closer and closer to our campground for the night, I felt weak. I couldn’t imagine the thought of walking one more step. I needed a miracle from God. Tears began streaming down my face.

It couldn’t end here for me, in the middle of the mountains. I had loved ones waiting for me at home. My team members, who had become like family, were counting on me. My parents were counting on me. My friends were counting on me. Lord

Shiva had heard my cries on his doorstep. Finally! I was saved by an un-ridden horse. I hurriedly mounted on in the pouring rain, pulled my hood over my head, gripped on tightly, and rode through the mountain valley until I reached our campsite.

No longer able to feel my feet, I jumped off the horse as quickly as I had jumped on, to search for

our tent. I was one of the first to arrive by horseback. Someone yelled, "tent #1." I unzipped the tent to find six mattresses and blankets lined side by side, in two rows. I immediately shed my freezing cold, soaking wet clothes and replaced them with equally freezing cold, dry clothes, as my bag had arrived by yak immediately after



me. I waited for the others arrive. After the others reached and did exactly as I had done, I packed my bag before dark, had a warm dinner, and went to sleep along with my five roommates.

Day 3

"Good morning didi! Chai? Coffee? Tea?" Today's the day we left Lord Shiva's abode; the last day of our pilgrimage. We had five miles left to trek today. It was bitter/sweet. We were only a few hours away from completing our trek where our land cruisers would be awaiting us. Everyone was in good spirits today. We sang, we danced, and we stopped for every possible photo op along the way. "A picture is worth a thousand words," but in our case, there are no words to describe what was captured in our photos. The beauty of the Himalayas and Mt. Kailash will forever be engrained in our minds.

Email Nisha at: Patel.646@gmail.com



MOUNT KAILASH - LAKE MANSAROVAR YATRA

A Divine Journey...
Join us in 2011!



Om Namah Shivaya...

Exclusive for Leuva Members...

Lina Patel, (LPS Executive Board member) is organizing an opportunity of a lifetime, Mt. Kailash Yatra in summer of 2011! Come Celebrate Life at Mt. Kailash – Lake Mansarovar! The Kailash Yatra is organized for those who wish to experience the religious and adventurous moments while trekking through the Himalayan valleys of Tibet Land. Please contact us with questions.

◆
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AAHOA



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Keep an eye out for AAHOA Women in Hotel Leadership (WIHL) events that will be held throughout 2011, including at the 2011 Annual Convention.

The mission of WIHL is to encourage and strengthen women to reach higher levels of leadership by helping them gain the life skills, knowledge and confidence needed through initiatives in education, networking and providing opportunities and resources to empower leadership in both their personal and professional development.

Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA)

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The Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) is THE voice of owners in the hospitality industry. Founded in 1989, AAHOA is now one of the fastest-growing organizations in the industry, with more than 10,000 members owning more than 20,000 hotels that total \$128 billion in property value. AAHOA is dedicated to promoting and protecting the interests of its members by inspiring excellence through programs and initiatives in advocacy, industry leadership, professional development, member benefits, and community involvement.

“Mota Ma Moti Khan Te Aur-Khan”

Here’s a fun ‘game’ that is high on the culture and giggle quotient, says Shailesh Patel...

What you need: Thirty pieces of paper

Number of players: The more the merrier!

How to play: Write the names of 30 relatives, one per paper. Crumple up the papers into little balls and put them all in a paper bag. Sit all players in a circle. Pick the starting person and ask them to select one paper from the bag. Whosever name is on the paper; they must tell how they are related to that person. One point for each right answer. The winner is the person with the most points!

Son	Dikro, Putra	Dad’s Sister to Child	Foi
Daughter	Dikri, Putri	Dad’s Sister’s Husband Child	Fua
Husband	Pati (to Wife)	Mom’s brother (any age)	Mama
Wife	Patni (to husband)	Mom’s brother’s wife (any age)	Mami
Brother’s	Son Batrijo	Mom’s sister (any age)	Masi
Brother’s	Daughter Batriji	Mom’s sister’s husband (any age)	Masa
Great Grandfather	Garda Dada	Husband’s Sister (to wife any age)	Narand
Great Grandmother	Garda Dadi	Husband’s Brother-in-law (to wife any age)	Nandoi
Grandfather	Dada	Husband’s Younger Brother (to wife)	Dear
Grandmother	Ma	Husband’s Younger brother’s wife (to Wife)	Derani
Father	Pitashri	Husband’s Older Brother (to wife)	Jeth
Mother	Matrushri, Jee	Husband’s Older Brother’s Wife (to wife)	Jethani
Brother	Bhai	Wife’s Younger Sister (to husband)	Sari
Brother’s	Wife Bhabhi	Wife’s Older sister (to husband)	Patlasasu
Sister	Ben	Wife’s Brother (to husband any age)	Sara
Sister’s Husband	Banevi, Lal, Patel	Wife’s Father (to Husband)	Sasara
Sister’s Son (To Brother & Sister)	Barniyo	Wife’s Mother (to Husband)	Sasu
Sister’s Daughter (To Brother & Sister)	Barnki	Wife’s brother –in-law (to Husband)	Sarubhai
Dad’s brother (General)	Kaka	Son-in-law	Jamai
- If Older	Bapa	Daughter-in-law	Vohw
- If Younger	Nana	Father-in-law (to others in family)	Vehvai
Dad’s brother’s wife(General)	Kaki	Mother-in-law(to others in family)	Vehvarn
- If Older Brother’s wife	Moti Ba		
- If Younger Brother’s wife	Nani		

Using word play, this simple statement exemplifies the importance of relationships in Indian culture. On a relaxed day, with your kids, see if they know who is related to them and how, *Gujju* style. Because the American version is simplified into either cousin or uncle, etc, for our family, it was quite an eye-opening road trip exercise to Canada.... comical to say the least!

Cut out 30 pieces of paper about ½” x 3” size. Next, write the names of 30 relatives one per paper. Crumple up the papers into little balls and put them all in a paper bag. Sit all players in a circle. Pick the starting person and ask them to select one paper from the bag. Whosever name is on the paper; they must tell how they’re related. One point for each correct answer. The winner is the person with the most points.

We found that most knew some names but couldn’t easily tell how they are exactly related. Interestingly, people extend these relationships from direct blood relations to those that are from the same

gaam or people they hold dearly in their lives. So sometimes you will see these relations used to refer to fellow gaam members or such. For example, all girls from the same gaam are generally referred to as sisters (*bens*) and their spouses are all *Gaam na Jamaais*. Also, all guys married to girls from the same gaam are *sarubhais*. These extensions require numerous examples to clarify so have fun.

I created this list to further our cultural teachings; but they are wasted if you don’t take the family time to really make it a fun game lasting at least a few hours. It goes by quick the more people you involve. As Leuva parents of the future, you cannot sit by and hope your children get interested. Instead take charge and force interaction. It will be fun and what they learn they will convey, like they know everything, to their friends.

Let’s try some fun things!
Shailesh Patel (Dost, Isroli).

A journey of love and courage

Ramesh Patel's brave battle against cancer remains an inspiration for his wife and children...



Name & Gaam: Ansuya Patel, Asta
Husband's Name, Gaam, Date of Birth and Demise: Ramesh Patel, Asta, 03/06/1953 to 08/23/2010.

Kids: Eldest child Bhavna married to Snehal (Gaam: Pera) – grandchildren: Jailen (6) and Shaya (3); middle daughter Monica married to Chandresh (Gaam – Soyani)– grandchildren: Aariyan (2) and Zain (7 mos); youngest son Satish married to Tejal (Gaam – Vadvaniya)

Names of other survivors of husband: Brother: Sukhdev Patel and Family, Sister: Hansa Patel and Family

What were your first thoughts and reactions during the instant you were notified of the killer disease your husband had?

Shock at first, then scared to think about the circumstances, and then I decided that I am not going to lose him right now no matter what. I prayed and asked God to give me the strength to help him fight this disease.

How did you cope with life while your husband was alive knowing the fact that there will be a time he will no longer be here someday and that tomorrow will never be guaranteed for him?

I took it a day at a time taking care of him through the various stages of his sickness.

It is to our understanding that Rameshbhai was given a very short period of survival time from the time he was diagnosed but managed to prove the doctors wrong by living several decades after. In your belief, what made him live longer than what doctors anticipated?

His will to live for his family, for me and our kids, combined with my faith helped him live. The doctor's still cannot believe that he was able to beat all the odds.

How did Rameshbhai feel when he

found out he was diagnosed with cancer? Throughout the years did he become strong for the family and prepare you for that day he will no longer be with you and your family?

When he found out he was very upset, but decided to fight back. He heard what the doctors said, but decided not to listen. The doctors gave him six months, but both of us decided that was not enough. Instead we got 23 years of fond memories.

Describe the type of person Rameshbhai was?

His strengths were that he was ambitious, determined, intelligent, strong willed, an eternal optimist, charismatic, loving, humorous and giving. His only weakness was that he was a workaholic.

What were Rameshbhai's top 3 desires he wanted to fulfil before he passed away? Did he fulfil all of them?

- 1) He wanted to see our children grow up and get married. (Our youngest was only two years old.)
- 2) He got to spend time with our grandchildren.
- 3) He wanted to build good memories with his family.

Now that Rameshbhai is no longer here, as a Leuva woman what has our culture

instilled upon you to move on in life?

I have always taken life one day at a time and that is what I am doing right now. I have spent most of my life taking care of everyone else and my children are now encouraging me to take care of myself and do the things that make me happy. I think about my husband everyday and I know he is watching over me. I feel so fortunate to have the support of my family, especially my brother, my sisters and friends, as I start this journey to move forward in my life.

What is the one thing that you can tell all our community for those who are facing this with someone that is as dear to them as Rameshbhai was to you?

Nothing can really prepare you for losing your loved one. Everyday is very hard, but instead of thinking about yourself in that moment, think about your loved one. They are no longer in pain and no longer suffering. Have faith in God and hope that he can guide you.

If you could describe Rameshbhai in one word what would it be?

Strong-willed

How have you moved on in life after Rameshbhai?

No I have not moved on yet, am still taking it one day at a time.





|| Umiya Matay Namah: ||



“Sasu hoi toi Aavi” In Loving Memory of



|| Ambe Matay Namah: ||

Date of Birth
31st July, 1927
(Sisodra-India)



Date of Death
1st January, 2011
(Soyani-India)



Late Ambabai Ishverbhai Patel

As many were celebrating and bringing in the 2011 New Year with joy and hope for improved prosperity, it was not the same for our family. On January 1st, 2011 the phone rang at 12:22am central time from my beloved husband, Bharat in Soyani, India to give me the unbearable news of the death of a great woman, my mother-in-law, the late “Ambabai Ishverbhai Patel” at the age of 83. She fell sick from pulmonary lung disease while she was visiting her homeland in India.

As I tried to grasp my breath from a moment of shock, tears shed down my eyes heavily and my heart was broken because I was not even by her side during her last moments of ailing health. Till that moment I never knew what it felt like to lose someone so close, someone who has been a part of my life for 21 years.

There are no words that can describe this graceful woman, who had the most beautiful silky whitish gray hair and the fairest skin of all. Her beauty from the outside was just as magnificent as her inner beauty. She accepted me as her sixth daughter, and while there were differences - who doesn't have differences, we have them with our own mothers - we were always glad that we could understand each other by being supportive and a part of each other's lives.

My mother-in-law and I grew closer over time during the time she survived a massive heart attack in May 1994. I would take her to all of her appointments and run her errands with her and never once did I complain or think it was burden but it was my pleasure and I enjoyed taking care of her from my heart. During these times with my mother in law I began asking her questions about her life that I didn't know. I had realized that she never really spoke of her childhood and I was curious of my mother-in-law's background. I also wanted to be able to tell my children stories of their grandma growing up. She loved talking to me about it, I could see it in her eyes as she reminisced of her childhood growing up back home in India.

You could tell these were memories she didn't get a chance to revisit often and I'm glad she had a chance to share them with me. By her telling me her life's story I understood why she was the way she was: a strong, caring, independent, hardworking woman with no ego. Doing whatever she had to do to make it and take care of her family during good times and hardship.

Now knowing my mother-in-law's struggles and all the obstacles she had to overcome I looked at her thinking, “My God, I think/thought I have it hard.” When actually I had no idea my problems were minuscule. I am happy I had these chances to talk to her about her life and grow closer together. It still has not struck me that she has left this world as my mind set is still thinking she will be coming back from her visit from India soon as usual.

Moreover, I wonder who will make me the best tea with all the love and care now, who will cook some of the delicious meals ready to eat when I come home from work daily, who will be there to give me guidance and support when I need, who will believe in me when others may think otherwise because she knew me better for who I am. Who will be there for me when life comes across difficulties, who will be there to spoil the grandkids, but most importantly who will be there now to play the role of my mother daily who cared for me? Sasu hoi to aavi.

Remember that life is short so learn to embrace it and the people that touch you in a positive way because someday it may be too late when that person is no longer in this world to know. Never take anything for granted, savor every bite of a meal, enjoy what you have, and live each day as if it is your first day of your life. Live life to its fullest as tomorrow is never guaranteed.

In my eyes by the world's luckiest *Daughter In Law : Nayana “Nancy” Patel.*

Surviving Family:

Husband: Ishverbhai Chottubhai Patel – Soyani
Son: Bharat Ishverbhai – Texas

Daughters':

Niruben Keshavbhai –Texas Gaam: Gorda
Manjubai Narottombhai-Georgia Gaam: Laken Pardi
Vinabai Jagubhai – California Gaam: Karachka
Ranjanbai Kishorebhai – North Carolina Gaam: Sampura
Ushabai Bharat – Texas Gaam: Bagumra

2407 South Jefferson Avenue, Mount Pleasant Texas 75455

A road trip to build bridges

Interactions with Leuvas in the gulf states highlighted the many needs for and demands on a community organization, says Shailesh Patel

The new president and his administration volunteered for their first regional via road trip through the gulf states last year. The goal was to spread the message of Leuva pride and detail the organization's efforts to bring value to its membership as well as unite our fellow Leuvas to preserve our culture and heritage.

We started our journey in the Sunshine State (Florida) in the city of Jacksonville. Our regional there was a good starting point as Kiritbhai Patidar (Afva, Sec), Sureshbhai Patel (Puna, IT), Dipakbhai Patel (Kharvasa, Area Rep) along with local leadership ensured a great turnout. Other LPS administration present included Bobby Newman (Pathron, President), Hasubhai Patel (Bajipura, V. President), and Mahendrabhai Arvind (Kharvasa).

The message delivered to this regional and subsequent regionals was that LPS stands for Leuva pride. We wish to provide avenues to preserve our ever fading culture and heritage; we wish to provide a web mechanism to promote inter-Leuva marriages and inter-Leuva communication; we will deliver value to the membership via Leuva Connection, calendar, online marriage researching, online Leuva news (deaths, births, marriages, etc...) and a new directory.

The top LPS leadership then reviewed the financial status of LPS and how LPS survives; how and which committees were set up to deliver set goals; how the education fund can benefit our youth; and how we can teach our youth the richness of being Leuva through this organization. After the presentation, the festivities of food, conversation, fun and karaoke (yep, you read that correctly!) went on late into the night.

The next morning took LPS to Tallahassee, FL. In Tallahassee, we thank Rakeshbhai Patel (Sungalpur, Area Rep) for organizing the regional. Rain made it difficult for maximum turnout; however, we had a decent turnout for the size of the community.

Since LPS has never reached out to many areas of the gulf states, we knew there would be some tough questions and comments. Our first came from a young lady who commented that LPS should do more to educate the youth about the increasing alcohol abuse amongst Leuva youth. She told us of her loss of a dear friend. Our answer was that although we do print articles in LC magazine to discourage such behavior, as our magazine and web integration gets better we will continue to do more to rid ourselves of this problem. Also we recommended that she and others voice their thoughts against drinking through the magazine.

The next morning was 243 miles of road to Mobile, Alabama. Joining the LPS road crew in the Cotton State were more LPS board members: namely, Jayesh, Rajendra, Sanjay Patel. Mobile proved to be the most vocal in their range of questions and comments to LPS possibly because of its young demographic. The questions ranged from "Why can't LPS do more to allow non-Leuva marriage or encourage non-Leuva membership?" to "Why did LPS not show up sooner and more often?" to "We want more value before becoming members."

Answers were provided by the top board members as follows:

"Our organization is founded on the idea of spreading culture and heritage of Leuva within a certain set of criteria. Therefore

it doesn't make sense for the organization to dilute itself and lose its original intent. Although LPS doesn't say you can't marry outside the Leuva community, it simply wishes to provide easy avenues to encourage inter-Leuva marriages."

"LPS is a completely volunteer (all costs are paid for by volunteers) organization and because of its breadth and depth it is impossible to visit all cities as often as we would all like."

"More value from LPS to its membership is an ongoing process and because of lack of funding much of the value such as marriage tab on website, calendar, new directory, convention, etc is slow to be marketed to the public."

Then the drive took us backwards to Fort Walton Beach where more board members joined us. A pretty area of the gulf with very family oriented Leuvas. Most understood and appreciated the purpose of LPS and I was particularly interested in thoughts expressed to me related to Leuva family dynamics, the role of meat and alcohol in Leuva lives. Although we had a lengthy talk; the gist was about the difficulties of Leuvas' trend towards making money and success at the cost of family bonding and teachings of respect and values.

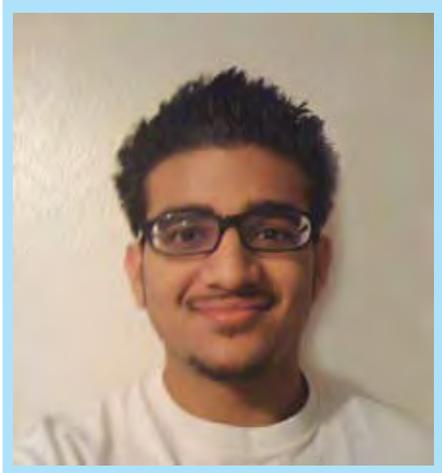
Next we set our sights on Lafayette, LA. Here we had the largest turnout. Most people there really understood what LPS was about and why it was necessary. Most of the questions were related to the operation of the Education Fund. Those questions were fielded by C. N. Patel and Fund committee. The results of the trip were a huge eye-opener for me and a great membership drive for LPS.





Know your Youth Volunteers!

Young, enthusiastic and charismatic, these young achievers have one thing in common: they believe in the LPS of USA!



Your Name: Sawan Patel
Father: Hasubhai Patel
Mother: Sarlaben Patel (Houston, Texas)
Currently residing: San Antonio, Texas.
University: University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA)
Gaam: Bajipura



Youth Name: Jenisha Kishor Patel
Father: Kishor Patel
Mother: Surekha Patel
Currently residing: Nashville, TN
Occupation: Logisitcs Account Exec, TQL University of Tennessee, Knoxville- Bachelor of science in Business Administration, Logistics
Gaam: Khotamdi



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Name: Shivani Patel
Fathe: Rajendra
Mother: Swati Patel
Currently residing: Murfreesboro, TN
Occupation/university attending: Mercer University, MBA/PharmD aka Pharmacist - May 2011
Gaam in India: Mota



Sitting pretty: Women members at the LPS Regional Meet, Florida.



Name: Kirti Vikash Surti
Father: Has Mukh
Mother: Chandan Shyamji/ Manher and Laxmi Surti
Currently residing: Toledo Oh
Occupation/university attending: Multi-Property Hotel Owner
Gaam in India: Segva / Soyaniz



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Youth Name: Rahul B. Patel
Parents Name: Balkrishna H. Patel
Resides: San Antonio, Texas
Occupation: Attorney – Civil Litigation and Hospitality Franchising/Dispute Litigation (www.pulmanlaw.com)
Gaam: Surat, India



Leuva Patidar Board of Trustees:
 (Left to right) Bhikhubhai Patel, Indravadan Patel, CM Patel, Bharat(Bobby) Patel, Jeffery O'Connor, Hashu Patel & Dhansukh Patel



Name: Bhavika Patel
Father: Dinesh K Patel
Mother: Pravina Patel
Currently residing: Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA
Occupation/university attending: Student/ Brown Mackie College-Fort Wayne
Gaam: Jamania



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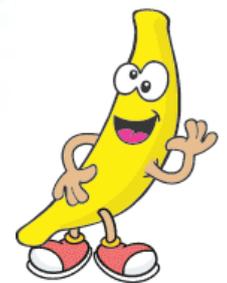
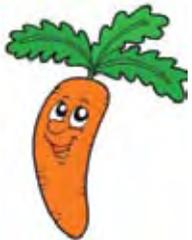
HAVE FUN!

Write Gujarati names in the blank spaces by matching the English names!

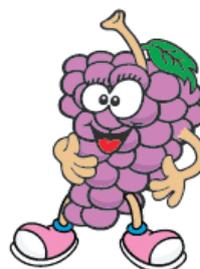
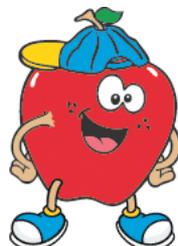
Good Luck!

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- _____ Keri (Mango)
- _____ Tindora Kantola
- _____ Bhinda (Okra)
- _____ Dhoru Ratalu (Kasawa)
- _____ Boongarya Lamba Marcha (Pakora Chilly)
- _____ Piri & Amba Harad (Yellow & White Turmeric)
- _____ Boongarya Tooka Marcha (Jalapeno)
- _____ Chapan Kadu (Green Squash)
- _____ Lavangya Marcha (Thai Chilli)
- _____ Gor Ratalu (Kand)
- _____ Green Zucchini
- _____ Dadam (Pomegranate)
- _____ Sandhya (Eddos)
- _____ Chori (String Bean)
- _____ Valor
- _____ White Zucchini



- _____ Guwar _____
- _____ Kantola _____
- _____ Dhana (Cilantro) _____
- _____ Parvar _____
- _____ Lasan (Garlic) _____
- _____ Hekta Ni Singh (Drumstick) _____
- _____ Nylon Kakri (Tar-Cucumber) _____
- _____ Doodhi (Long Squash) _____
- _____ Karela (Bitter Gourd) _____
- _____ Lila Chana (Sholiya) _____
- _____ Marcha (Long Chilli) _____
- _____ Pharnsi (String Beans) _____
- _____ Kakri (Baby Cucumber) _____
- _____ Raingan (Eggplant) _____
- _____ Serdi (Sugar Cane) _____
- _____ Turiya (Long Gourd) _____



Let Health be your Wealth

The ancient secrets of everlasting health and strong immunity are simpler than we think...

Yoga is the subtle spiritual discipline that purifies the body and mind, while Ayurveda is a practical physical discipline that focuses on diet and lifestyle to heal and purify the body. Real progress towards finding a peaceful, prosperous and stress-free life is not possible without Yoga and Ayurveda, which are based upon truth, health and life. So let health be your wealth.

These days neurological disorders such as anxiety, depression, neurosis, psychosis, and emotional confusion, when accompanied by the attendant hurry and worry, self-repression, rebelliousness, addictions - especially to technological devices - are a part of the every-day landscape. But many people still ask, "What's in it for me? What benefit will I get out of this?"

How can we make this body happy? Give it what it really wants, not what your taste-buds want. Instead, let your body's innate wisdom reveal symptoms of comfort and discomfort and allow them to guide you. This natural process will make your body immune to disease.

Today's youth are mentally sound but physically weak because they give too much exercise to the mind and too little to the body. This is because they lack the knowledge and practice of Yoga and Ayurveda.

These ancient sciences guide us and establish us in true and lasting health that is not just the absence of disease, but a state of well-being: physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. Your coronary arteries need fresh air, fresh fruits and vegetables; not fast, fatty and fried food. Your body should be luminous, not voluminous.

The heritage of Yoga was given to us by Hyrinyagarbha, Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna, whereas Ayurveda has been given to us by Lord Brahma. Lord Shiva is the Destroyer, but He has given to us the Yoga of Immortality.

What is Yoga? The word Yoga means union, the union of individual soul with cosmic soul. It also means control: control of mind and senses. Thus Yoga is the practice of controlling mind and realizing the Self. The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali is the masterpiece of Yoga.

This spiritual science has eight essential practices: 1) Yam, the five rules of moral restraint; 2) Niyam, the five rules of observance; 3) Asana, the practice of Yoga postures; 4) Pranayam, the practice of breath control; 5) Pratyahar, the withdrawal of mind from senses; 6) Dharana, the practice of mental focus; 7) Dhyana, the practice of meditation, and 8) Samadhi, the state of super consciousness and perfect

equanimity.

The primary goal of yoga is the realization of the spirit within. An undisciplined and unrighteous way of life inevitably leads to unhappiness and suffering. Therefore Yam and Niyam serve as practical commandments. They inspire peace, mental steadiness, good deeds and spiritual growth. Yam and Niyam enable one to control the emotions and passions that normally disturb one's peace of mind. In order to know God, one must faithfully practice yam and niyam.

The five Yam are: 1) Ahimsa: non-violence, or dynamic love for all living beings; 2) Asteya: non-stealing or honesty; 3) Aparigraha: non-possession, or the adoption of a simple lifestyle; 4) Satya: truth, or purity and harmony in one's thought, speech and actions; 5) Brahmacharya: continence or celibacy.

The five Niyam are: 1) Saucha: purity; 2) Santosh: contentment; 3) Tapas: austerity; 4) Swadhyay: study of the self; and 5) Ishvarpranidhan: devotion to God.

Asana are the physical postures of Yoga. The practice of Asana brings steadiness, health and lightness of body. These exercises focus on one's physical, mental and spiritual well-being. They bring harmony to the body, mind and spirit.

The benefits of Asana include: 1) Increased energy, strength, stamina and endurance; 2) Increased flexibility, adaptability and alertness which enhances memory, confidence, and determination; 3) Improved respiration, circulation, elimination, metabolism and endocrine gland function. Thus the practice of Asana increases energy by relaxing the muscles and releasing tension.

Pranayam: Breathing is life. The continuous process of breathing exhausts our life. The life-span of each living being is fixed by a specific number of breaths. If our breath is shallow and rapid, our life will be short. Slow breathing animals such as tortoises, snakes, elephants and whales live for a very long time, while animals that breathe more rapidly like cats, rats, dogs and rabbits have much shorter life span.

Normal breathing is a two-stage process that includes inhalation and exhalation. The Yogic method of breathing introduces "retention of the breath." In the practice of Pranayam, each phase of the process-inhalation, exhalation and retention is strictly regulated.

Pran is the vital force within us. "Ayam" means control. Thus Pranayam means control of Pran. Pranayam encompasses a variety of different breathing exercises. For example, if you feel tired, you should practice Suryabhedan Pranayam: Breathe deeply through the right nostril, retain your breath, and then exhale through the left nostril. Continue this practice until you feel energized.

If your mind is restless, you should practice Chandrabhedan Pranayam in which you breathe through left nostril, hold the breath as long as is comfortable, and finally exhale through right nostril. If, you feel hot, you can practice Chandrabhedan Pranayam. Again, if you feel cold, practice Suryabhedan Pranayam. The practice of Pranayam purifies the channels of body, makes mind calm, quiet and focused, and increases the life span.

The basic principle of Ayurveda (the science of living) is that the body is composed of five elements (ether, air, fire, earth and water) which form the three forces that operate within the body: Vata (vayu/wind), Pitta (fire), and Kapha (earth and water).

When these forces are balanced there is health, when they are imbalanced there is disease. All the treatments of Ayurveda are based on balancing the three Doshas through diet, lifestyle, PanchKarma, and the use of herbal medication.

If you want to conduct an experiment with impure and un-fit instruments it will not produce accurate results. Similarly an impure body and mind will not allow us to succeed in our endeavor to live a prosperous and successful life and achieve the highest goals.

Here at Life Mission, we utilize the natural remedies of Yoga and Ayurveda: diet, lifestyles, and practices which are conducive to your health and happiness. Come and experience the effect of these natural remedies at Lakulish Yoga and Health Retreat in Mebane, NC.

Wish you a prosperous new year.

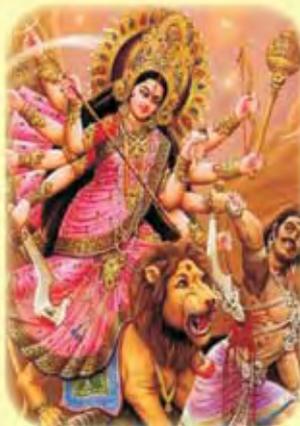
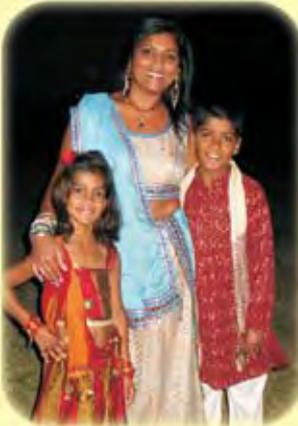
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Live & Learn!



Mayuri Mulji

If 2010 hasn't been a somewhat intense and stressful year for you, give yourself a hand: whatever strategies you've been employing to offset, manage or transform stress are apparently unusually effective.

As for the rest of us, 2010 certainly gave us an opportunity to learn something about how well we do or not cope with challenging circumstances. This is a good time to reflect on what we might take away from the past year's experiences: Where did we rise to the occasion and where did we find our coping skills lacking?

I did just this sort of review in my own life recently, and here are some of the insights I took away:

When the going gets tough, the tough keep going: I know the saying is that they get going, but many people who initially take on big challenges wind up losing heart along the way – usually about the same time their goal turns out to be a lot tougher than they thought. This year I lost my own steady business as a fitness instructor. But what I've learned during this experience is never to quit or give up on what you really want to accomplish. It has also reconfirmed my belief that when the present moment seems miserable, looking and facing forward to new challenges is often the best way to a better place.

When the future scares you, focus on the present: I realize this may seem a little contradictory to what I just said about moving forward and putting faith in the possibility of a brighter future, but in fact, it's a similar principle: The present is actually far more bearable than our minds make it seem. It's generally our projection into a future of scarcity & misery (or our mental replaying of a painful past) that convinces us we cannot stand what's happening now. In fact, in the present moment, virtually all of our real

needs are met. We are OK, safe, and blessed. We have choices. We may be uncomfortable, but we're rarely in as much trouble as our future-and-past-obsessed selves would have us believe. So when the future or past has you rattled, focus on the now.

When the control is beyond your reach, seek wisdom instead: "He who has a why to live can bear with almost any how." I have always believed that having a clear sense of purpose is one of the most essential ingredients for surviving and thriving through stressful experiences of all kinds. I recently encountered the painful shingles which just made me more depressed and helpless. There's one thing I learned from this unbearable pain ordeal: a sense of purpose and determination that comes with it. There were times when I simply did not have control of a given situation. In these moments when I could not change things the way I wanted to, I was essentially forced to accept things as they were. In the process, I discovered a deeper kind of wisdom and faith – one that gave me transcendent sense of acceptance I'd simply never experienced before.

So that's been my takeaway from 2010 so far! Take the lessons you learn from your own life to heart and you'll probably find you can enjoy much of the peace you always wanted within YOU! However you approach your goals, make that empowering choice to you as an individual. Make it happen!

Wishing You All a Wonderful Holiday Season & A Prosperous New Year! Namaste.



Foods that reduce stress levels:

Reach for these items next time you're feeling under pressure, under the weather, or just too close to that breaking point. Munching on these stress-free foods will help pull you back into the game.

Oranges:

A German study found that vitamin C helps reduce stress and return blood pressure and cortisol to normal levels after a stressful situation. Vitamin C is also well-known for boosting your immune system.

Sweet Potatoes:

Sweet potatoes can be particularly stress-reducing because they can satisfy the urge you get for carbohydrates and sweets when you are under a great deal of stress. They are packed full of beta-carotene and other vitamins, and the fiber helps your body to process the carbohydrates in a slow and steady manner.

Dried Apricots:

Apricots are rich in magnesium, which is a stress-buster and a natural muscle relaxant as well.

Almonds, Pistachios & Walnuts:

Almonds are packed with B and E vitamins, which help boost your immune system, and walnuts and pistachios help lower blood pressure.

Spinach:

A deficiency in magnesium can cause migraine headaches and a feeling of fatigue. One cup of spinach provides 40 percent of your daily needs for magnesium.

Avocados:

The monounsaturated fats and potassium in avocados help lower blood pressure. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute says that one of the best ways to lower blood pressure is to consume enough potassium (avocados have more than bananas).

Green Vegetables:

Broccoli, kale, and other dark green vegetables are powerhouses of vitamins that help replenish our bodies in times of stress.

More stress-busting tips:

- Exercise regularly
- Drink an energy shake for breakfast
- Eat small meals throughout the day, which will keep your blood sugar stable (when blood sugar is low, mental, physical, and emotional energy decreases, and stress increases).
- Choosing to be as healthy and fit as you possibly can is the one of the single most empowering choices available to you as an individual!

Wishing You All a Wonderful & Prosperous New Year! Namaste.

By Mayuri Mulji

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Change of Address ■ Print your old Address ■ New Member ■ Life Member ■ Membership Renewal 	Make check payable to LPS of USA Enclose \$60 for one year and \$100 for two years Or \$1001 for Life time membership Mail to: Ravindra Dave LPS of USA 716 Sweetwater Cir, Old Hickory TN 37138-2063
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APPLICANT INFORMATION	SPOUSE INFORMATION
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Full Name _____	Full Name _____
Village _____	Village _____
Father and Grandfather's full name _____	Father and Grandfather's full name _____
_____	_____
Mother's name _____	Mother's name _____
Father and Grandfather's name _____	Father and Grandfather's name _____
_____	_____
Village _____	Village _____
Name of Business _____	Profession _____
Home Address/ Street Name _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____	
Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____ Fax () _____	
Email _____	
Old Address: (For change of address only) Street Name _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____	

Unmarried Children First name only	Date of birth Month/ Year	Unmarried Children First name only	Date of birth Month/Year

Married Children First name only

1. _____	3. _____	5. _____	7. _____
2. _____	4. _____	6. _____	8. _____

Payment Option: Check # _____ Dt: _____

Credit Card Type Visa Master Amex Discover

Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Three digit CVV (Four digit for Amex) # _____

Amt Authorized \$ _____

Name on the Credit Card _____

Signature _____ Date _____

એલપીએસ - પ્રેસિડેન્ટનો પત્ર

જય શ્રી કૃષ્ણ,

મારા વહાલાં ભાઈઓ તથા બહેનો,

આપણો દેશ અત્યારે મંદીના સમયમાંથી પસાર થઈ રહ્યો છે, છતાં આપણા સમાજે યુએસના દરેક ખૂણે દિવાળી ઊજવી હતી. દિવાળી આનંદ અને ઉત્સાહનો તહેવાર છે. ફરી એક વાર હું આપ સૌને દિવાળી અને નવા વર્ષની શુભકામના પાઠવું છું.

૧૨, જુલાઈ ૨૦૧૦એ મેં હોદ્દો સંભાળ્યા બાદ પાંચ મહિનાથી પણ વધારે સમય વીતી ગયો છે. જેમ, મેં પહેલા કહ્યું હતું કે એલપીએસ ઓફ યુએસએનું એક અને માત્ર એક જ ધ્યેય છે કે આપણી રંગબેરંગી સંસ્કૃતિ અને સમૃદ્ધ વારસો નવી પેઢી અને આવનારી પેઢી સુધી પહોંચાડવો.

હું, મારા કેટલાક બોર્ડ ઓફ ડાયરેક્ટર સાથે જેક્સનવિલ, ફ્લોરિડાથી ફોર્ટ વોલ્ટન, ફ્લોરિડાથી ટલાહસેથી મોબાઈલ, અલાબામા અને આખરે લફાયેટા, લોસ એન્જલસ, એમ ચાર રાજ્યોમાં રોડ શો માટે ગયો હતો. અમારી આ મુસાફરી દરમિયાન અમે કેટલાક અદ્ભુત લેઉવાઓને મળ્યા હતા. અમે તેમની મહેમાનગતિ માણી અને વખાણી પણ હતી. અમે નાના ગામોની હોલ મીટિંગથી માંડીને લફાયેટા, એલએ જેવા શહેરોમાં રીજનલ મીટિંગો પણ કરી હતી.

મિત્રો, મને એ કહેતા બહુ જ આનંદ થાય છે કે મીટિંગમાં આપણે જે ઉત્સાહ જોયો, તે દંગ કરી દે તેવો હતો. સમગ્ર બોર્ડમાં અમને એક બાબત સમાન લાગી, અને તે હતી આપણાં બાળકો! એલપીએસ ઓફ યુએસએનું આપણું જે ધ્યેય છે, તે યોગ્ય માર્ગે હોય તેવું મને લાગે છે. અમારી આ ટૂર દરમિયાન અમને ૩૦ લાઈફટાઈમ મેમ્બરશીપ અને કેટલીક એન્યુઅલ મેમ્બરશીપ પણ મળી છે.

આપણા ધ્યેય સુધી પહોંચવા માટે આપણને ભંડોળ જોઈએ છે અને મેં પહેલા કહ્યું તે પ્રમાણે આપણું એલપીએસ ઓફ યુએસ તે બાબતે ઊંચું ઊતરે છે. તેથી અમે એમએલએસ ડાયરેક્ટ



નેટવર્ક, ઈન્કોર્પોરેશન સાથે પ્રોફિટ શેરીંગ પ્રોગ્રામ લોન્ચ કર્યો છે. ચેઝ બેંક મારફતે એમએલએસ ડાયરેક્ટ નેટવર્ક ઈન્કોર્પોરેશન હોટેલ, મોટેલ, રેસ્ટોરાં અને ગેસ સ્ટેશન માટે ક્રેડિટ કાર્ડ પ્રોસેસ કરતી કંપની છે.

હવે જાણીએ કે, અહીં એલપીએસ ઓફ યુએસએ પ્રોગ્રામ કેવી રીતે કામ કરશે. આપણા મેમ્બર્સને ક્રેડિટ કાર્ડ પ્રોસેસિંગમાં બેસ્ટ રેટ્સ મળશે અને તેના બદલામાં એમએલએસ તે રકમનો થોડો ભાગ એલપીએસ ઓફ યુએસએને ડોનેટ કરશે. એમએલએસમાં મળેલા ફંડનો ૨૫ ટકા જેટલો ભાગ સ્કોલરશીપમાં અપાશે, ૫૦ ટકા જેટલો ભાગ કેસ રિઝર્વ એકાઉન્ટમાં જમા કરાશે અને ૨૫ ટકા જેટલો ભાગ હાલના ઓપરેટીંગ એકાઉન્ટમાં અપાશે.

છેલ્લા એક દશકાથી પણ વધારે સમય એલપીએસ ઓફ યુએસએ સાથે જોડાયેલો હોવાથી મેં આ સંસ્થાને કેટલીક વાર નાણાંકીય મુશ્કેલીઓમાં ફસાતા પણ જોઈ છે, તેથી જ આપણે વધારે રકમ આવનાર સમયમાં કામ લાગે તે માટે સંઘરી રાખવી જોઈએ, આપણે એક હોટેલ ઈન્વેસ્ટમેન્ટ કંપની સાથે એક પ્રોફિટ મેકિંગ પ્રોગ્રામ કરવાના છીએ. આ માટે હું અને જયેશ પટેલ તે કંપની સાથેના ફાઈનલ કોન્ટ્રાક્ટ પર કામ કરી રહ્યા છીએ અને અમે ટૂંક સમયમાં જ આ પ્રોગ્રામ ઈન્ટ્રોડ્યુસ કરશું.

આ પ્રોગ્રામને સફળ બનાવવા માટે મને

તમારા સાથની જરૂર છે. તમારે ઓછામાં ઓછા આ વેન્ડર્સને તમારા બિઝનેસમાંથી કમાવાનો ચાન્સ આપવો જોઈએ. મેગેઝીનમાં તમને આ અંગેની જાહેરાત જોવા મળશે.

આપણી યંગ કમિટી ઓહાઈયોમાં સ્કી-ટ્રીપનું આયોજન કરી રહી છે. આ અંગેની વધારે માહિતી તમને આપણી વેબસાઈટ પર જોવા મળશે. વધારામાં, એલપીએસ ઓફ યુએસએના બોર્ડ વેબસાઈટને સુધારવાની મંજૂરી આપી છે અને આ વેબસાઈટમાં મેટ્રીમોનીયલ ટેબનો પણ ઉમેરવામાં આવશે. મારી મુસાફરી દરમિયાન, તમારામાંના કેટલાક લોકોએ મને આ એરીયામાં કામ કરવા સૂચવ્યું હતું, ખાસ કરીને આપણા યુવાનો માટે. આ અંગે સુનીલ પટેલ આવનારા ૩૦ દિવસોમાં કામ શરૂ કરી દેશે.

આપણા બધા જ સભ્યોને એપીએસ ઓફ અમેરિકાનું સુંદર કેલેન્ડર સમયસર મળી ગયું હશે. નયન પટેલે (પુના ગામ) કેલેન્ડર બનાવવા માટે ખૂબ મહેનત કરી તે માટે હું તેમનો સહૃદય આભારી છું. આપણા ઘણા સભ્યો ડાયરેક્ટરીની રાહ જોઈ રહ્યા છે, અમારી ટીમ તે તૈયાર કરી રહી છે. બધા જ સભ્યોને એલપીએસ ઓફ યુએસએ તરફથી યુઝર નેમ અને પાસવર્ડ ટૂંક સમયમાં મળી જશે. આ બાદ બધાએ ૩૧ માર્ચ, ૨૦૧૧ પહેલા પોતાની પ્રોફાઈલ એડિટ કરી લેવી. બધા સભ્યોએ પોતાની પ્રોફાઈલ એડિટ જાતે જ કરવી પડશે કારણકે તે પ્રેક્ટીકલી અમારા માટે શક્ય નથી.

અમે ન્યુ ઓરલેન્સ, લોસ એન્જલસ ખાતે યોજાનારા એલપીએસ ઓફ યુએસએ નેશનલ કન્વેન્શન માટે ૨૮-૩૦ જુલાઈની તારીખો નક્કી કરી છે.

જેએફકે એ કહ્યું હતું તે રીતે કહીએ તો, મહેરબાની કરીને એવું ન પૂછો કે એલપીએસ ઓફ યુએસએએ તમારા માટે શું કર્યું છે, એવું પૂછો કે તમે એલપીએસ ઓફ યુએસએ માટે શું કર્યું છે..... 'ટીમ વર્ક'.....

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૧૨ દિવસ, ૧૯,૫૦૦ ફિટ અને ૩૨ માઇલ પછી...

૨૬ વર્ષના નિશા પટેલે હાલમાં જ પવિત્ર કૈલાસ પર્વત અને માનસરોવરની યાત્રા પૂરી કરી છે. તેઓ તેમના અનુભવો સમગ્ર દેશના લેઉવાઓ સાથે શેર કરે છે...!

મે, ૨૦૧૦માં લો સ્કૂલ પૂરી કર્યા બાદ મેં કૈલાસ પર્વત અને માનસરોવરની યાત્રા કરવાનું નક્કી કર્યું હતું. જુલાઈના અંતમાં ઈલિનોઈ બાર એકઝામમાં બેઠા પછી આ યાત્રા મને શાંતિ અપાવશે તેવું મેં વિચાર્યું હતું. યાત્રા એટલે હિન્દુ મહાકાવ્યો જેમકે, મહાભારત અને રામાયણમાં જે સ્થળોનો ઉલ્લેખ થયો છે તેવા પવિત્રધામની તીર્થયાત્રા.

હિન્દુ ધર્મ અનુસાર, ભગવાન શિવ અને તેમના પત્ની પાર્વતી કૈલાસ પર્વતના શિખર પર આવેલા માનસરોવર પાસે વસવાટ કરે છે. આ સરોવર દરિયાઈ સપાટીથી ૧૫,૦૦૦ ફિટ ઉપર છે, તે દુનિયાનું સૌથી ઊંચું મીઠાં પાણીનું સરોવર તો છે જ, તે ઉપરાંત પવિત્રતાનું પ્રતીક પણ છે. હવે હું મારી ત્રણ દિવસની કૈલાસ-માનસરોવર યાત્રા વિશે જણાવીશ.

દિવસ : ૧

‘ગુડ મોર્નિંગ દીદી! ચાય? કોફી? ટી?’ અમારી સવારની શરૂઆત અમને બ્રેકફાસ્ટ ટ્રિક ઓફર કરતા અમારા ટ્રેક લીડરના અવાજથી થઈ હતી. અમે ઝડપથી તૈયાર થયા, અમારી બેગ પેક કરી અને અમે પવિત્ર કૈલાસ પર્વતની ત્રણ દિવસની યાત્રા શરૂ કરી. અમે કૈલાસ પર્વતના બેઝ કેમ્પ, ડારચેનની એક લોકલ હોટેલમાં અમે રોકાયા હતા ત્યાંની લોબીમાં અમે બધા એકઠા થયા. અમારું આખું ગ્રુપ બ્રેકફાસ્ટ કર્યા બાદ ખુબ જુસ્સા સાથે પદયાત્રા કરવા તૈયાર હતું.

અમે અમારા લેન્ડ કુઝરમાં ગોઠવાયા. એકાદ કલાકની મુસાફરી પછી અમે કૈલાસ પર્વતની સપાટી પર પહોંચ્યા અને ત્યાંથી અમે અમારી પદયાત્રા શરૂ કરવાના હતા. અમે ઉત્સાહપૂર્વક અમારી લેન્ડકુઝરમાંથી બહાર આવ્યા અને ટ્રેક માટે અમે અમારો સામાન અને હાઈકીંગ ગિયર તૈયાર કરવા માંડ્યા. હાઈકીંગ શુઝ, રેઈન જેકેટ, વોટર બોટલ, હાઈકીંગ સ્ટીક અને ડે પેક ચેક કર્યા પછી અમે આગળ વધવા માટે તૈયાર હતા. અમારા બેગ્સ યાક પર ગોઠવાયા, જેઓ આ યાત્રા ચાલીને પૂરી કરવાના હતા તેમણે ચાલવા માંડ્યું અને જેઓ ઘોડા પર બેસીની યાત્રા કરવાના હતા, તેઓ તેમના ઘોડા પર બેસી ગયા અને તેઓ થોડી વાર પછીથી પોતાની યાત્રા શરૂ કરવાના હતા. અમે અમારી ચારે બાજુ આવેલા પહાડો, ધોધ અને ભેખડો વચ્ચેનો ખડકાળ પ્રદેશ અને ચમકતા આસમાની રંગના આકાશ અને તેમાં છૂટાં છવાયેલાં વાદળાઓની સુંદરતાને નિહાળી રહ્યા હતા. પવિત્ર કૈલાસ ત્યાં ઐશ્વર્ય સાથે ઝળહળી રહ્યો હતો! અમે ભગવાન શિવના દરવાજે આવીને ઊભા હતા.

દિવસ : ૨

‘ગુડ મોર્નિંગ દીદી! ચાય? કોફી? ટી?’ પર્વતોની વચ્ચે આવેલા ગેસ્ટ હાઉસમાં રાત્રે કાચી ઊંઘ પછી અમે વહેલી પરોઢે જાગી ગયા હતા.



અમારો નાસ્તો આવ્યો. મેં ગરમાગરમ ઓટમીલનો બાઉલ એવું વિચારીને ખાધો કે આજે મારે સૌથી વધુ ચઢાણ કરવાનું છે અને તેના માટે મને ઘણી તાકાતની જરૂર પડશે. આજે અમારે ૧૯,૫૦૦ ફિટ ઊંચાઈ સુધી ચઢાણ કરવાનું હતું. અમારા ટ્રેક લીડર પ્રેમે અમારો ટ્રેક શરૂ કરાવ્યો.

હાઈકીંગ સ્ટીક હાથમાં લઈને અમે સૌથી વધુ આધ્યાત્મિક જગ્યા પર પહોંચવાની કવાયત શરૂ કરી. ૧૯,૫૦૦ ફિટ પર આવેલા ડોલમા લા પાસનું ચઢાણ સહેલું ન હતું, લિનાની પાછળ ચાલતા ચાલતા દર ૨૦ ડગલે અમે થોડો આરામ કરતા હતા. આ દરમિયાન અમે ગીતો ગાતા, અમારા વિચારોનું આદાનપ્રદાન કરતા અમે ઉપર સુધી પહોંચવા માટે એકબીજાને પ્રોત્સાહન આપી રહ્યા હતા. આ દરમિયાન મેં માનસિક હતાશાથી માંડીને ઉલ્લાસ સુધીની દરેક પ્રકારની લાગણીની અનુભૂતિ કરી હતી. આખરે ચઢાણ પૂરું કર્યું. મહિનાઓની તૈયારી પછી, હું દુનિયાની ટોચ પર પહોંચી હતી. કેવી સરસ સિદ્ધિ! થોડી વાર ફોટો પડાવા રોકાયા પછી અમારે ચઢાણ ચાલુ રાખવાનું હતું. દરિયાઈ સપાટીથી આટલી ઊંચાઈ પર બહુ સમય રહેવું તે જોખમભર્યું હતું.

બીજો મુકામ: ગૌરી કુંડ, આ પણ હિન્દુઓનું પવિત્રયાત્રા ધામ છે, એવું માનવામાં આવે છે કે ભગવાન શિવનાં પત્ની દેવી પાર્વતી અહીં સ્નાન કરવા આવતા હતા. અમે ગૌરી કુંડના સ્થાનેથી આગળ વધીને અમે નીચે ઉતર્યા ત્યાર બાદ રસ્તો બહુ જ કપરો બની ગયો. ભૂપ્રદેશ બદલાઈ ગયો નાના સ્ટેપીંગ સ્ટોન અને પથ્થરોને બદલે હવે, તે પવન અને પાણીને કારણે ઘસાઈ ગયેલા પથ્થરોવાળો રસ્તો અહીં હતો. વરસાદ અને આછી બરફ વર્ષાને કારણે તે પથ્થરો વધુ લપસણા બની ગયા હતા.

હવે ૨૦ ડગલા ચાલવું અને થોડી વાર રોકાવું શક્ય ન હતું. અમને જાણ થાય તે પહેલા સૂરજ આથમી જાય તેમ હતો. અમે આગળ વધ્યા. ઉતરીને

અમે ડોલમા લા પાસ પહોંચ્યા અમારી પાસે થોડી વાર ટેન્ટમાં આરામ કરવાનો સમય હતો. અહીં અમે મારા માતા-પિતા સહિતના ગ્રુપના બાકીના સભ્યોને મળ્યા. તેમણે ઘોડા પર સવાર થઈને પર્વતારોહણ કર્યું હતું. મેં ક્યારેય મારા માતા-પિતાને આટલા ખુશ નહોતા જોયા. તેમણે આખરે કરી બતાવ્યું. તેઓ વિજયી થયા.

અમે રાત માટે અમારા કેમ્પ તરફ જઈ રહ્યા હતા ત્યારે મને બહુ જ નબળાઈ લાગતી હતી. હું એક ડગલું આગળ ચાલું તેવું વિચારવાની શક્તિ પણ મારામાં ન હતી. મારે ભગવાનના એક ચમત્કારની જરૂર હતી.

ભગવાન શિવે તેમના દરવાજે મારી અરજી સાંભળી. આખરે મને એક સવારી વગરનો ઘોડો મળ્યો. વરસતા વરસાદમાં હું તેના પર ચઢી ગઈ અને મેં મારા હુડથી માથું ઢાંકી દીધું, જ્યાં સુધી હું અમારા કેમ્પસાઈટ પહોંચી ત્યાં સુધી મેં ઘોડાને જોરથી પકડી રાખ્યો હતો.

મારા પછી કેમ્પમાં પહોંચેલા યાક પર મારો સામાન આવ્યો એટલે તરત મેં મારા ઠંડા અને ભીના કપડાં બદલીને એવા જ ઠંડા પણ કોરા કપડાં પહેર્યાં. અંધારું થાય તે પહેલા મેં મારી બેગ પેક કરી, ગરમાગરમ ભોજન લીધું અને મારા પાંચ રૂમમેટ સાથે ઊંઘવા ચાલી ગઈ.

દિવસ : ૩

‘ગુડ મોર્નિંગ દીદી! ચાય? કોફી? ટી?’ આજે અમે ભગવાન શિવના ઘરમાંથી વિદાય લીધી. આ અમારી યાત્રાનો છેલ્લો દિવસ હતો. અમારે આજે પાંચ માઈલ ચાલવાનું હતું. તેનો અનુભવ થોડો કડવો અને થોડો મીઠો હતો. થોડી કલાકો ચાલ્યા બાદ અમારી લેન્ડકુઝર અમારી રાહ જોતી હતી. હિમાલય અને માઉન્ટ કૈલાસની સુંદરતા હંમેશા અમારા મનમાં વાગોળાતી રહેશે.

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ગલ્ફ રાજ્યોના રિજયનલ્સમાં એલપીએસ

આ વર્ષે નવા પ્રેસિડેન્ટ અને તેમના એડમિનિસ્ટ્રેશનએ ગલ્ફના રાજ્યોમાં પહેલી રિજયનલ- રોડ ટ્રીપ કરી હતી. આ ટ્રીપનો હેતુ 'લેઉવા પ્રાઇડ'નો મેસેજ ફેલાવાનો અને આ સંસ્થાની મેમ્બરશીપનું મૂલ્ય સમજાવવાનો અને આપણા સંસ્કારો અને વારસાની જાળવણી માટે લેઉવા ભાઈઓને એક કરવાનો હતો.

અમે અમારી યાત્રાની શરૂઆત સનશાઈન સ્ટેટ (ફ્લોરિડા)ના જેક્શનવિલાથી કરી હતી. આપણા રિજયનલની શરૂઆત કિરીટભાઈ પાટીદાર (એએફવીએ, એસઈસી), સુરેશભાઈ પટેલ (પુના, આઈટી), દીપકભાઈ પટેલ (ખારવાસા, એરિયા રેપ) જેવા લોકોની લિડરશીપને કારણે સારી રહી હતી. બીજા, એલપીએસના એડમિનિસ્ટ્રેશનના બોબી ન્યુમેન (પેથરોન, પ્રેસિડેન્ટ), હસુભાઈ પટેલ (બાજીપુરા, વાઈસ પ્રેસિડેન્ટ) મહેન્દ્રભાઈ અરવિંદ (ખારવાસા) પણ હાજર રહ્યા હતા.

રિજયનલ અને સિક્વેન્શીયલ રિજયનલમાં અમે લેઉવા પ્રાઇડનો સંદેશો ફેલાવ્યો છે; તેમની સામે જીર્ણ થતા આપણા સંસ્કારો અને વારસાની જાણવવાની તથા ઈન્ટર લેઉવા મેરેજ અને ઈન્ટર લેઉવા કોમ્યુનિકેશનને પ્રમોટ કરવા માટે વેબ મિકેનિઝમ પુરું પાડવાની ઈચ્છા જાહેર કરી હતી. અમે ઈચ્છીએ છીએ કે અમે લેઉવા કનેક્શન, કેલેન્ડર, ઓનલાઈન મેરેજ રીસર્ચિંગ, ઓનલાઈન લેઉવા સમાચાર (મૃત્યુ, જન્મ, લગ્ન, વગેરે) અને નવી ડાયરેક્ટરી દ્વારા તેમની મેમ્બરશીપને વેલ્યુ પૂરી પાડી શકીએ. કઈ અને કેવી રીતે કમિટીઓ પોતાનું ધ્યેય નક્કી કરે છે, કેવી રીતે એજ્યુકેશન ફંડ આપણા યુવાનોને મદદ કરે છે, કેવી રીતે આ સંસ્થા દ્વારા આપણે યુવાનોને લેઉવા સમાજ ના મૂલ્યો સમજાવીએ છીએ, જેવા વિષયો પર પણ તેમને માહિતી પૂરી પાડી હતી.

આ પ્રેઝન્ટેશન પછી, અમે નાઈટ ફેસ્ટીવીટીઝ જેમકે ભોજન, ચર્ચા, ફન અને કેર્યોકે (હા, તમે બરાબર જ વાચ્યું છે) જેવી પ્રવૃત્તિઓ કરી હતી, આ બધું મોડી રાત સુધી ચાલ્યું હતું. બીજા દિવસ સવારે અમે એલપીએસને ટલાહસ્સે, ફ્લોરિડા લઈ ગયા હતા.

અમે રાકેશભાઈ પટેલ (સુગલપુર, એરિયા રેપ)



નો આભાર માનીએ છીએ કે તેમણે ટલાહસ્સેમાં રિજયનલનું આયોજન કર્યું હતું. વરસાદને કારણે વધુ પ્રમાણમાં લોકો ભાગ નહોતા લઈ શક્યા પણ થોડા લોકો સમાજ માટે આવ્યા હતા. અત્યાર સુધી ગલ્ફ સ્ટેટના ઘણા એરિયામાં એલપીએસ નથી પહોંચ્યું, તેથી અમને ખાતરી હતી કે કેટલાક અઘરા પ્રશ્નો અને ટીકાઓનો સામનો કરવો પડશે. સૌથી પહેલા એક યુવાન મહિલાએ અમને કહ્યું કે એલપીએસએ લેઉવાના યુવાનોમાં વધતી જતી ઓવર-ડ્રિફ્ટિંગ હેબીટ વિશે યુવાનોને સમજાવવું જોઈએ. આ કારણે જ તેના એક મિત્રના મૃત્યુ થયું હતું, તે વિશે તેણે અમને જણાવ્યું હતું. તેના જવાબમાં અમે કહ્યું કે અમે એલના મેગેઝીનમાં અવારનવાર આ પ્રકારના વર્તણૂકની ટીકા કરીએ છીએ, છતાં પણ એક વાર આપણું મેગેઝીન અને વેબ ઈન્ટીગ્રેશન વધારે સારા થઈ જશે, ત્યારપછી આપણે આમાંથી બહાર નીકળવાનો રસ્તો શોધી લઈશું. અમે તેને સૂચવ્યું કે તેણે અને તેના જેવા બીજા લોકોએ પણ આ વિષય પર મેગેઝીન મારફતે પોતાનો અવાજ ઉઠાવવો જોઈએ. બીજા દિવસે સવારે અમે રજીડ માઈલની મુસાફરી કરીને અલાબામાના મોબાઈલમાં પહોંચ્યા.

કોટન સ્ટેટમાંથી એલપીએસ બોર્ડના વધુ સભ્યો જેમકે, જયેશ, રાજેન્દ્ર, સંજય પટેલ એલપીએસ રોડ ક્રુમાં જોડાયા. એલપીએસને મોબાઈલમાં યંગ ડેમોગ્રાફિકને કારણે સૌથી વધુ પ્રશ્નો અને ટિપ્પણીઓ આવી હતી. નોન લેઉવા મેરેજ માટે છૂટ આપવા વિશે કેમ એલપીએસ કંઈ નથી કરતું

અથવા તો નોન લેઉવાને મેમ્બરશીપને કેમ પ્રોત્સાહન નથી અપાતું? હવે કેમ એલપીએસ જલદી અને વારંવાર યોજાતી જોવા મળે છે? અમને અમારી મેમ્બરશીપના બદલામાં વધુ વેલ્યુ મળવી જોઈએ, જેવા પ્રશ્નો ઉદ્ભવ્યા હતા. તેના જવાબમાં આપણા ટોપ બોર્ડ ડાયરેક્ટર્સે જણાવ્યું હતું કે, 'કેટલાક કાર્ટેરીયાની અંદર જ આ સંસ્થા લેઉવાના સંસ્કારો અને વારસાને ફેલાવવા માટે ઘડવામાં આવી છે. તેથી આ સંસ્થાને ડાયલ્યૂટ કરીને તેનો ઓરિજિનલ ઉદ્દેશ્ય ભૂલાવી દેવાનો કોઈ અર્થ નથી. તથા એલપીએસ એવું નથી કહેતું કે તમે લેઉવાની બહાર લગ્ન ન કરી શકો, પરંતુ અમે તો ઈન્ટર લેઉવા લગ્નોને પ્રોત્સાહન આપીએ છીએ.' 'એલપીએસ સંપૂર્ણ વોલન્ટરી સંસ્થા છે, (આ સંસ્થાનો ખર્ચ પણ વોલન્ટીઅર્સ જ ઉઠાવે છે) અને તેની બ્રેડથ અને ડેપ્થને કારણે જ દરેક શહેરોમાં જ્યારે ઈચ્છા થાય ત્યારે જઈ શકીએ છીએ.' 'એલપીએસ મેમ્બરશીપ દ્વારા વધુ વેલ્યુ પૂરી પાડવાની પ્રક્રિયા હજી ચાલુ છે અને ઓછા ફંડને કારણે મેરેજ ટેબ, કેલેન્ડર, નવી ડાયરેક્ટરી, કન્વેન્શનને લોકો સુધી પહોંચાડવામાં મોડું થાય છે.'

ત્યારબાદ તે મુસાફરી અમને પાછી ફોર્ટ વોલ્ટન બીચ પર લઈ ગઈ, ત્યાં અમારી સાથે વધુ બોર્ડ મેમ્બર્સ જોડાયા. તે ગલ્ફનો સુંદર એરિયા છે અને ત્યાં ફેમિલી ઓરિએન્ટેડ લેઉવાઓ રહે છે. મોટા ભાગના લોકોએ એલપીએસના હેતુને સમજ્યા અને તેની કદર પણ કરી. તેઓ જે રીતે લેઉઆ પરિવારના ડાયનેમિક્સ, લેઉવાના જીવનમાં મીટ અને શરાબની ભૂમિકા જેવા વિષયો પર ચર્ચા કરતા હતા, તેમાં મને ખાસ રસ પડ્યો હતો. જોકે અમારી વાતો ખૂબ લાંબો સમય ચાલી હતી. પણ પરિવારની ઉપેક્ષા કરી નાણાં બનાવવાના લેઉવાના ટ્રેન્ડથી પડતી મુશ્કેલીઓ તે મુદ્દો સૌથી મહત્વનો હતો. ત્યારબાદ અમે લાફાયેટ, એલએ ગયા.

અહીં સૌથી વધુ લોકો આવ્યા હતા. મોટાભાગના લોકો એલપીએસ શું છે અને તે કેમ જરૂરી છે તે વિશે જાણતા હતા. ત્યાં મોટાભાગના પ્રશ્નો એજ્યુકેશન ફંડના આર્થિક વ્યવહારને લગતા હતા. આ પ્રશ્નોના જવાબ સી.એન. પટેલ અને ફંડ કમિટીએ આપ્યા હતા. આ મુસાફરી મારા માટે આઈ-ઓપનર અને એલપીએસ માટે વધુ મેમ્બરશીપ મેળવવાની તક હતી.





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