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Aum School Newsletter

April 6, 2025 | Newsletter 5

Wishing You a very Happy Ram Navami!

On this auspicious occasion of Ram Navami, we honor the values of strength and righteousness, inspiring growth and learning across our preschool communities.



Aum School San Antonio

Holi & Mahashivratri celebrations and my culture project

Aum School San Antonio came alive with joy and devotion as students and teachers celebrated the festivals of Holi and Mahashivratri with enthusiasm and togetherness.

The Holi celebration was filled with colors of joy, as students and teachers played with organic vegetable colors, spreading love and happiness throughout the school.

For Mahashivratri, students honored Lord Shiva by making Shivalingas out of clay and listening to the sacred story of Mahashivratri, deepening their understanding of this spiritual occasion.

Adding to the cultural learning, Kindergarten students participated in a special project, "My Family Culture," where they created poster presentations showcasing their unique family traditions. They proudly shared their posters in the classroom, fostering appreciation for diverse cultures and values.

It was a wonderful celebration of tradition, learning, and togetherness!



New Jersey Aum School

Legacy of Bharat: Showcasing India's Rich Culture and Traditions

Aum School in New Jersey recently hosted a spectacular cultural and fashion show titled "Legacy of Bharat" on February 22nd, 2025, at the BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir. Mr. Casey Parikh, a Council member from Livingston graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

Around 180 people attended the show. The event transported participants on a vibrant journey across India through traditional music and dances representing various states of Bharat. From the bustling streets of Delhi to the serene temples of Tamil Nadu, from the royal deserts of Rajasthan to the lush landscapes of Bengal, each performer showcased a unique cultural tradition. The audience was treated to the rhythmic Garba of Gujarat, the graceful Kathak of Uttar Pradesh, the vibrant folk dances of Bihar, and the majestic elegance of Karnataka, to name just a few.

The families also enjoyed clicking pictures with their loved ones in traditional backdrops. Overall, it was a memorable evening filled with treasure of culture, rhythm, vibrancy, diversity, and love.



Carolina Aum School, Charlotte

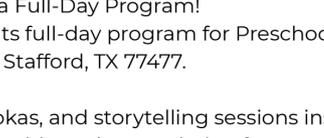
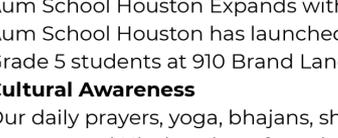
Springtime Wonders: Colors, Creativity, and Curious Minds

Spring has sprung, and the kids are brimming with ideas for what to grow in our greenhouse, showcasing their creativity and enthusiasm for nature.

This month, we celebrated Holi with a splash—literally! Using cotton balls, the children created vibrant, colorful masterpieces, fully embracing the fun of this festive activity.

Our young learners have also been traveling through time, exploring the fascinating world of dinosaurs, while celebrating the timeless works of Dr. Seuss.

Yoga time remains a favorite, with the kids impressing us all with their flexibility and boundless energy. We are also thrilled to share that they've been learning the shloka 'Ganga Cha Yamune Caiva.'. On top of that, their journey with the alphabet continues strong—some have even reached Z!



Houston Aum School

Expanding Horizons: Aum School Houston Now Offers a Full-Day Program

Aum School Houston Expands with a Full-Day Program!

Aum School Houston has launched its full-day program for Preschool to Grade 5 students at 910 Brand Lane, Stafford, TX 77477.

Cultural Awareness

Our daily prayers, yoga, bhajans, shlokas, and storytelling sessions instill deep-rooted Hindu values, fostering pride and appreciation for our rich cultural heritage alongside regular academic subjects.

Educational Learning

In addition to Dharma & Heritage studies, Samskritam, and yoga, our students engage in Math, Science, Social Studies, and English. Our dedicated teachers make learning interactive through puzzles, experiments, and games.

Outdoor & Indoor Fun

From yoga sessions to creative games, children stay active while learning teamwork, physical fitness, and mindfulness. They also explore arts, crafts, and cooking.

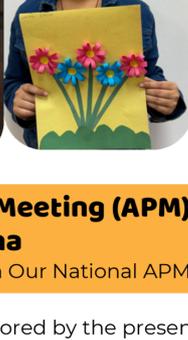
Special Events

We recently celebrated Maha Shivaratri and Holi with great enthusiasm, making these cultural experiences memorable for our students.

Spring Camp Success

We successfully concluded our Spring Camp and are excited about the future of Aum School in Stafford. This success reaffirms our mission to provide not

only academic excellence but also a strong foundation in moral and spiritual values for our children.



Highlights from the Annual Planning Meeting (APM) Weekend in North Carolina

Strategic Vision, Collective Action: Highlights from Our National APM



Our Annual Planning Meeting (APM) was held in North Carolina from Friday through Sunday, bringing together an inspiring group of 35 attendees.

The national team gathered on Friday for strategic discussions, and the full group joined on Saturday and Sunday—including National Directors, Managers, Advisors, local school teams, and the Curriculum Development Team.

We were honored by the presence and valuable insights of several distinguished guests:

- Sriram ji from Gurukula
- Kalyan ji from HUA
- Jai Bansal ji from VHP

Local school participation came from across the country, including San Antonio, Charlotte, Los Angeles, Seattle, New Jersey, and Maryland.

Following the APM, we had the opportunity to visit the Charlotte AUM School—a wonderful chance to see local efforts in action and connect with the team on the ground.

Dharma Bee 2025: A Promising Start!

We're excited to share that the inaugural Dharma Bee competition is off to a fantastic start, with an enthusiastic response from participants across the country.

This year's theme is the Ramayan, and participants were encouraged to read Valmiki Ramayan by Bibek Debroy as a reference and inspiration throughout the competition.

The event consists of three engaging rounds:

1. Online Quiz
2. Activity Round
3. Regional Round



We're now gearing up for the National Finals, which will be held on April 19 in Missouri.

We're proud of all the participants and grateful to the volunteers and mentors who have supported this journey so far. Looking forward to an inspiring finale!

Empowering Identity: The Importance of Culturally Relevant Content in Education

by Rakhi Israni

The need to incorporate culturally relevant content into the mainstream education system is essential not only for fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, but also for enhancing academic engagement. This, in turn, plays a vital role in shaping the identity of the student. As a Hindu American who grew up in a Texas community where Indian Americans were a small minority, I have experienced firsthand the challenges of feeling disconnected from the mainstream narrative. The inclusion of culturally relevant educational curricula - those that help students better understand and embrace their identities in a positive way - can empower students to develop a stronger sense of self, connect more deeply with their studies, and engage more meaningfully in their learning.

Unfortunately, today's public school curriculum, particularly in certain parts of the country, is strongly trending toward dividing communities into opposing categories of oppressors and the oppressed. This oversimplified narrative often casts some communities as victims and others as aggressors, without providing the necessary context of historical events. The portrayal of these dynamics in such a black-and-white manner can negatively affect the psyche of students from those marginalized communities, often leading to feelings of disconnection or even dissociation from their own cultural identity.

Alternatively, incorporating culturally relevant content enables students to form a more positive and nuanced identity. When students see their cultural backgrounds, histories, and experiences reflected in the curriculum in a balanced, thoughtful manner, they feel recognized and valued. They are more likely to develop a strong sense of pride in who they are. This validation significantly boosts self-esteem and confidence, which are essential for healthy emotional and psychological development.

Moreover, culturally specific content leads to greater engagement and promotes better critical thinking and deeper learning. When students feel that their perspectives and life experiences are acknowledged, they are more likely to participate actively in class discussions and academic activities. Such an approach invites students to explore their worldviews, challenge assumptions, and develop a broader understanding of the world around them. It strengthens intellectual growth and nurtures a lifelong passion for learning.

For my kids, who currently attend public schools in which Indian Americans are the majority, the inclusion of more Hindu-focused educational content into their mainstream education goes beyond simple representation - it serves as a powerful tool for creating a deeper, more meaningful educational experience. For me, someone who grew up navigating the complexities of being a part of a very small minority, this type of education would have made a significant difference in how I related to myself and the world around me. Fortunately, I grew up in a family and in a close-knit local Hindu community that ensured that I, along with many others like me, developed a strong sense of pride in our Hindu culture.

Rakhi Israni is the President of Excel Test Prep, Inc, a national educational company based in Fremont, CA. She is an attorney by profession and currently serves as the Vice President of Government Relations for Sewa International USA, the largest Hindu American service organization in the United States.