



UPCOMING EVENTS

Saraswati Puja February 12, 2011

Location: Gwyn-Nor Elementary School in North Wales, PA

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Pragati's Winter Newsletter

JANUARY 2011

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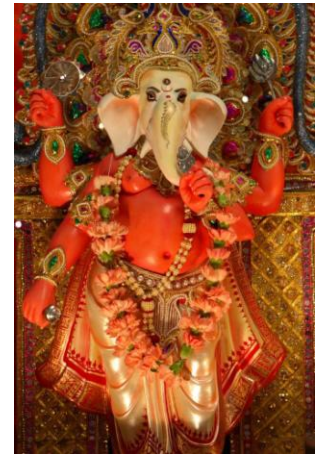
Happy New Year 2011!

Welcome to Pragati's 2nd quarterly online newsletter! With the start of 2011, we begin afresh with new events and new programs to look forward to.

After the highly successful 2010 puja events, we begin our celebrations in the new year with Saraswati Puja in February.

Here's to hoping that 2011 is filled with joy, excitement, and happiness for you and your family!

— Pragati Communications



Editorial by Pragati President



Happy New Year!

It is my great pleasure to come to you with our second

electronic news letter! This newsletter is more colorful, more organized, and more informative than the first one. I am sure you will enjoy it!

It is hard to believe that a year has already passed since our current executive committee was elected. 2010 has been a great year for PRAGATI. I am grateful to each and every PRAGATI member for actively and enthusiastically supporting and participating in the various events of the past year. Your participation is our vital inspiration.

We are very proud to bring in a new and unique flavor to our most recent past events such as the fulfilled Bengali Dada and Didi competition on Nababarsha, the uniquely decorated "Puja Mandap", the colorful Puja magazine, the Bengali Natak by our very own members, the interactive movie song competitions (involving the entire audience), and of course, the delicious homemade treats we have enjoyed throughout the year.

We have also taken the initiative to discuss and explain the history and significance of each event to our younger generation. Going forward, we endeavor to present even more interesting programs during each of our future events. Please stay tuned!

As usual, we request your active participation in our various programs, and we would love to hear your suggestions for any improvements.

Our upcoming event is Saraswati Puja to be celebrated on February 12, 2011. Please visit the Pragati Website (pragati.org) for details, and encourage your kids to participate in the talent show.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at the Saraswati Puja.

With warmest regards,

Dipanwita Roy



Appreciation for Past Events

Pragati Executive Committee's 2010 fall ventures included Durga Puja, Laxmi Puja and Kali Puja celebrations in October and Nov. All three events have been credited by our members as a great success.

"I intended to congratulate you all on your performance while I was on the podium last night but was not able to complete my statement. So let me thank you and congratulate you all for the hard work and excellent performance. Your enthusiastic and heartfelt posture in welling us all was most impressive. Personally I was touched by it. I wish you continued success in future endeavors.

I am not sure I know the name of our Priest. I think he is a gentleman (priest and gentleman). In Bengali we call such a person "Matier Manush." Please convey to him my personal thank and appreciation for such a wonderful execution of Pujas, particularly Anjali. "

- Shila Sarkar

"We would like to express our appreciation and extend our congratulations to all of you for conducting the Durga Puja and Laxmi Puja ceremonies so well.

The tireless efforts you have given in planning and organizing, the execution and the enthusiasm you have shown have drawn everyone's attention. Your personal phone calls to every family ahead of the puja, requesting them to attend, surely brought in a lot of familiar faces we did not see for a while!

Most noteworthy was your conducting the puja ceremonies and the other events more or less at the scheduled times. You also made special efforts for fund raising. Well done and keep up the good work. We need you. "

- Arun & Ratna Bhattacharjee

Dish Network - Note of appreciation

"The Bengali package in Dish network provides three channels which are not currently provided by any other Network. We had to weigh in between the channels provided by Direct TV/ Dish Network/ Comcast/ Verizon and we came to the conclusion that Dish Network provides the most number of popular Bengali channels compared to others. They are clearly the leaders in providing quality Bengali programs, some of which include:

1. *Star Ananda: Latest News and happenings in India and around the globe. Lots of local news of Kolkata and debates on current topics. Excellent Puja coverage featuring tours to various Puja pandals, decorations and interview with local artists involved in creating the magnificent look of Goddess Durga.*
2. *Sony Aath: A complete Movie/Drama entertainment channel. Never get bored if you are a movie buff. Four movies per day, two crime thrillers and various other entertaining serials will keep you entertained throughout the day.*
3. *Tara Musik: Get nostalgic with the melodies of Robindro Songeet. This channel promotes various upcoming singers. Their voice and quality will never let you down. For music lovers this is a must. Some of the programs worth mentioning are: "Chirontoni", "Aaj Shokaler Aamontrone", "Chandadi ke Bolo", "Argho" etc.*

We are looking forward to New Year programs that will be exclusive in these channels. Last but not least, these programs bring you closer to your roots and expose your kids to their own culture."

- Sharmila & Subir Gupta



Disclaimer: Comments provided by pragati members have been printed as sent in. Pragati executive committee is not responsible for their content.

Saraswati Puja Cultural Program Highlights

Art Competition at 2 p.m. in the school cafeteria for kids between ages 2-13

Theme — “What would you like to be when you grow up?”

Judges — Senior Pragati members

Winners — To be announced from each age group of **2-5, 6-9** and **10-13**

* Art paper provided by the committee. Participants bring their own art supplies.

No pre-registration required for the art competition.

Talent Show at 3 p.m. presented by kids of our community between the ages 3-14

Performance — One act (song, dance, poem, instrumental, etc.) per child within time limit of 5 minutes

Contact committee members -

Anand Awasthi at anand@pragati.org or Paramita Sinha at paramitasinha@hotmail.com

We would like to encourage all kids to participate in the talent show!

Musical Presentation by guest artist Smt. Somdatta Pal (NJ)

Performance — Rabindra Sangeet as well as some popular modern Bengali songs on Karaoke tracks and guitar

* Somdatta's first album titled "Uttarshuri" hit the stands in 2004



“Culture of the mind must be subservient to the heart.”
- Mahatma Gandhi

2010 Cultural Programs Review

It has always been Pragati’s goal to bring the best possible cultural entertainment for its members. In 2010 Pragati executive committee worked tirelessly to put together an unprecedented array of cultural programs to entertain our members in the limited resources available.

For the first time in the history of Pragati, we sponsored a prominent playback singer from India, “Arnab Chakraborty”. We also successfully featured a Natok, “Se Kaler Roopkatha”, performed by our own Pragati members. Other outside artists/ groups featured in 2010 include Saikat Mukherjee, Shibani Patnaik, Mitali Saha, NPHS India Club and Penn Masti.

We also promoted local talents by featuring Kristy and Monalisa Ghose, Anindita Sengupta, Prerna Dance School and Rabindra-Nazarul Geeti and Agaomoni songs performed by Pragati members.

We at Pragati are extremely proud of this feat and are hoping to take it a notch higher in coming months and years. We look forward to your continued support and patronage.



“Every man's ability may be strengthened or increased by culture .”
- John Abbott

Citi Bank Savings Account for NRIs

The Citibank Rupee Checking Savings Account is an interest bearing bank account for NRIs held in India in Rupees. It is a single account that meets all NRI banking needs in India.

The Rupee Checking Account is a savings account opened in India. The money deposited into the account is converted to Indian Rupees, as per the foreign exchange rate. You can operate the account like any other from anywhere in the world.

Your family in India can also make transactions, as a Mandatee.

Humor

Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It is already tomorrow in Australia.

- Charles Schulz



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Youth Volunteer Activities

The Pragati Executive Committee is proud to announce the active participation of youth volunteers in various events.

These participants are welcome to use their volunteer hours towards their community service requirements at school.

Bake Sale Event



A special thanks to the following Bake Sale Volunteers !

- Nayanika Basu*
- Paramita Basuthakur,*
- Shinjini Bakshi,*
- Orunima Chankraborti, ,*
- Pria Ghosh,*
- Poushali Ghosh,*
- Medha Ghosh, ,*
- Kamalini Ghosh,*
- Alisha Khan,*
- Tuli Mitra Majumder,*
- Aparna Mukerji,*
- Indira Mukerji,*
- Sreejata Munsu,*
- Arnab Nandi,*
- Pria Roychoudhury,*
- Radhika Sinha*

Pragati Executive Committee has introduced the Bake sale event through the sincere participation and dedication of our youth volunteers .

The enthusiasm and the interest of our volunteers is notable.

We thank each and every volunteer for putting in the time and effort to bring in homemade baked goods and selling them during the 2010 Saraswati Puja as well as two days of Durga Puja celebrations.

The proceeds from the Bake sale will be used towards the purchase of items needed For various youth cultural activities.

We congratulate each one of you for the immense success of this event that has been made possible only with your participation, enthusiasm and dedication and hope to see the same in our future events.



Manna on Main Street (Soup Kitchen)

We are proud of our youth volunteers who helped serve hot meals, cleaned, and mingled with not so fortunate individuals of Manna.

We commend the community service of the youth volunteers below for their dedication.

Shinjini Bakshi, Kumar Bhattacharya, Orunima Chakraborti, Diya Dasgupta, Kamalini Ghosh, Medha Ghosh, Alisha Khan, Tuli Mitra Majumder, Sreejata Munsu, and Arnab Nandi

A Community service under the guidance of Pragati Charity committee.

Pragati Youth Writing Competition

Congratulations to our Kids Writing Competition winners . The winning entries were published in Pragati Puja magazine and each winner received an award.

The following individuals are the winners of this year's writing competition.

High School Level:	Medha Ghosh (Poetry) Tuli Mitra-Majumder (Short Story)
Middle School Level:	1 st Place – Orunima Chakraborti (Poetry) 1 st Place- Amrita Guha (Short story)
Elementary School Level:	1 st place- Anandita Guha (Poetry) 1 st Place- Trisha Gupta (Short story)



Photographs of 2010 Events by Anand Awasthi

We are sure that our members have enjoyed the photographs for 2010 events that were uploaded on Pragati's website.

The photographs for all the 2010 events were taken and processed by our talented Executive Committee member - Anand Awasthi (Cultural Secretary)

Thank you, Anand, for your tireless and amazing effort to capture these precious moments that will be cherished forever.



Pragati Reach-out Committee

Pragati has always encouraged the involvement of new people in its various committees and subcommittees.

We strongly believe that new people bring new ideas and renewed enthusiasm .

In line with that belief, Pragati Executive Committee has nominated Anand Awasthi to carry out Pragati's reach-out and outreach activities.

Anand is currently a member of the Executive Committee and is also the Cultural Secretary.

Anand will replace the previous Reach-out committee and will represent Pragati at CIO and other similar platforms. He will work in consultation with the Executive committee and will seek help, support and volunteers as needed.

"The ability to convert ideas to things is the secret of outward success."

- Henry Ward

Volunteer Recognition

We would like to recognize people who have volunteered to help us during 2010 events in transporting material from storage and setting up the sound system. Without their help we would not have been able to celebrate our festivals and enjoy the cultural programs.

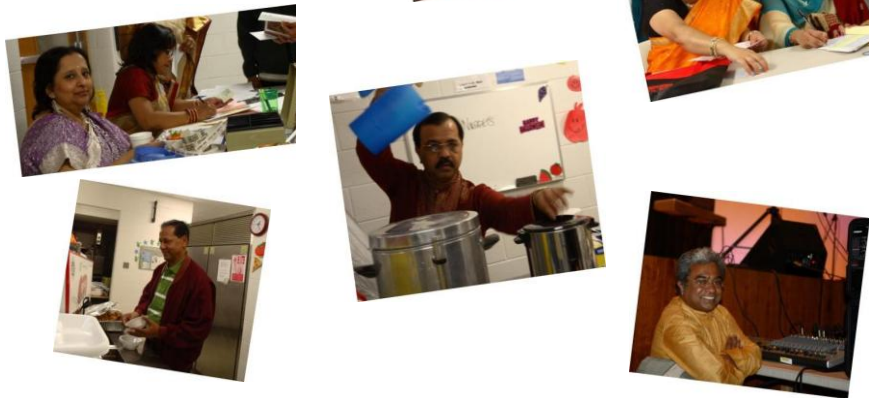
Transportation:

Sankar Basuthakur
Anand Awasthi
Debashis Purkayastha
Subir Gupta
Gautam Das
Ayan Das
Priyam Das
Anish Mukhoti
Pradip Khan
Partha Debnath
Amit Yadav
Subhashis Sengupta



Sound System:

Subhas Chakravorty
Subir Sengupta
Anand Awasthi
Sumit Chakravorty



Also, we would like to thank our members and non members who volunteered to help in the kitchen. Without their contribution we couldn't have efficiently served the food on time. Special thanks to our youth volunteer **Rohin Chattopadhyay** for his constant help in the kitchen.

Pragati Executive Committee extends a Special Recognition to **Amit Guha** for his tireless effort towards the beautiful exterior decorations of pratima. Thankyou Amit !



Milestones, Achievements & Announcements

Congratulations to the Fall 2010 college graduate!

- *Rituparna Basu* daughter of *Manjari and Arunabha Basu* graduated from Pennsylvania State University Schreyer Honors College this winter with honors in Biology.

We wish you the best!



Congratulations to the proud parents!

- *Anurag Holloman and Austin Holloman* are the proud parents of their newborn son *Zachary Avi Holloma*.



Congratulations to the proud grandparents!

- *Rina and Aniruddha Das* of King of Prussia, PA are the proud grandparents of twins *Asha Kathleen Miller and Shoumik Thomas Miller*.

Asha and Shoumik were born on Aug. 6, 2010 to *Jayatri and Stephen Miller*.



Congratulations PRAGATI!

- The Executive Committee is pleased to announce that the United States Census Bureau has awarded Pragati with a plaque of appreciation.

The Census Bureau bestowed this honor in recognition of our efforts to raise awareness of and inspire participation in the 2010 census.

The Bureau thanks Pragati "FOR HELPING TO PAINT THE NEW PORTRAIT OF AMERICA."

Congratulations!

- Please welcome *Swapna Mukherjee* as the new Pragati Vice President.

Pragati

Greater Philadelphia Area Bengali Association (estd. 1972)

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