

HMEC 2017 – Program Committee Meeting – May 31st, 2017

Attendees: Kumar Dave, Hansa Dave, Anil Bajpai, Vijay Reddy, Chandra Reddy, Ram Sahadeo, Swami Parmeshananda, Anita Gupta, Surendra Pandey, Fred Stella, Arun Jain, Sant Gupta, Divya Selvakumar, Ramesh Gosyne, Shama Mehta, Raju Chauhan, Preya Dave, Ramesh Desai, Kaushik Joshi, Swati Patel

9:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Prayer by Sri Muktananda

Program Draft Review

- Walk through of the revised draft and additions from last week's meeting.
- Extensive discussion regarding invitation of speakers and whether support is available for scholars and academics to encourage them to come
 - In the past all speakers have been expected to pay for their own registration and travel expenses. Some rare exceptions may have been made for religious leaders.
 - Opinion was expressed that we should seek speakers within our temple communities rather than academics
 - If there are excellent speakers that need travel support their names can be suggested and we can see if sponsors are willing to help them.
- Discussed need to start gathering names and reaching out to potential speakers.

Brainstorm on Theme and Topics

- Ceremonies for Conversion to Hinduism. Can a standard be developed to have a formal ceremony for non-Hindus who choose to adopt Hinduism as their faith? Discussion regarding the different ways of practicing and how that may make it difficult to have a single universal ceremony. More exploration will be done on how temples have been doing this.
- Last Rites. Looking at laws and practices relating to handling the remains at funeral homes and how these may conflict with needs of Hindus. Discussed asking funeral home director that may understand these issues to speak.
- Baal Vihar. Discussed need for topics relating to curriculum, teacher training and spiritual guidance of students.
- LGBT inclusion. Extensive discussion regarding the importance of this topic to the 2nd and 3rd generation of Hindus outside of India. Concensus was there needs to be very careful selection of speakers who can deal with this topic in an educational rather than controversial way and be sensitive to traditional Hindu beliefs and practices.