



THE HINDU AMERICAN FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT, 2016

Namaste and welcome

TO OUR FIRST-EVER ANNUAL REPORT!

When HAF's co-founders met over our small kitchen table in Philadelphia to brainstorm about and build a Hindu American advocacy organization, I was pregnant with our younger son Nimai. He's a 9th grader now — how time flies.

Ninth grade in our local school district is when students “learn” about Hinduism. Having a front row seat to HAF's many textbook battles in California, Texas, Virginia, and Maryland, Nimai decided to read ahead of the syllabus only to confirm that his book was just as bad as the ones he had watched us fight against. Stereotypes, inaccuracies, and conflation of social practices with religious teachings summed up the few pages that sought to teach over 5000 years of history and philosophy.

As a kid who's been surrounded by advocacy from literally the womb, I wasn't surprised when he told me he approached his teacher to tell her about HAF's Hinduism 101 curriculum and see if she would consider using it as a supplement.

What we heard back surprised us...

She informed us that not only had a former student and parent pointed her in the direction of our Hinduism 101 website, but that she found the website to be crucial in her professional development. In fact, she found it so instructive, that she shared it with her department.

The week learning about Hinduism was one that Nimai actually enjoyed. His teacher used HAF's *The Basics* presentation, used the information in the primer to fortify the lesson, and involved Nimai as a willing and enthusiastic contributor. Unfortunately this is not the experience of most Hindu school children. Most shrink back in embarrassment or are bullied because the way Hinduism is taught is not only inaccurate, but gives fodder to alienate them.

Perhaps I shouldn't have been so surprised that Nimai's teacher had heard about HAF. After all, thanks to your investment, we've been able to train thousands of teachers on how to better teach about Hinduism. But there's something else. What the experience with his teacher demonstrated is that you -- our supporters -- heed the call to “Do Your Part” at the end of so many of our messages. Nimai's teacher didn't find out about the 101 program because she had gone through a training or from Nimai. She had found out about it from an HAF supporter.

Thank you for helping make 2016 yet another remarkable year at HAF. Our dedicated Board, Staff, and National Leadership Council did a tremendous job in scaling and strengthening our programs and advocacy work, and expanding our outreach. We also grew by three staff this year and look forward to continued growth in 2017.

Thank you,



Suhag A. Shukla, Esq.
Executive Director / Legal Counsel





EDUCATION

IMPROVING THE UNDERSTANDING OF HINDUISM AND HINDUS

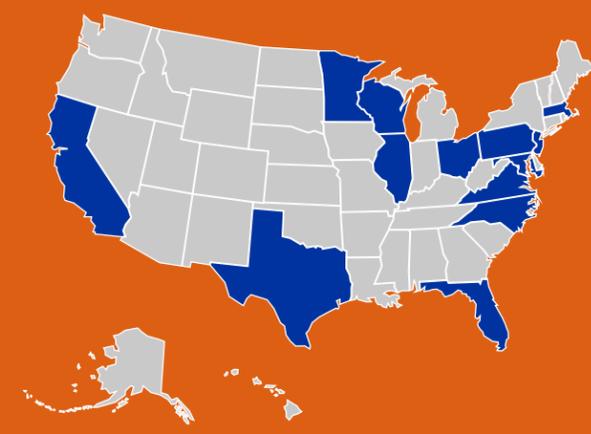
HINDUISM 101: LEARNING ABOUT HINDUISM INSIDE AND OUT

In 2016, HAF trained 500+ teachers across the US through our Hinduism 101 professional development program. Since the program's inception in 2013, we have reached over 2,000 teachers. That's an impact of 150,000 students gaining a better understanding of Hinduism every single year. We have also gone into individual classrooms and presented directly to students who are learning about Hinduism.

"A million thanks! So many kids gave me such positive feedback about your presentation! It was one of the days I was truly proud to be an educator. It meant so much to me and my school district that you took the time to come in and teach us." - *Beth Patten, 7th Grade Teacher, Kutztown, PA*

The Dharma Ambassadors program, managed by Aesha Mehta, HAF's Associate Director of Programs, trains our community members to become effective and confident representatives of Hinduism, regardless of sampradaya. In 2016, we hosted trainings in 14 states, in conjunction with various Hindu organizations.

"I am excited to be a Dharma Ambassador, and I take great pride in being associated with HAF. The presentations you have on your site are remarkable, and Dr. Rao's collection of essays about Sanatana Dharma have helped me educate myself about my Dharma." - *Sudhir Malhotra, Chicago*



MEDIA



HAF's Executive Director, Suhag Shukla, worked closely with National Geographic in reviewing the Hinduism content in its series *The Story of God* with Morgan Freeman.

Toward the end of 2016, Mat McDermott, HAF's Communications Director, launched a Swastika 101 education campaign to highlight the significance and historical importance of this symbol used by Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, and others.

CALIFORNIA TEXTBOOKS

HAF launched the Don't Erase India campaign to ensure that California's textbooks depict the history, culture, and traditions of Indian and Hindu Americans accurately and in a culturally competent manner. Young Hindu American students joined HAF in testifying at the Board of Education hearing about the negative impact of current portrayals of Hinduism textbooks. Shortly thereafter, HAF released its "Classroom Subjected" bullying report, spearheaded by our Director of Education, Murali Balaji. The report is now a resource used by the U.S. Department of Education and school districts across the country.



ENGAGING KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO REPRESENT HINDU INTERESTS AND ENSURE THE WELFARE OF ALL



FIRST ANNUAL POLICY CONFERENCE

The inaugural policy conference was the brainchild of HAF's Director of Government Relations, Jay Kansara, who has been the face of our public policy advocacy in Washington, DC for over six years. The conference brought together HAF's Board, staff, National Leadership Council, summer interns, and members who heard from 15 expert panelists, engaging in thought-provoking discourse on some of the Hindu American community's most pressing foreign and domestic policy concerns.



SUPPORTING THE WELFARE OF PAKISTAN'S HINDUS

In July 2016, HAF successfully assisted a Pakistani Hindu man and his family to receive asylum in the U.S. The family was escaping religious persecution in Pakistan. HAF's Human Rights Fellow, Samir Kalra, worked directly with the asylum applicant and his attorney to provide documentation, a letter detailing conditions for Hindus in Pakistan, and an expert sworn affidavit to the court in support of the case. The family is safely rebuilding their lives in New York.

The type of religious persecution this man faced - specifically the threat of his daughter being kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam and the inability to openly practice his Hindu faith - was highlighted in HAF's 2016 Speaker Series Tour, A Day in the Life of a Pakistani Hindu. In the last two months of the year, our members heard from two Pakistani Hindu leaders, Sanjesh Dhanja and Kiran Kumari, about the human rights abuses faced by the community. The couple spoke at over a dozen venues across the US, sharing their stories of fending off kidnapers targeting young Hindu girls, advocating for groundbreaking legislation granting enfranchisement to bonded laborers, and joining all religious and social minorities in their quest to be treated as equal citizens of Pakistan.



COMMUNITY

SERVING OUR YOUTH, MEMBERS, AND INSTITUTIONS THROUGH EMPOWERING PROGRAMS AND INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT



INTERNSHIP

Six outstanding college students joined HAF in DC for eight weeks over the summer as part of the Foundation's annual internship program. Launched in 2011 by HAF's Senior Director, Sheetal Shah, the

"I've accompanied HAF staff to meetings at Senate offices, talks given by ambassadors, briefings at the State department, and meetings with other advocacy groups. What particularly struck me at an interagency meeting on hate crimes legislation was the diversity of representation...Attending this meeting made it clear to me why our community needs an organization like HAF. We were the only Hindu American voice present at this group. If we hadn't been there, who would have spoken up for us?"
- Rina Patel, 2015 HAF Intern

internship program is our investment in the next generation of Hindu American advocacy leaders. Interns have the opportunity to work alongside HAF staff and delve first hand into our advocacy efforts on behalf of the community.

BHUTANESE GRANTS

2016 marked our third year of providing direct assistance to Bhutanese Hindu American refugees. Thanks to many HAF supporters, we provided \$12,000 in direct grants to 11 organizations to allow them to send children to a Hindu heritage camp, teach traditional Bhutanese dance, host yoga sessions, and more. In particular, HAF thanks the Gummakonda Reddy Foundation, which has this generously support this grant program since its inception.

DIWALI STAMP

HAF celebrated with the community when the USPS finally issued its first Diwali stamp. The road to victory was a multi-pronged and multi-year effort. Prompted by a 2015 letter co-led by HAF and Indiaspora, more than 100 community organizations petitioned the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee. This was followed by an advocacy day organized by HAF and a community hosted Congressional Diwali celebration at the Library of Congress. In turn, this galvanized support from members of the House and Senate for bipartisan resolutions in their respective chambers in honor of a long standing community request for an official Diwali stamp.

BEHIND THE SCENES

HAF WELCOMED THREE NEW STAFF IN 2016



Mat McDermott
Director of Communications



Aesha Mehta
Associate Director of Programs



Deidra Prather
Office Administrator

TECHNOLOGY

Though our members rarely hear about it, HAF is always trying to find ways to streamline our backend processes and integrate our systems to optimize our efficiency as an organization. We have made and continue to make investments in our donor relationship management system, our online event ticketing system, and our website to better serve our community.

GUIDESTAR GOLD

HAF is on GuideStar and this year, we received the GuideStar Gold rating. What does this mean? This is one of the ways we aim to be transparent as an organization: mission, financials, goals, strategies, and capabilities. Check us out!

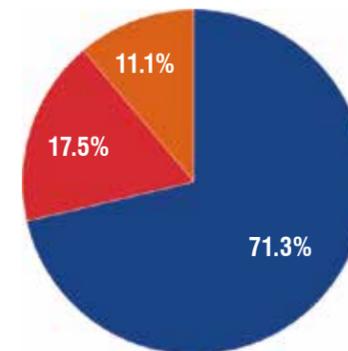


2016 FINANCIALS

HAF manages a full-time staff of nine, an office in Washington, DC, and a robust slate of programming with fiscal prudence. We are acutely aware that 90% our budget comes from the generosity of our donors. Every dollar matters. As such, we do not have any six-salary staff members - not even our Executive Director. We book travel to conferences, meetings, and awareness events weeks in advance to get the best rates. Our annual Board meetings have always been hosted at the home of a board member. Not only does this help defray hotel costs, but it is a pleasant reminder that HAF is more than just an organization — we are a family.

This year, our Director of Philanthropic Partnerships, Seetha Aiyar, truly helped broaden our membership across the country and expanded our efforts to apply for relevant grants. This resulted in the best year HAF has ever had from a financial perspective. It has allowed us to invest more in our three areas of programming: Education, Policy, and Community.

As always, we are deeply grateful to our supporters who make our advocacy efforts possible. We look forward to more growth, new challenges, and stronger results in 2017.



BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES

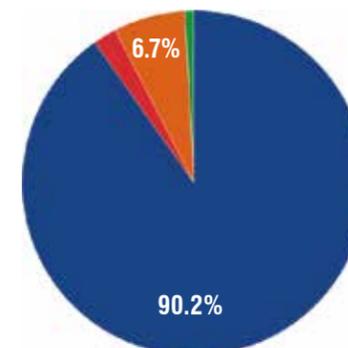
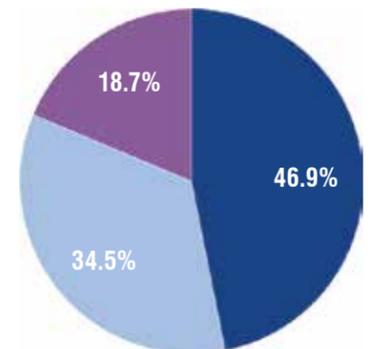
Total 2016 Expenses: \$1,294,000

- Programming
- Admin
- Fundraising

BREAKDOWN OF PROGRAM EXPENDITURE

Total 2016 Program Expenditure: \$923,000

- Education
- Policy
- Community



BREAKDOWN OF INCOME

Total Income: \$1,620,000

- Contributions
- Grants
- Investments
- Other