

Darshana Exhibition by HSS Receives an Overwhelmingly Positive Response at the Parliament of World Religions

Chicago, IL. August 22, 2023 – Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh USA (HSS) garnered a resounding response from delegates at the Parliament of World Religions (PoWR), held from August 14 to August 18 in the City of Chicago, IL. The active participation of HSS in the event was reflective of its commitment to interfaith dialogue, cultural exchange, and the promotion of universal values.

During the five-day event, in addition to sharing information about its mission and annual report, HSS proudly exhibited posters from its nationally renowned exhibition, "Darshana: A Glimpse into Hindu Civilization." (Darshana). The Darshana exhibition at the PoWR emerged as a dynamic hub of interaction and collaboration among representatives of diverse faiths. Attendees from a wide spectrum of faiths, including Paganism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Buddhism, Zoroastrian, and Baha'i, visited the Darshana exhibition and offered positive feedback. The exhibition sparked meaningful conversations about Hindu culture, philosophy, and civilization, creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation.

One of the key highlights of HSS's participation was the introduction of the Raksha Bandhan celebration as "Universal Oneness Day." This innovative concept resonated deeply with attendees, who enthusiastically engaged with HSS volunteers as they tied rakhis - a traditional wrist band symbolizing protection and unity, to their hands. Delegates expressed their excitement and support for the idea of recognizing and celebrating universal interconnectedness. It was also observed that the delegates were highly appreciative of HSS's work in civic engagement, Teacher Appreciation Day (Guru Vandana), food security/donation (Sewa Diwali), Health for Humanity, Yogathon in hundreds of cities across the USA.

As a prelude to the conference itself, on Sunday, August 13, 2023, HSS along with community organizations, showcased its vibrant spirit in the 'Parade of Faiths'. The contingent's presence was marked by infectious energy and a display of unity. Carrying U.S. flags, Om symbols, and religious banners, the participants of the Parade of Faiths marched with pride and purpose. Dhol-Tasha drummers, Lezim, a traditional folk dance, and enthusiastic walkers added cultural richness to the procession.

"We are thrilled with the overwhelmingly positive response to the Darshana exhibition received at the Parliament of World Religions. It was truly heartening to witness representatives of various faiths engage in meaningful conversations and explore collaboration possibilities," said **Dr. Bharti Raizada**, of HSS. "The introduction of 'Universal Oneness Day' through our Raksha Bandhan celebration was a testament to our shared values of unity and mutual respect."

HSS was successful in initiating conversations, building bridges and promoting greater understanding in line with the Hindu values of acceptance despite variances. This was in spirit with the famous address by the first Hindu at the PoWR, Swami Vivekananda, a hundred thirty years ago. Several updates from this year's event participation are available at www.facebook.com/hsschicagodowntown.