

## **Ananda Mela 2016: Message from the Artistic Director**

On July 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, Redmond City Hall will wear a festive look, resplendent with thousands of cheerful folk partaking in Ananda Mela: Joyful Festival of India. Vedic Cultural Center (VCC) of Sammamish, in close collaboration with the City of Redmond, is pleased to bring you the seventh edition of the annual festival which has become a much-anticipated attraction in Redmond. The popularity of the festival affirms the vision of the festival's founder and leader, Harry Terhanian, and the dedication of scores of volunteers of VCC working tirelessly year round to plan and conduct the festival.

The main objective of Ananda Mela is to present the breadth and depth of one of the longest continuous traditions of arts and culture in the world. We seek to achieve this goal by offering you elaborately crafted displays, two days of entertainment on three stages, and other experiences including tasty food and tempting shopping. We have designed programs and attractions to engage people of all ages and national origins, with many interesting participatory events!

Festival grounds open at 12 noon on July 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. Programs on the ***Ganga Stage*** and ***Yamuna Stage*** feature dances and music by groups as well as individual artists. The program items cover a broad range of classical-, folk- and popular dance and music traditions from different parts of India, as well as yoga and magic shows on both days.

The prime time main event on the ***Ganga Stage*** starts at 6:45 pm on Saturday, when ***Anita and Friends*** from Vancouver, BC will treat you to an assortment of Punjabi urban, folk and sufi songs. On Sunday July 31<sup>st</sup>, from 0615 pm onwards, ***Deep and Friends***, another talented group from Vancouver, BC, will regale you with Punjabi folk (including Bhangra) and Celtic dances. The bonus attraction at the Sunday show is the **Aloha Bhangra Dance Contest**. Winners are chosen from dancing audiences to receive gift certificates and other valuable prizes, the grand prize being a vacation for two to Hawaii!

We present an extensive array of colorful visual treats, including traditional decorations and displays. This year, we present a must-see special display of a ***Vedic village***, a model of a fully self-sustaining and environmentally-friendly traditional Indian community. The theme of this display is ***ancient wisdom for modern sustainability***. Also please be sure to visit the special display on ***Ganges (Ganga)***, the best-known holy river of India.

In this year's Ananda Mela, we have expanded the repertoire of participatory events by introducing several new, interesting contests for festival attendees: Cooking contest, chess contest, general knowledge quiz, Indian epic quiz, henna contest, clay Ganesha making contest, rangoli contest, and technology contest, to name a few!

Add delicious food from diverse regions of India, bouncies for children, and other attractions, and what you have is a pleasant, entertaining, and memorable cultural experience for people of all ages and national origins. We thank **ExperienceRedmond.com** for grant support.

Welcome to Ananda Mela!  
**Latha Sambamurthi**  
**Artistic Director, Ananda Mela**

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