



Hamilton Kerala Samajam Incorporated

Registered under Incorporated Societies Act 1908
Reg No. 1764776

ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010

Namaskāram, Greetings to all,

Although 2009-2010 year had its challenges the Executive Committee made it a remarkable and inspiring fourth year for Hamilton Kerala Samajam. Coming out from the few glitches faced in the previous year, the Executive Committee took some bold and stern steps to steer Samajam to be a force to be reckoned in community development in Hamilton. We have not only delivered but evaluated and continued to set the future direction of Hamilton Kerala Samajam as an organisation, a pivotal strength and partner in delivering cultural diversity in a multicultural Hamilton. We not only achieved our goals but exceeded expectations and went further than we ever could have imagined. The report year saw extensive, exclusive, innovative and quality program delivery which boosted cultural development and community participation. Huge steps taken in promoting Malayalam literature in New Zealand, youth and family support, leadership and awareness programs, have made it a glittering year for Samajam. We, the Executive Committee of the Samajam are proud and honoured to present this Report which outlines our achievements from 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010.

OUR MISSION

Hamilton Kerala Samajam Inc. is a non-profit organisation of people of Kerala ancestry (also known as Malayalees) living in Hamilton. The overarching purpose of the Samajam is community development in Hamilton by promoting cultural, educational and social activities of Malayalees. We, Malayalees cherish our social, cultural and religious inheritance. We celebrate our inherited values as different festivals like Vishu, Easter, Onam, Christmas etc. The Samajam through these festivals tries to preserve and nurture the Malayalee culture and to bring up the younger generation of members within the cultural heritage. In addition, the Samajam organises various sports activities, recreational activities and also help new Malayalee immigrants settle down in Hamilton. We hope by safeguarding and promoting cultural identity among Malayalees, we have plenty to contribute to the social and cultural environment of New Zealand.

THE BEGINNING

Hamilton Kerala Samajam was established on 1st February 2006 realising the dream and aspiration of Malayalees settled in Hamilton for several years to form an organisation to preserve and promote our cultural identity. Since that time, Samajam has worked consistently to support members and Malayalees in Hamilton and has a

strong history of quality program delivery and of encouraging innovation and creative cultural expression in traditional arts and sports.

THE EXECUTIVE

The following members elected by the Annual General Meeting formed the Executive Committee of the Samajam:-

1. Mr. Jeevan Syril Mathews	President
2. Mr. Pratheesh Joseph	Vice President
3. Mr. Sivan Achary	Secretary
4. Mr. Toms Joseph	Joint Secretary
5. Mr. N. K. Thomas	Treasurer
6. Mr. Bino Mathew	Committee Member
7. Mr. Poulouse Poulouse	Committee Member
8. Mr. Shibu PP	Committee Member (till August 2009)

WEEKLY COMMUNITY MEETINGS/FAMILY GATHERINGS

Fridays of every week were earmarked by the Executive Committee to conduct family get-togethers and community meetings. The members along with their families enjoyed the numerous community meetings which were conducted from 7.30pm to 9.30pm every Friday at Hamilton West School Auditorium. Various entertainment and fun activities were held during these community meetings which the members and their children enjoyed to the full. Moreover, the group discussions, seminars and symposiums held during these meetings helped members and guests in gaining awareness about various subjects that affected them. We are proud to boast that these gatherings, brought out communal harmony and brotherhood among members and also helped Samajam in finding new talents in Arts, Sports and also in nurturing the leadership skills of young and adult alike.

CELEBRATIONS / FESTIVITIES

1. Onam Celebrations

Onam, the national festival of Kerala which is the only festival celebrated by all Malayalees irrespective of caste, creed or religion, was celebrated by Samajam on 29 August 2009 with the same spirit as it is celebrated in our native land. It was a half day long programme which started at 12 noon and finished at 6pm. The floral arrangement (Athappokalam) brought colour to the function. Various native sports and games competitions were held along with a portrayal of traditional art forms like Thiruvathira kali and Puli kali. The quiz competition held, which focussed on Kerala and its culture, was a learning experience to members and guests alike. The high light of the function was the traditional **Onam Sadhya** (onam feast) which comprised of 28 mouth watering dishes served on banana leaves. This brought nostalgia to most of the 135 members gathered. Mr. Philip Yeung, Ethnic Development Advisor of Hamilton City Council, was the guest of honour at the function. At the closing ceremony

President, Mr. Jeevan Mathews and former Secretary, Mr. George Cherian gave away the prizes to the winners of various competitions held on that day. We acknowledge the financial support given by M/s Trust Waikato and Mr. Mark Crean in making Onam celebrations a huge success.

2. *Snehotsavam 2009/ Christmas Celebrations*

A cultural festival named Snehotsavam 2009 as part of our Christmas celebrations was held, showing the full colour and zeal of Christmas, at Hamilton West School Hall on 27 December 2009. The function which started off with Christmas dinner at 7.30pm and then continuing onto a 3 hour long stage programme conveyed the message of unity, love, compassion and brotherhood in the community. Members and children portrayed their talents in carol singing, nativity skit, various dances, comedy skit and karaoke singing. Rev. Andrew McKean, Chaplain of Wintec, delivered the Christmas message. The innovative idea of Santa Claus becoming the Master of Ceremony aroused great enthusiasm and novelty. Around 120 members and guests attended the evening. We acknowledge the support given by our sponsors-The Lion Foundation and Wel Energy Trust.

3. *Easter-Vishu Celebration 2010*

Although the timing of Easter-Vishu celebrations held on 17 April 2010 is out of the purview of the report year, it is worth mentioning that a great show was put up by our member children making it an evening to remember. Preparations for the programme were held in the report year which culminated in celebrating Easter and Vishu with great gusto and fervour. 130 members and guests attended the function which comprised of various dances, classical music, karaoke singing and skit.

PROMOTION OF MALAYALAM LITERATURE

Owing to the tireless efforts and exclusive initiative of Samajam Executive Committee, the first lot of Malayalam Books are now available at Hamilton City Central Library for the use of all Malayalees. At a small function held at the Central Library on 13 August 2009, the first issue of Malayalam Books was done by Mr. Jeff Downs (Collections Leader, Hamilton City Libraries) to Mr. Jeevan Mathews (Samajam President) in the presence of Mr. Sivan Achary (Samajam Secretary), Mr. Bino Mathew (Samajam Committee Member) and other library authorities. We, the Executive Committee, are very proud that Samajam has become the facilitator in spreading the rich Malayalam literature in New Zealand. We believe that it is the first time in New Zealand that a public library is issuing Malayalam books. We urge all members to take pride in Samajam's achievement and also request each member to become frequent visitor to the library. We would like to thank Ms. Smita Biswas (Digital Access Manager, City Libraries) and Mr. Jeff Downs for their support in this feat.

SAMAJAM-VOICE OF MALAYALEE COMMUNITY

Hamilton Kerala Samajam has become a pivotal strength among the ethnic communities in Hamilton and has been recognised by other communities and local authorities as an organisation which contributes heavily towards community development in Hamilton.

Samajam also made its voice loud and clear in the educational sector of New Zealand. Samajam President, Jeevan Mathews took initiative in arranging a meeting with Wintec authorities in addressing the concern of Indian students of Wintec. At a meeting held on 12 March 2010 with Mr. Edgar Wilson, Regional Engagement Manager of Wintec, Mr. Jeevan Mathews laid down Samajam's proposals to encourage closer ties between Wintec and Malayalee community. It was brought to the notice of Wintec authorities about the hardships faced by nursing students coming for IELTS and competency programme. The meeting addressed the hardships of Business and IT students in finding a job in New Zealand and also pointed out the problems students face in New Zealand owing to the false information given by agents in Kerala. We are glad to inform that Wintec has already started working on the proposals laid down by Samajam.

SPORTS, GAMES AND ARTS

The arts and sports wing of the Samajam is doing a wonderful job in training members and the children in various sports, games, arts and entertainment activities. The Samajam hires Hamilton West School Hall every Friday and uses the School basketball court and school grounds for training in various sports and arts activities. Currently members practice basketball, volleyball, badminton, chess, caroms and cards. The arts wing practices their dance, songs, skits and various traditional art forms. Our sincere gratitude to the Hamilton West School authorities for letting us use their facilities.

PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY PROGRAMS IN HAMILTON

The representatives from Executive Committee participated in various workshops, forums and meetings held by Hamilton City Council and ethnic community forum. Samajam member, Deepthi Nair performed at the Diwali function held by the Waikato Indian Cultural Society and received huge accolade. Samajam members also made their contribution in the Indigo festival conducted by Hamilton City Council in March 2010 by participating in the street parade and cultural performance.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND GENERAL MEETINGS

The Samajam Executive Committee met several times during the report year to guide the Samajam in its progress. Annual General Meeting and one Special General Meeting were also held during the year. Our sincere gratitude to all the members who participated in these meetings.

FINANCE

Financially we have now shown that through hard work and good management Samajam can travel well even in troubled times. Although the global economic condition and fund raising from donors provided a stiff challenge, our Treasurer, Mr. N.K. Thomas, was capable of providing new direction on financial operations and planning. The only disappointment at times is the fact that funding received does not always reflect the valuable and innovative work Samajam undertakes. Samajam is often praised for its efforts, used as a model, remarked on about the effort the organisation puts into planning, organising and initiating -yet funding sources and levels do not reflect this work. Samajam calls on those in control of funding sources

to look closely, examine and evaluate the efforts of Hamilton Kerala Samajam and to provide the funding commensurate to the projects being undertaken by Samajam. We, the Executive Committee, are proud of our efforts, and our financial reports demonstrate that the organisation is financially sound, has an achievable mission and delivering.

During the financial year the Samajam made expenses of \$4168.53 and had a gross income of \$4290.00. The excess of income over expenditure of \$121.47 will go a long way in achieving our goals.

A NOTE OF THANKS

We take this opportunity to thank Hamilton West School authorities, Hamilton City Council, Hamilton City Library authorities, Trust Waikato, The Lion Foundation, Wel Energy Trust, Mr. Mark Crean of Millennium Insurance Group, M/s Kiwi Fresh Bader Street, Mr. Graham Hastings and all the individuals who supported us financially and otherwise to make all our programs a success.

We thank all the members whose relentless support made the past year a success story for Samajam and present this report for the approval of this AGM.

For Hamilton Kerala Samajam Executive Committee

**Sd/-
Jeevan Mathews
President**

**Sd/-
Sivan Achary
Secretary**

Dated: 1 May 2010