

Ninth Annual Health Mela attracts over 1400 people

Preston Health Mela is nationally recognised as an example of best practice in community healthcare engagement. The ninth Annual Health Mela was successfully conducted with over 1400 people attending the event out of which 200 were children. The key theme for this year is 'Children's Well-Being'. The aim is to encourage healthy living at a young age. It took place at the Gujarat Hindu Society Centre on South Meadow Lane in Preston on 17th April 2010. The event is supported by NHS Central Lancashire, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, North west Ambulance service with funding from Grass roots Grant.

This year's Health Mela was multifaceted as ever and featured a variety of displays, activities, health checks, workshops. Health Mela is a great way to encourage people from minority ethnic communities to meet health experts and get informal, friendly advice.

The aims and objectives of the Health Mela are to improve health awareness and promote various health related issues amongst the local population of Lancashire and in particular the ethnic minorities living in Preston and surrounding areas and health seminars are conducted every month to provide an enhanced learning environment for the community and to provide an informal opportunity for the residents of Lancashire to obtain advice from specialists from different areas of medicine and other voluntary organisations.

The Chief Guest this year was Dr. Mike Cheshire, Medical Director of NHS North west. The event was officially opened at 10.30am with Indian style welcome dance by members of the Gujarat Arts Association followed by a speech by the Chairman of LGHUF, Professor Romesh Gupta. In welcoming all the visitors, dignitaries and participants Romesh Gupta said that health Mela is particularly aimed at ethnic minorities where the incidence of conditions such as diabetes, heart problems and stroke is high. The Health Mela event is promoted as a fun family day out.

Chief guest Dr. Mike Cheshire in his speech congratulated the forum in organising such a big event which would benefit the community in improving their health. He also said that the aim should be the health of young people; today's children are tomorrow's adults and we cannot start early enough to encourage healthy living.

Mr. Ishwer Tailor, President Gujarat Hindu Society, said that he is pleased to note that GHS as an ethnic minority group has taken lead at a national level to have pioneered such a healthy partnership between its professionals, community members and the NHS and thanked all the volunteers for contributing to the success of the event.

There were 73 stalls, which included voluntary sectors, primary and secondary health care organisations and pharmaceutical companies.

The seminars and workshops during the day included General health assessments, Blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol checks, Holistic Medicine, Head & Body massage, Ambulance service giving lessons in breathing. There were exclusive activities for Children like Nintendo Wii games, exercise sessions, oral hygiene & accident prevention.

The event went on till 4.00pm and the feedback received has been very positive. LGHUF expressed their thanks to the sponsors of the Mela, for the encouragement given in organising this event.

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