October 6, 2006

His Worship Mayor Larry DiIanni
City of Hamilton,
Hamilton, Ontario

Your Worship Mayor Larry DiIanni:

Re. 9/15 Event observance at the Hindu Samaj of Hamilton and Region Temple.

The Board of Directors of the Hindu Samaj Temple wish to sincerely thank you for being the Chief Guest, along with Hon. Dr. Marie Bountrogianni, MPP, for observing the fifth anniversary of the 9/15 event at our temple. We are proud that you have helped unveiled the plaque designating our temple a "Historical Site".

Our congregation appreciated you personally bringing message of support from our City of Hamilton. We also appreciated your inspirational speech to our congregation. Above all, we thank you for your concern and support for our Temple.

We will appreciate any further financial help that City programs can offer and your support in our application to receiving a National Heritage Site designation from the federal Government. Enclosed herewith for your record is a news item published in Indian Express newspaper of September 29, 2006.

We have confirmed Saturday, September 15, 2007 as the date for our Sixth 9/15 Event observance at the Hindu Samaj of Hamilton and Region Temple. We hope you will join us that day in support of our activities.

Again, please accept our sincere thank you for being the Chief Guest, the Key Note Speaker and unveiling the Historical Site designation Plaque.

With kindest regards and God Bless,

Sincerely,

Ramanath Kamath
President, Hindu Samaj of Hamilton & Region Temple
HINDU SAMAJ OF HAMILTON & REGION TEMPLE
Following the 9/11 destruction of the World Trade Centre buildings in New York the Hindu Samaj of Hamilton and Region Temple was burned to the ground on September 15th, 2001. Such senseless destruction caused immeasurable emotional and spiritual trauma to the Hindus of this area and the world over.

After the destruction of the Temple, the Hamilton community and leaders from all faiths came together in an act of solidarity, and initiated a poster campaign which stated, “AN ATTACK ON ONE IS AN ATTACK ON US ALL”. With the help of Hamilton’s community and spiritual leaders, the “Strengthening Hamilton’s Community Initiative” was established to combat hate crimes.

**Pali Tripitaka in Dhammapada verse 5 states “For hate is not conquered by hate; hate is conquered by love. This is a law eternal**.

With love, the Hamilton and Canadian communities have rebuilt the Hindu Samaj of Hamilton & Region Temple on this same site. The entrance area preserves artifacts that were saved from the destruction on 9/15.

With education, communication, understanding and love we will prevent such crimes in the future. Please come inside and visit.

II OM SHANTI, SHANTI, SHANTI: II Let there be peace everywhere!

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Hamilton Historical Board 2006
Rebuilt Hamilton temple designated ‘historical site’

RENU MEHTA
Hamilton

THE Hamilton City Council has designated the Hindu Samaj of Hamilton and Region Temple grounds as a historical site. The temple which was bombed in the aftermath of 9/11 in a case of mistaken identity, has been rebuilt, for the most part, announced temple executives.

On September 15, 2001, the temple was firebombed by a group of vandals, leaving the building an empty burnt shell. Temple executives called it a hate crime and believe that those responsible just wafted revenge.

"The only deity that was saved during the arson of 9/15 was a granite statue of Ganesh—the god of wisdom and wealth and remover of obstacles," says Subhash G. Dighe, vice-president of the temple.

The task to reconstruct a landmark cultural and religious centre initially seemed unsurmountable. But with bank loans, massive fundraising within the community and some compensation from insurance, the temple was rebuilt.

"The Hamilton City Council has designated the Hindu Samaj of Hamilton and Region Temple grounds as a historical site. And we are here to dedicate the plaque designating these temple grounds," said Dighe at the ceremony last week.

"The designation plaque will continue to remind us and coming generations of this heinous hate crime. It will remind us of our duty to prevent such crimes and to be vigilant always. We have a dream that there will never be another Canadian Ground Zero," he added.

The event began with a peace prayer that included 12 children carrying plaques of different religious faiths and lighting a candle to honor the inter-faith groups in the city.

"The temple is open for all faiths. The Hindu Samaj temple community hall and programs such as yoga classes, wellness club gym, dance classes etc. are all available to any community member," said Raminath Kamath, president of the temple, appealing to the government to provide additional funding of $500,000 required to complete the project.

Messages were also sent by the Governor General of Canada Michelle Jean and Prime Minister Stephen Harper to temple executives. Hamilton Mayor Larry Di Ianni appreciated the efforts of the Hamilton community in their rebuilding efforts.

"The City Police have set up a special unit to deal with the hate crimes," he said while reiterating his continued support for the temple and its activities.

Other prominent guests at the event included Minister Dr Marie Boutrosian, president of McMaster University Dr Peter George and several MPs and MPPs. The program ended with aarti and pitri bhoj.