

International Women's Day: UN Parade

March 8, 2015 marked the significance of International Women's Day, specifically held to convey the message and importance of gender equality. The Sant Nirankari Mission provided its participation in the form of over 200 volunteers of all age groups, with the majority of the participation coming from youth members. With such a large number of people, volunteers first assembled at the same time and were split up into groups, each consisting of a team leader for further instruction. These multiple teams each were given a specific location in Manhattan on the designated path for the UN Parade, which started from the UN Headquarters, East 47th Street and 2nd Avenue. It ended at Times Square. Youth members from the Sant Nirankari Mission came from surrounding states such as Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania and all gathered together for the common cause. However, we were not alone. Various other organizations came together as one big group for one common cause - Gender Equality.

That day the weather maintained an average of 43⁰ F with the addition of wind biting at everyone's cheeks. However, frozen fingers did not stop our collective team. We trekked on in the company of saints as well as members from other organizations. For example, a group of students from LeHigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania volunteered their services as Marshalls as well.



This specific group of students was connected to the UN event through their class on comparative and international communication, with their specific topic on gender equality.



Although the experience was “windy”, it made all the difference in the world that various individuals devoted their time on this Sunday to contribute for International Women’s Day. All Marshalls were given the responsibility to aid in crowd control and maintain the flow of the parade. They

were given bright yellow jackets, which said “Marshalls,” so they could be identified. Some Marshalls also carried signs to show the purpose of the event in addition to spreading awareness of our message to support women. The Sant Nirankari Mission’s banners read: “Gender Equality through Spirituality” and “Enlightened Woman is Empowered Woman”.

There was another group that belonged to “Reevaluation Counseling Community.” The group was doing a plus 20 Beijing project. Twenty years ago they took part in a 4th row conference on women in Beijing. A representative of the group, Claudia shared her thoughts on the experience. She was from Connecticut and loved the fact that the parade was in New York City and affiliated with the UN. She further talked about different projects their organization is working for: “No limits for women,” and “No limits for girls.” They are essentially working for equality for women and girls.



Thanks to the grace of His Holiness Lord Master Baba Hardev Singh Ji, we were able to represent the Sant Nirankari Mission at the United Nations Parade. The motto that we had was Equality through Spirituality, and it resonated within each member of the parade.

Being a member of this event, whether it was in the form of a Marshal, a coordinator, or a mere volunteer was an enlightening experience. And so from this event we were able to help promote awareness. Every act big or small makes an impact.