

## Sharing ECK Heart to Heart:

### Postering and Fairs

By Victoria Olender, Minnesota

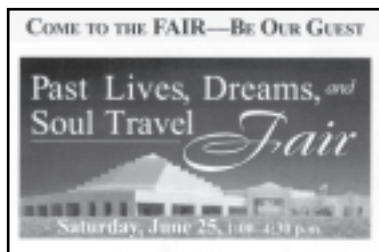
To prepare for a "Past Lives, Dreams, and Soul Travel Fair" at the Temple of ECK, Vahanas gathered to watch a how-to-do-it postering video from Florida chelas. The video made postering easy! It was so loving, fun, and simple that I caught the joyful spirit of service. It helped me get out of the way and let the ECK do it.

Love from the chelas at the meeting filled me. We got to place pins on a big map of the area to mark the places we would poster. It was like a festival, and I wanted to be a part of it.

#### Let the Master Lead the Way

The night before I postered, I imagined the places I might visit and let the love of ECK fill me. I saw each place as a room in God's home, filled with people who've already met the Mahanta. It helped me to relax, have fun, and let the Master lead the way.

I teamed up with two people to poster four big strip malls. At each mall we chanted HU together in the parking lot. It lifted our spirits. I felt like I was floating on the sound of HU, and each store I went into was like a room in a Golden Wisdom Temple. This wasn't about the poster; this was about being an instrument for God's love in the special way the Mahanta had planned. When I asked, "I wonder if you have a place to put a poster or some flyers," most people said yes.



The last place to visit was a pizza restaurant. I thought, *They'll never take a poster.* But I checked within and got, *Why not go in? It's not about the poster.* I thought, *I agreed to do this. And the Mahanta's by my side.* I sang HU and felt Wah Z's presence surround me with love. A woman was there alone, making pizza. Smiling, I said hello, looked into her eyes, and asked about putting up the poster. She said, "The owner doesn't allow posters." I said, "OK, thanks." And I waited for a moment.

#### Touched by the Hand of God

Then she asked, "Well, what is it about?" I gave her the poster and said, "It's a free fair for exploring your spiritual life. It's a lot of fun, and people of all faiths are welcome."

She took a step back, put her hand to her mouth, and tears poured down her cheeks. She said she had been on her break half an hour before, praying to God to find the right spiritual path for herself and her family. Nothing had felt right, and she was at her wit's end. She couldn't believe someone would then walk in with a poster on a religion. We marveled at the closeness of God. I focused on the ECK and waited.

She wanted more information, so I got her an introductory packet from our car. We always have Vahana materials when we poster, for the seekers who want more. She started to read the blue letter from Sri Harold that begins, "Dear Seeker of Truth." She put the letter over her heart,



looked up to the ceiling, and said, "That's me!" as more tears rolled down her cheeks. She read the rest of the letter and was so grateful. She said, "You'll definitely see me at the Temple."

It was such a gift to witness someone touched so powerfully and knowingly by the hand of God.

#### Meeting Others Who Love God

Another opportunity I've had to share the message of God's love for Soul is by being a host at our ECK booth at expos. I absolutely love it! I like to hear about people's spiritual interests. A passerby may share great wisdom to remind me of the precious gift of the Master's love and the teachings of ECK.

It's so fun to meet others who love God and who are seeking truth. To me, whenever you do something for ECK, you're celebrating life. It's like going to a party. I'm just happy, and I let that feeling go out. I say, "Hi!" to anyone who passes by, look into their eyes, and smile. I let them take it from there.

There's always a surprise. One man who visited our booth was from Africa and had heard about ECKANKAR. He opened a book by Sri Harold and turned right

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to a story about the town he came from. We stood in wonder at the nearness of God and Its personal touch.

I've learned these tips for sharing ECK: Do what's in your heart. Imagine the presence of Wah Z with you. Fill yourself with joy—seekers will be looking for the Light in you! Know you stand on sacred ground with other Vahanas in this worldwide mission. The right thing is going to happen. Be open to God's loving ways. Go to ECK trainings and gatherings and surround yourself with the wave of love for the Vahana mission. Have fun!

## How Do We Grow?

By Sam Dufu, RESA, Ghana

How does ECKANKAR grow in Ghana? It's from the commitment of the chelas. They stand up for ECK and let people know they are ECKists in their workplaces. They're able to face life issues. People notice and ask what their religion is. Our youth are examples of this.

### Youth Stand Up for ECK

Most of our secondary schools are missionary-based boarding schools. Because the majority of people in Ghana are of another religion, ECKists have faced prejudice. This was really affecting our children. Some were being harassed by other children, or even by teachers.

We went to the headmasters of the schools and told them about ECKANKAR. We gave literature and information that calmed their fears and misconceptions.

We intensified our ECK Rite of Passage study program. By the time our ECK youth leave home to go to secondary school, they have

gone through a year of training in the ECK principles. Our best Arahatas teach them how to do the spiritual exercises, how to have their own inner experiences with the Light and Sound of God, and how to strengthen their relationship with the Mahanta.

By the time our youth have



their ECK Rite of Passage ceremony, they're really firm on their feet. They can stand up for ECK. When they leave home to attend the boarding schools, their schoolmates learn how spiritually balanced they are. They turn to the ECKists when they need to talk.

Now the schools recognize the ECKists as children that others should learn from. ECK children are the most well behaved. And our children want to stay with ECK. When our ECK youth go on to universities, they start ECK campus activities.

We have put a lot of attention on familiarizing people of other religions with ECKANKAR. Then newcomers are more comfortable coming to our events, and ECKists are more comfortable sharing ECK.

Training the chelas is essential. Our ECK neighbor and Arahata trainings have helped. And we are repeating the training for *Handbook for ECK Leaders*. Chelas understand how to use ECK principles in relating to others.

### Finding Vahana Champions

To find Vahana champions, we

just let people volunteer. We sent letters to all chelas inviting them to a Vahana meeting. Eight areas of service were listed, such as poster, fairs, and ECK talks. Over three hundred chelas came. Right on the spot, sixty-two Vahana teams were formed. At the next meeting, chelas were given their mandate, more training in the specific areas, and materials.

One-to-one communication is the most effective. The next step is to invite interested seekers to a bring-a-friend program, an ECK Worship Service, or an introductory talk. The Vahanas need to choose the right topic for these talks: one that's ECK, but also catchy.

Chelas want to help. They like the information and excitement that goes with service. When they don't come, we've found it's because they don't have enough information.

Our ECK leaders inspire chelas by being involved in the forefront. We don't wait for others to get something going. Most important, to get ECKists to help, I have to be involved. Vahanas expect me to be there to provide input and guidance.

I have to be ready to give energy to the ideas. I help the project to work instead of just approving things from the outside.



Photo by Lorraine Irwin

A three-year effort by Vahanas in New Zealand resulted in the display of this beautiful sign in Auckland.