

# Oxfam Hunger Banquet aims to change perception of hunger

**Utsav Gandhi**  
CAMPUS EDITOR

Is hunger about too many people? Very little food? Global warming? Political strategy? International development? No. It is about all of those and none of those at the same time. Hunger is about power. The world's equality graph is quite badly skewed, and hunger falls somewhere along the line as a consequence of human rights and opportunities being not accorded in the right proportion, and little action being carried out about it. Companies and governments control more of the food patterns in today's world than the farmers who grow it or the consumer who eat it. Resource constraints, a growing family, gender stereotypes, erratic weather patterns, and conflicts are driving food prices up while record numbers of people go hungry.

One-third of the grain grown in the world and one-half of the fish caught are fed to animals in rich countries. The U.S. daily per person calorie supply is 3,671; almost twice that of Sudan's 1,974 average daily caloric intake, fewer calories than needed to maintain a productive life. In Sub-Saharan Africa, one in three people are malnourished, half live on less than \$1 a day and 30 million

people required emergency food aid (in 2005)

The Office of Service Learning hosted an eye-opening event on the January 25, in the MTCC Ballroom in partnership with Oxfam America, an international relief and development organization "that creates lasting solutions to poverty, hunger and injustice." The event, frequently organized around college campuses and public venues across the United States is a free dinner organized in the attempt of spreading awareness about income inequality. Guests are randomly assigned a ticket as soon as they enter and placed accordingly in either of the three subsets of income levels: low income level, middle income level and high income level. The lower class sits on the ground, isn't allowed the use of cutlery and gets two cups of white rice (along with a glass of water.) The middle class gets a table to sit on, a fork, brown rice instead of white and some extra nutrition in the form of beans. The upper class is seated on well catered tables and is served a three course meal including bread, salad, pasta, and a choice of beverage representing fine wine.

If you ended up in the high-income group, you represented the 15 percent of the world's population fortunate enough to afford

a nutritious daily diet (including many of our students at IIT.) They live primarily in countries like the United States, Australia, France, Switzerland, and most countries in Western Europe. The leading cause of death here, ironically, is heart disease, diabetes and obesity; linked directly to over consumption of food. Healthcare is more readily available to them. In the U.S. there is one doctor to every 470 people, compared with one doctor per 7,140 people in Haiti.

In general, their children are healthy, and infant mortality rate is low. Though they are well-off, millions of their fellow citizens live below the poverty line. Most of them are women and children who lack access to adequate services.

Those in the middle income group represent roughly 25% of the world's population. There are more countries in this group than in the high-income group countries like Bolivia, the Philippines, Turkey, Costa Rica, and Iran. Their average income ranges from \$912-9,095. Their children are six times more likely to die of hunger and related diseases than if they lived in a high-income country. They use 35% of your income to feed themselves, compared with the 15% people in high-income countries spend. Their

economies are crippled by foreign debt—these can consume half of their governments' earnings.

Those in the low income group represent the majority of the world's population. They live in countries where the average income is less than \$912 a year. Somalia, Honduras and Vietnam are among the countries in this group. Government debt is mounting, people cannot have rights to buy land (even if tilled for centuries by their ancestors), chronic malnutrition is a problem, and unemployment is driving them to even greater hardships in booming cities incapable of supporting an influx of migration. Ironically, this group works tirelessly for "landlords" in fruit plantations, typically for export to developed countries. In exchange they get meager benefits and are exploited upon for their helpless situation.

At this interactive event, the place where you sit, and the meal that you eat, are determined by the luck of the draw—just as in real life some of us are born into relative prosperity and others into poverty. A lively discussion followed the meal and students left with a better understanding of the world's skewed equality ratio and a renewed drive to help tackle it.

## Vedic Vision Society: 'Love & iPhone'

**Sneha Saraf**  
STAFF WRITER

On Friday, February 1, speaker Nityananda Pran began this semester's lecture series with "Love & iPhone: Spiritual vs. Material Love." He first asked the audience to write down, in descending order, what would be most difficult for them to give up – some of the audience members gave answers such as family, friends, education and some material possessions that they had. The speaker then explained that in the material world, we are very attached to things and use people, when instead we should be attached to people and use things. The "iPhone" referred to in the title of the lecture represents a most coveted piece of material: those who desire it most will do anything to obtain it, sometimes to the point where they will camp out right outside the Apple store waiting for the latest release! From an elevated consciousness, however, material things don't have much value – it's relationships that do.

Before moving on to the next point, Nityananda Pran introduced the audience to the Bhagavad Gita. The Bhagavad Gita is a timeless classic of a conversation between two friends: one of them is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, and the other is His friend, Arjuna, who asks the same questions

about life that every human being asks or should ask. Within this conversation, there are many spiritual principles given which are unaffected by time, circumstances, or people. In other words, the principles described 5,000 years ago are still applicable today, regardless of our skin color, gender or nationality. The speaker mentioned that many references will be made from the Bhagavad Gita throughout the semester.

Coming back to the lecture, Nityananda Pran explained that everything we see around us is made of five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether (space.) Everything we come across has some combination of these elements. For example, the human body has earth in the form of flesh and bone (carbon, calcium, iron, etc.); water, which composes 70% of the human body; fire in the form of body heat; air in the form of breathing; and space (inter-molecular, intercellular, etc.). But the difference between a human being and, say, a chair, is that the human being has consciousness – and that consciousness is due to the presence of the soul. Whenever we see some manifestation of consciousness, this is an indication that there is this material-spiritual combination.

According to the speaker, there are also three subtle material elements which contribute to the material-spiritual combination: mind, intelligence, and (false) ego. The mind in itself is not conscious, but becomes activated with the presence of the

soul. For example, a car is inanimate unless there is a driver to turn on the ignition. Similarly the soul is the life-force that brings the body into action, and when the soul leaves (death), the body becomes non-functional and disintegrates. Thus we say, so and so passed away. Who passed away? The soul. So, clearly we are not this body. We are the spiritual being (soul) that is eternal, cognizant and blissful in its original state as described by the Bhagavad Gita.

So false ego is the false sense of identity based on the material conception of "I am this body" which translates to "I am a woman," "I am rich," "I am an engineer," etc. In absence of a different conception, the soul is under the influence of this false ego and acts in a certain way according to the identification. For example, someone might be performing in a drama, let's say as a queen. So according to that role the actress will act like a queen, but that's not the real identity. Hopefully she wouldn't act like a queen when she gets home. Likewise, given we are spiritual beings, living a life on the bodily conception cannot lead to happiness, peace and satisfaction.

In the next article, you can look forward to hearing about how this knowledge is received and shared in a descending process. As always, everyone is welcome to hear, discuss, debate, and eat a tasty lunch every Friday at Wishnick 117 from 12:45 p.m. to 2 p.m.

## Fueling Innovation campaign aims to fundraise

**Monica LaBelle**  
IIT OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

IIT students, faculty, and staff are invited to join community leaders and other friends of the university from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. this Friday, February 8 in the MTCC and The Bog to launch "Fueling Innovation: The Campaign for IIT."

An ambitious fundraising campaign, Fueling Innovation will provide the power that IIT needs to transform the future through upgraded and new facilities in an effort to continue to attract innovative minds.

To celebrate this important moment in the university's history, the campus will be lively with activities. Read on to find out what's in store.

The Winter Wonderland Carnival at 3 p.m. will offer ice skating, ice sculptures, and a life-sized snow globe—all in the MTCC. Stick around for half an hour to witness President John L. Anderson announce the remarkable progress and ambitious nature of the campaign, then watch the world-premiere of an IIT video featuring current students. Finally, cap off this historic celebration in The Bog at 4 p.m. with refreshments and live entertainment.

Friday's launch events will also be featured live online with activities such as a virtual scavenger hunt. Faculty, students and staff are encouraged to share their experiences in live social media feeds; use #iitinnovates on Twitter to make this campaign go viral.

## Caribbean Visionaries sponsor 2nd FIFA tournament

**Travon Cooman**  
TECHNEWS WRITER

On Saturday, February 2, 2013, Caribbean Visionaries hosted their second Annual FIFA Competition which was held in the MSV McCormick Lounge.

The competition was organized by Roselle Grant, Caribbean Visionaries' Athletics Coordinator, and her team. Sixty-four enthusiastic participants with a passion for playing soccer video games entered the competition in pursuit of the winning prize of a (40-1) TV, a crown, and team jersey of their choice. The competition commenced at 4 p.m., ended at 10 p.m. and both full time and part-time IIT students were eligible to participate. There were four rounds which included 32 matches in the first round, 16 matches in the second round, eight matches in the third round and four matches in the fourth round.

Defending champion and Ricardo Gradilla who was seeking to defend his title

was disappointed that he was knocked out in the first round by Akosa Okwusi. Ricardo was only able to score two goals whilst his opponent scored five goals.

Spectators were amused and enjoyed the entertainment by the participants. Despite all the wonderful games that were played, only Hector Rios demonstrated the ability to defeat all his opponents. Rios won the final convincingly against Kraig Van Wieringen. Rios scored six goals and his attacking and defending abilities did not allow Van Wieringen to score a single goal. Although disappointed, Van Wieringen will be receiving a team jersey of his choice and a match ball for his achievement. The third place winner will be receiving a team jersey of his choice whilst fourth to eighth place winners will be receiving AMC movie tickets.

Athletic coordinator Roselle Grant expressed her gratitude toward all the participants and the spectators for making the second Annual FIFA Competition a success. This event is only one of the many events the

Caribbean Visionaries have organized and they are hoping to have many more events this semester.



Photo by Travon Cooman