

# Edison library starts new collection

Books now offered  
in Telugu language

BY JOE TYRRELL  
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

With a recent donation of 100 assorted volumes from the Balabharati Cultural Center, Edison has established the first collection in Telugu, a southern Indian language, at any public library in the Garden State.

"We would like to offer languages as they are needed by the community," although that's something that stretches resources, said Edison Library Director Susan Krieger.

The library already has some volumes in Chinese and recently received a \$2,000 donation to expand that collection. Through its membership in a library consortium, "we get on loan from the Newark Public Library a rotating collection of books in Hindi, Gujarati and Chinese," Krieger said.

One-third of Edison's population is foreign-born, according to the 2000 Census, so those choices just scratch the surface of the languages spoken in the township, the librarian and other local officials said.

The township library has been steadily expanding, adding 15,294 books last year to bring the total collection to 262,112 volumes, Krieger said. And it does have a cataloger, Shu-Lan Simmons, who evaluates books to add to the existing foreign-language collections.

Starting a new language collection is daunting, though, particularly because residents of other ethnic groups might question the focus, Krieger said. That's where donations become important, she added.

And that's where Gopala Kovvali comes in. As president of the Balabharati center, he's trying to ensure that local children of Indian descent are able to participate in American society and in their cultural traditions.

"Our children are growing up in  
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## LIBRARY

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a very rich atmosphere," he said, "and we wanted them to have the best of both worlds."

Helping the library reflected the "American tradition of voluntary community service that we wanted to instill in our children," but also provided an educational resource for readers of Telugu, primarily spoken in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh.

He and other members of the cultural center donated a variety of books, Krieger said. This will enable the library to establish Telugu sections in its main branch on Plainfield Avenue and its North Edison branch on Grove Avenue.

"There's an assortment: fiction and nonfiction, poetry, cookbooks, travel books and children's books," the library director said.

"We would like to call for more children's books," Kovvali said. "We'd like to be able to establish an 'Indian corner' in the library."

That need not be limited to books in a handful of languages, he said. While the Balabharati center offers Saturday classes on the culture and language of Andhra Pradesh, that's not intended to be exclusionary, he said.

"Edison is a multicultural society, and we wanted to be a part of that multicultural pride," Kovvali said.





**ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON  
MEDICAL SCHOOL**

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October 28, 2002

Dr. Gopala Kovvali, President  
Balabharati Cultural Center  
103 Timber Oaks Road  
Edison, New Jersey 08820

Dear Dr. Kovvali:

On behalf of our library's Board of Trustees, staff and patrons, I wish to extend our appreciation to you and the members of the Balabharati Cultural Center for your donation of books in the Telugu language. We are very pleased to be able to offer this collection to interested library patrons. And as you stated, "It's also a symbolic way to introduce [the Telugu] culture to the mainstream Edison society."

I really enjoyed attending the special inauguration of the collection held last month. It was a pleasure meeting members of your cultural center, seeing your slides of Andhra Pradesh and hearing the children sing Telugu songs. I also enjoyed sampling food from that region of India. I know that our Library Board President, Assistant Library Director and President of our Friends of the Library enjoyed themselves as well.

Thank you for your gifts: the lovely plate, framed picture and letter holder. It was very thoughtful of you to acknowledge me with these special mementos.

I will look forward to working with you in the future as we catalog the Telugu books and present them to the public.

Again, thank you for your interest in our library, as well as all of your time, consideration and effort.

Sincerely yours,

  
Susan M. Krieger  
Library Director

SMK:hg



## LOCAL

## ASIAN-INDIAN DIALECT

# Edison celebrates donation of books

By RAVIYA ISMAIL  
STAFF WRITER

**EDISON:** Himantha Reddy has been living in the United States for 40 years and is happy to see books in his native tongue finally offered to the mainstream.

The Edison resident was joined by a crowd yesterday for ceremonies commemorating the donation of books written in Telugu, a southern Asian-Indian dialect, to the Edison Township Free Public Library at the Minnie Veal Community Center.

"It's very good, especially for children," Reddy said. "My granddaughter is here, she doesn't speak Telugu, only English."

Over 200 township residents, councilmen, library officials and members of cultural groups, gathered at the community center to celebrate the donation of the books to the library.

Edison Mayor George Spadaro, Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula, D-Middlesex, Somerset, Union, and Councilman Parag Patel addressed the audience. The event was sponsored by the Balabharati Cultural Center and the Telugu Fine Arts Society.

The Balabharati Cultural Center, a group dedicated to teaching the culture and language of Andhra Pradesh, a state in southern India, donated approximately 100 books to the library.

Gopala Kovvali, president of the cultural center, said the group has been working on acquiring the books for two months. Kovvali said the books were donated to the cultural center after a request was made to township and surrounding residents who had books in the language.

"Edison is a multicultural society, and we wanted to be a part of the multicultural society," he said.

The ceremony included a slide show depicting scenes from India and Kovvali addressed the importance of the books.

"The fact is, we want our children to learn the best of both worlds," Kovvali said to the audience. "It's also a symbolic way to introduce our culture to the mainstream Edison society."

Spadaro was enthusiastic about the introduction of the books into the library.

"This is a very important occasion," Spadaro said. "Today we are inaugurating our first foreign-language section."

"We live in a very small world today. . . Edison is one of the most diverse cities in the state of New Jersey and as mayor, I'm very proud of that," he said.

Chivukula, an Asian-Indian and a Telugu, addressed the crowd in the language. The crowd responded with immediate applause. "It's a pleasure to be an Asian-Indian," Chivukula said, "but I'm very proud to be a Telugu person."

Chivukula also felt the books were important to pass on the heritage to the younger generation.

"It is good that we promote our language abroad and to our children so we can continue our cultural values and continue to be a part of mainstream society," he said.

The high point of the ceremony was the symbolic donation of the books, with Chivukula handing a wrapped package of books to Spadaro, who cut the ribbon and unwrapped the books.

Murty Bhavaraju of Parsippany donated 700 books to the Balabharati Cultural Center. "These are old books that depict the culture of the Telugus," he said.

Bhavaraju said the books will be an influence on the coming generation.

"I think right now, the books are for the adult community," he said. "But it gives the atmosphere to the children as they grow up in that environment."

Kishore Dhara of Sayreville who has a six-month-old daughter, said there is more work to do.

"It's great actually, but there's a bigger task, and that's to teach (the children) how to read Telugu," he said.

Dhara agreed that access to books in Telugu was important to the exposure of his culture.

"If the books are in English and somebody browses through it. . . it's more awareness," he said. "I'd like to see how the circulation is, that's a measure of what we are doing."

Virginia Comito, President of the Library Board of Trustees said, "it's very heartwarming to see the Indian community donating to our library." Comito thanked the audience in Telugu, and they erupted in laughter and applause.

"I think it's very indicative of our society today," Susan Krieger, the library director said. "That we are welcoming more cultures into our society and our libraries."

Aruna Kovvali, the wife of Gopala Kovvali, had a look of joy on her face after watching her daughter sing with a group in Telugu.

"I feel very happy and excited when the children performed today," she said. "Though they are in the United States, they know that they are Indian, their parents hail from India and their roots are in India. They get to learn the best of both worlds, the American culture and the Indian culture."

Raviya Ismail: (732) 565-7261;  
e-mail rismail@thnt.com



## DONATION FROM CULTURAL GROUP

## Edison library to include Indian-language books

By JONATHAN TAMARI  
STAFF WRITER

**EDISON:** The Edison Public Library's collection will expand to include books written in an Indian language this weekend, courtesy of a recently founded Indian-American cultural organization.

The Balabharati Cultural Center, which meets in Edison once a week to teach about the culture and language of Andhra Pradesh, a state in southern India, will donate books written in Telugu, a local language, to inaugurate a new section of the

library.

Hoping to turn the children of Asian-Indian immigrants into "cultural ambassadors" and community volunteers, parents founded the Indian cultural organization to teach youths about their heritage.

"All (the students) are children who are born and brought up here and go to schools here (and) are very well assimilated into the American society, but still have their interest in the Indian culture," said Gopala Kovvali, president of the cultural center.

"The parents want to educate them and want to give them the benefit of the best of both cultures."

Edison, with an Asian-Indian population of 28,597 out of 97,687 township residents, according to the

See **Library**, Page B2

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2000 Census, has by far the largest Asian-Indian community in Central New Jersey.

Kovvali, an Edison resident, helped found the cultural center with the idea of reaching out to the population in the township and surrounding municipalities such as Woodbridge, Metuchen and Piscataway.

The center has about 30 to 35 students between the ages of 5 and 14 who gather at the Minnie Veal Community Center in Edison once a week for teaching from volunteers and parents. The organization also plans to expand to include a "youth forum" to encourage children 13 and older to volunteer in their municipalities.

The cultural center will present its books, donated by members of the local Asian-Indian community, to the library in a ceremony at 10 a.m. Saturday in the Minnie Veal Community Center. More information is available at [www.blabharti.org](http://www.blabharti.org).

Jonathan Tamari: (732)  
565-7347; e-mail  
[jtamari@thnt.com](mailto:jtamari@thnt.com)



ATTN: Ms Susan Krieger  
Ms Krieger, Please suggest changes  
if you like  
OK

## **Balabharati Cultural Center**

<http://www.balabharati.org>

### **Inauguration of Telugu language section in Edison public libraries.**

1. Welcome.
2. U.S. and Indian National songs.
3. **Slide show: Beauty of Andhra Pradesh – A southern Indian state**
4. Welcome the Mayor and inauguration of Telugu section by the Mayor.
5. Welcome Assemblyman Chivukula followed by his speech.
6. Donation of first book to the library by Assemblyman. Upendra Chivukula followed by senior community leaders and children.
7. Response from the Director of the Edison Public libraries.
8. Presentation of Mementos to the dignitaries.
9. Telugu songs by Children and Mrs. Kiranmayi.
10. Vote of thanks.
11. Indian National Anthem.
12. Refreshments.

**September 28, 2002. 10 AM-Noon.**





**FAX**

**Date** *Sept. 20, 2002*

**Number of pages including cover sheet** *1*

**TO:** *Dr. Gopala Kovvali*

**Phone**

**Fax Phone** *c/o Fax (732) 235-8651*

**FROM:** *Susan M. Krieger  
Library Director  
Edison Twp. Public Library  
340 Plainfield Avenue  
Edison, NJ 08817*

**Phone** *(732) 287-2298, ext. 222*

**Fax Phone** *(732) 819-9134*

**REMARKS:** ☐ *Urgent* ☒ *For your review* ☐ *Reply ASAP* ☐ *Please Comment*

Here are the library officials who will be attending the program on September 28th:

Mrs. Virginia M. Comito, Library Board President

Mrs. Susan M. Krieger, Assistant Library Director

Ms. Molly Davis-Bright, Assistant Library Director

Ms. April Cormaci, President, Friends of the Edison Public Library

I have invited several other library staff members as well, but they are not sure if they can attend. I will let you know.



Attn Mrs. Susan

**BALABHARATI CULTURAL CENTER**

103 Timber oaks Rd, Edison NJ 08820

Ph: (908) 822 2324. <http://www.balabharati.org>



\* Permit  
Ginny to  
come

To  
Mr. George A. Spadaro  
Mayor  
Edison, NJ

Dear Mayor spadaro,  
My name is Gopala Kovvali. I live in Edison. We have recently founded an Indian Cultural center, registered as Balabharati Cultural Center, in Edison with a view to impart Indian culture and languages to children. As a part of those efforts, we are conducting Telugu language classes on every Saturday.

Telugu is a language spoken in a southern state of India, Andhra Pradesh. This language was described as Italian of the East by a British scholar Sir C.P. Brown. There are several unique aspects of the language and culture of Andhra Pradesh. In New Jersey and especially Edison, there are several families that speak Telugu language.

We have requested Edison public library to create a section for Telugu language and Ms. Susan M. Krieger, Library Director has agreed to do so. The section will be inaugurated on September 28<sup>th</sup> 2002. I want to invite you to the function as a chief guest and inaugurate the section. We are also happy to mention that Assemblyman Chivukula will be the guest of honor.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Gopala Kovvali  
President, Balabharati Cultural Center

Tom Hoppe -  
get it

Ms Krieger, please make your suggestions. I will take the letter personally and ask for appointment with Mayor. Thank you for your help. Gopala.

10am-1pm

\*ASK Dr.C.  
@ slide  
projector or

LCD  
Projector!



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EDISON  
New Jersey



COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX  
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TELEFACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL FORM

PLEASE FORWARD ATTACHED DOCUMENT:

TO: Gopala Kovali

SENDING ADDRESS: c/o Fax: 732-235-8651

DATE: 9/11/02 NUMBER OF PAGES WITH COVER: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: Suse Kiege

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: Here are the names of our

Councilmembers:

Anthony Massaro, Council President

Charles Tomaro, Council Vice-President

Peter J. Barnes, III

Robert C. Diehl

Joan Kapitan

William (Billy) Kruczak

Parag Patel





**FAX**

**Date** *July 10, 2002*

**Number of pages including cover sheet** *1*

**TO:** *Dr. Gopala Kovvali, Ph.D.*

**Phone** *(732) 235-8683*

**Fax Phone** *(732) 235-8651*

**FROM:** *Susan M. Krieger  
Library Director  
Edison Public Library  
340 Plainfield Avenue  
Edison, NJ 08817*

**Phone** *(732) 287-2298, ext. 222*

**Fax Phone** *(732) 819-9134*

**REMARKS:** ☐ *Urgent* ☒ *For your review* ☐ *Reply ASAP* ☐ *Please Comment*

In order to process the books written in Telugu, we need the following information for each book:

- 1) Title
- 2) Author
- 3) Publisher
- 4) Place of publication
- 5) Number of pages
- 6) ISBN number, if available
- 7) Subjects:
  - If fiction, please indicate.
  - If non-fiction, please tell what the subjects are (history, cookery, essays, poetry, etc.).

The Main Library's meeting room would be available for a reception all day on Sept. 28th, and in the afternoon after 1:00 p.m. on October 5th.

I will be away on vacation from July 17th until August 1st. Feel free to contact me before or after those dates to further discuss this project. I am looking forward to meeting you.



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EDISON

*New Jersey*



COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX

732 287-2298

July 2, 2002

Dear Mr. Gopala Kovvali:

The following is the information that is absolutely necessary for every book, magazine, audio and video cassette that is donated to the Edison Public Library.

Fox:  
732-235-8651

all day Sat. 9/28  
w afternoon aftw  
1pm w Oct. 5



**This information is absolutely necessary:**

- 1) Title
- 2) Author
- 3) Publisher
- 4) Place of publication
- 5) Number of pages
- 6) ISBN, if available
- 7) Subjects:
  - If fiction, please indicate
  - If non-fiction, please tell what the subjects are  
(history, cookery, essays, poetry, etc.)



To  
Susan M. Krieger  
Director  
Edison Main Library  
340 Plainfield Avenue  
Edison, N.J. 08817  
(732) 287-2298

Dear Susan M. Krieger,

It was very nice speaking with you this after noon regarding establishing a section for one of the Indian languages, Telugu in your libraries. Thank you very much for receiving the idea positively and I assure you that you will receive full cooperation from me and others in our community.

Telugu is a language spoken in a southern state of India, Andhra Pradesh. This language was described as Italian of the East by a British scholar Sir C.P. Brown. There are several unique aspects of the language and I will be very happy to present to you some of them when we meet.

In New Jersey and especially Edison, there are several families and that speak Telugu language. I think that it will be nice to have a section for this language in libraries in New Jersey and with your efforts Edison could be the first to do that.

I am very happy to tell you that we have recently founded a cultural center to teach children Indian culture and languages and we conduct Telugu language classes every Saturday. You can get some more information about Telugu language in our web site <http://www.balabharati.org>.

We want to request your library to create a section for holding books in this language. We will donate books, magazines, audio and video cassettes. If you have any questions please contact me and I look forward to working with you on this project. If I can be of any help to your library, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,  
  
Gopala Kovvali, Ph.D.  
103 Timber Oaks Road  
Edison  
NJ 08820  
(908) 822 2324  
kovvali@mindspring.com

Wah:  
732-235-8683



This information is absolutely necessary: ...

① Title

② Author

③ Publisher

④ Place of publication

⑤ Number of pages

⑥ ISBN if available

⑦ Subjects :

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Jonathan Tamari: (732)  
565-7347; e-mail  
[jtamari@thnt.com](mailto:jtamari@thnt.com)