

Crystal Hermitage Survey Results

Spring 2017

Summary

When going through the survey cards the most striking these was that people from farther away are coming long distances to visit, and the very important role in our outreach Springtime at Ananda plays. The main feedback we received for improvement is offering more opportunities for people to experience all that there is to offer at Crystal Hermitage.

The peacefulness and beauty at Crystal Hermitage is a gift, radiating something special that people look forward to year after year. It has become a meaningful tradition in many local families, and a destination for visitors seeking a divine experience of beauty.

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The final count for Springtime at Ananda 2017 was 7,500 visitors

The weekends were odd this year because of the rain. Our best weekend was the 15th and 16th, Easter weekend. Saturday the 15th brought in about 1,000 people, which was our biggest day.

Earned income for this year is \$45,000.

Over 175 marketing survey cards were completed.

(n=176, n=total sample size)

They were available at a table outside the dome and people were offered a chance to win two season passes for next year if they completed the card.

Note: A sample size of 200 or more would have provided more accuracy or “confidence.” It would have painted a picture of the overall visitors better.

Best press coverage:

- AAA magazine in list of best gardens in the west:
<https://www.viamagazine.com/blog/13-gorgeous-gardens-west>
- Gold Country TV
- CBS Good Day Sacramento
 - <http://gooddaysacramento.cbslocal.com/video/category/spoken-word-good-day/3650358-springtime-at-ananda/>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lch73sUZh0>
- Union coverage:
<http://www.theunion.com/entertainment/activities-and-events/tantalizing-tulips-springtime-at-ananda-video/>
- Grass Valley of Chamber of Commerce did several photo shoots from the gardens for different features in their magazine

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Where did visitors travel from?

Farthest traveled? Dallas, Texas; Portland, OR; Los Angeles, California

Majority Local: %63

Includes Nevada City, Grass Valley, Auburn, Penn Valley, NSJ, Colfax

4 States represented:

California, Nevada, Texas, Oregon

Surprises? Thought there would be more from Sacramento and Bay Area this year. Perhaps due to weather they did not travel from as far as often. Some people did drive from far away and it was closed or were hoping for more snacks and refreshments.

How did visitors hear about us?

“Everyone on the ridge!”

62% word of mouth, including comments like local, friend, family, co-workers:

“My soul mate and life long friend.”

“life”

“friend’s wedding”

“walking group”

“Sierra Family Medical Clinic”

About 1/3 of this group also said they had been *coming for years*, return visitors.

10% media

Including newspaper (14), radio (1), magazine (1)

Of newspaper, *Union* was more commonly stated.

1% flyer/postcard

“Random stranger at a coffee shop.”

6% Facebook (only social media site we currently use in CH communications)

“Mom’s Facebook friend.”

6% Internet

Including Google (most) and TripAdvisor (1)

“Luck and blessings!”

Other

“From others in community. I love Yogananda.” “Autobiography of a Yogi.”

Few (3) mentioned being in relation to their spiritual path and Master, but may have been more if we had had it as a multiple choice question rather than open-ended.

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What can we do to improve:

“Ananda, do something better? You have done it all! :)”

“I love the scones and baked goods.”

“Everything is wonderful!!! :)”

“The creator’s beautiful handiwork.”

“Keep this beautiful place open!” (2x)

“You already did, made me pause and think about life. Thanks”.

90% said we had nothing to improve or wrote a thank you note with a happy face.

Other ideas:

- Serving tea along with the water outside if it is not an open house weekend
- Reducing scents in the gift shop and bathroom for those with sensitivities
- Having more updated website (in the works!)
- More tulip suncatchers in the gift store
- Improving mobility for those with disabilities (even a bit more on pathways)
- Better organization of parking
- Info about yoga classes (perhaps meditation too)
- Labeling different plants

“Keep doing what you’re doing.”

Highlights from Testimonials / Stories:

Share a special story or memory while visiting the gardens.

“The tulips are stunning. It is beautiful here.” –C.N., Auburn, CA

About 3/4 of all visitors (72%) wrote about the beauty and peacefulness at Crystal Hermitage; specifically speaking to the tulips, other flowers, and view.

“It is a gorgeous retreat.”

“This is an amazing place. Congratulations. Thanks for all the beautiful flowers and hard job.” –J.B. Grass Valley, CA

“New life blossoming everywhere.”

“The views of the Middle Form from the garden are superb. Beyond words.” –R.T. Nevada City, CA

“I could look at the colors all day.” “The glorious colors. I pray.”

“Most beautiful place I’ve ever seen!”

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The second most common memory mentioned included a special experience of enjoying the gardens with their family. It created lasting memories or became their favorite tradition:

“The memory of my late father and sister sitting under the cherry blossoms as they rained down upon them. <3” –K.A., Nevada City, CA**

** <3= drawing of a heart

“Walking through the gardens with my son and Scotty puppy Wally. Enjoying the VAST array of beauty. Thank you for all that goes into creating such lovely beauty.” –Pam, Nevada City

“Watching my 6-month old daughter enjoy the colors of the flowers.”

“I love to bring my two daughters every year, it’s now a tradition.” –U.K. NSJ

“Amazing tulips. My fourth year. Look forward each year.” –R.V.

“Being with my Aunt who is in heaven now. Making this an annual family event. Beauty and the glory <3”. –R.S. Fresno, CA

“Always come for my April birthday, for beautiful flowers, incredible views, peaceful ambience. Thank you for sharing this sweet space!” –R.M. Nevada City, CA

“Celebrating my birthday with my husband and my daughters. Flowers are my favorite thing—the Earth laughs in flowers! Thank you <3” –B.K. Penn Valley, CA

“Perfect romantic day with someone I love.” –K.B. Reno, NV

“I am enjoying the beautiful springtime bloom, amazing sunshine, and taking a moment to remember my grandparents—who would love this place and used to take me to gardens and spiritual places just like this in Washington! <3” –M.W. Truckee, CA

“I brought my mom here for early Mother’s Day and she cried.” –J.C. Reno, NV

The next common story was visitors elaborating on the peacefulness or meditative quality of the grounds, chapel (2), and mandir (5):

“I feel a peace of Heaven while visiting. Tranquility. Thank you.”

“Like going to heaven for a short visit.” –E.B. Nevada City, CA

“Walking into the chapel!”

“Thank you! <3 Easter here with my son from Sacramento: service, lush, and tulipins in the rain! Very peaceful, Spirit-filled day! My first visit to the interment space—Oh my! The Spirit

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Presence!” –B.P. CA

“The tulips are amazing. Like the sanctuary with the view of the mountains (mandir). Very peaceful at Ananda.” –D.W. Grass Valley, CA

“In the meditation room, deep inhaling while watching one tree sway around from the soft wind. Exhaling out deeply with focus on God’s creation.” –N.F. Grass Valley, CA

“Those who did go in the mandir came out with a special glow. It was a great thing that we did by opening it up to visitors.” –Devalila, volunteer on Springtime at Ananda weekend

“I always cry when I come here. The vibration is so high sitting in the mandir it is like stepping into the Infinite. Today, I realize it is time to forgive Kriyananda for his past transgression against women.” –D.G.

We also continue to receive feedback about the kindness of the people at Ananda serving there.

“The nice people.” “The spirit and the people.”

“The tulips and comforting feeling Ananda provides. The food at the deli was wonderful. :)”

“Everything is our favorite.”

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Conclusion:

- In communications, continue to use the imagery and video of expansive, scenic views and colors of tulips, other flowers.
- Go through the above stories and testimonials to find words and phrases that stand out to you that will spark interest in others when describing Springtime at Ananda.
- Expand social media communications to include sites beyond Facebook. Social media is another form of “word of mouth” or “friend” referrals which we know are most successful at bringing new visitors.