

# संस्कृतभारती

Press Release

Tuesday, June 12, 2007

## **Ramayana contest attracts Indian-American kids in hundreds**

Do not be surprised if one of these days, you search for Ramayana on the popular internet portal “youtube” and end up finding videos of three year old kids born and brought up in the USA reciting shlokas from the great epic!

It was in February this year that Samskrita-Bharati USA, a voluntary nonprofit organization committed to bringing Samskritam, to daily lives, announced plans to conduct its popular “Shloka recitation competition” in six US cities compared to three last year. The competitions were held in the months of April and May in temples, community centers or auditoriums. While San Francisco-Bay area saw the event happen for the fourth time, Boston for the third time and Seattle for the second, Pittsburg, Dallas and Buffalo were the new additions this year.



Winners from the competition is SF-Bay Area

Participants were divided into four groups based on age. Shlokas were chosen from the BaalaRaamayana – number of verses varying from 5 for the “atishishugana” (3-5 yrs) to 20 for the “kishoragana” (12-15 yrs). 365 children registered online from across the six cities and of them 250 finally participated, making the event one of the biggest organized by Samskrita-Bharati in USA. Experts on Ramayana and Samskritam were chosen as judges and trophies were presented to the winners.

All over these metropolitan centers, it was a matter of great pride for the parents and the community to see these children come up on stage and recite the verses with ease as if they used Samskritam on a regular basis. While some of the parents were already participants in Samskrita-Bharati programs, some others who were new to the organization wanted to learn to speak Samskritam themselves and also teach their children to converse in the language.



Children from Dallas chanting Hanuman Chalisa at the end of the program



Some of the participants in Pittsburg along with the judges

Such a well coordinated event would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts by scores of volunteers in each city, some of whom were involved for the first time and were quite excited. *“Being part of organizations such as Samskrita Bharati is my way of honoring the great Vedic culture that continues to benefit not only the Hindus but the whole world”*, said Clarita, a volunteer from Seattle. All children received participation certificates and mementos. The top performers in each age group were awarded trophies. Some of the judges found it “heart-breaking” to give trophies to only a few kids while “all of them did so well”.

In the last few years Samskrita-Bharati has been able to involve a lot of young second generation Indian-American in its programs. In addition to a family camp to be conducted in Edison NJ during the Labor Day weekend, where over a 100 participants are expected, Samskrita-Bharati is conducting a residential spoken Samskritam camp exclusively for teenagers, from June 23 to 27 at Pennsylvania. This camp named “shraddhaa” has participants coming from the West coast, Midwest and East coast. Instructors at the camp are also second generation Indian-Americans – Kartik, Varija, Muthu, Prakruti and Sowmya. Sowmya, who completed her undergraduate studies this May at University of Pennsylvania, recently taught a weekend workshop in Florida to a group of 22 young adults of Indian-American and Indo-Caribbean background. In fact she is dedicating one year as a full time volunteer of Samskrita-Bharati in the US.

Indeed all these are milestones for Samskrita-Bharati which aims to make the world aware of India’s rich cultural heritage. Ever since its inception in India in 1981, the organization has stressed that the means to keeping a language alive is to take it into households as a spoken language. In its twelve years of activity in USA it must be a matter of pride for Samskrita-Bharati that the second generation Indian Americans are also taking a keen interest in it to help it realize its goals.

For more information on the competitions, statistics and high resolution pictures, contact Dr. Rajinder Kaul, 206-310-8936, [rk.kaul@verizon.net](mailto:rk.kaul@verizon.net)

For more information on Samskrita-Bharati, visit [www.samskrita-bharati.org](http://www.samskrita-bharati.org) or contact: Giridharan Bharathan, 978-761-1142 , [gbharathan@yahoo.com](mailto:gbharathan@yahoo.com)

Some of the youtube videos mentioned in the press release may be viewed at

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-S3I0\\_pcZf4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-S3I0_pcZf4)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sWEh0bSm38>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHfsbMxd9f8>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXl4963STGw>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AULzhXTpl7E>



Section of the parents from the Seattle competition



Some participants from the Seattle Competition