

## **Beyond Sanskrit Tattoos: Land of Hollywood to host the West-Coast Sanskrit Camp**

In Hollywood, it makes sensational news when celebrities from singer Rihanna to actress Jessica Alba get Sanskrit tattoos done. However, the same region has quietly witnessed a silent revolution over the past eight months with an upsurge of interest in the rising 'Speak Sanskrit' movement.

Starting September 2007, Samskrita Bharati, a voluntary non profit organization spearheading the movement to popularize the usage of Sanskrit in daily life, stationed a full time volunteer in LA area to initiate change. Successfully, the volunteer Sowmya Joisa, a recent graduate from University of Pennsylvania conducted nearly 20 different 'Speak Sanskrit' workshops attended by over 300 people. Additionally, over 150 people attended a recent Sanskrit entertainment program conducted as the culmination of a youth workshop in Irvine, CA.

To nurture this growing interest in spoken Sanskrit out west, Samskrita Bharati took the decision in their United States National Samskrita Bharati Volunteer Annual Meeting to hold its West Coast annual residential family camp named 'Narmadaa' in the Los Angeles area this year. At the Annual Meeting held in Maryland (March 22-23), Madhavi Kondamudi was also named as the West Coast Coordinator for Samskrita Bharati



*Samskrita Bharati volunteers during the Annual Meet in Maryland*

Camp Narmadaa will be held during the Memorial Day weekend from May 24-26 at Camp Nawakwa, near the San Bernadino Mountains. Participants are expected from various Samskrita Bharati centers including San Jose, Fremont, Seattle, Portland, Dallas, Austin and San Diego. "There are beginner intermediate and advanced levels and the beginner level require no prior knowledge of Sanskrit", says Hariharan, the coordinator for South LA area and one of the organizers of the camp. Online registration is now open, with special discounts for students and visiting parents, as well as an early bird registration offer that ends on April 28.

The key to Samskrita Bharati's success with family residential camps has been the unique style of teaching Sanskrit through interactive and fun-filled workshops. From morning yoga sessions to late evening entertainment programs, it will be the sound of Sanskrit that reverberates throughout camp. The resultant immersion experience coupled with a supporting environment provides enough impetus for even the most reluctant participant to begin conversing in Sanskrit. Needless to say, grammatical mistakes are accepted as a part of the natural progression to acquiring fluency.



*Games at last year's Samskrita Bharati family camp, attended by over 120 people*

Samskrita Bharati's popular camps are not limited to families. Second generation Indian American youth too have been captivated by the teaching approach adopted by Samskrita Bharati. In 2007, a five-day residential youth camp named Shraddhaa was held in the east coast where the teachers too were Young Indian Americans who have adopted Spoken Sanskrit in their daily lives. The enthusiastic response from the participants of this camp has elicited Shraddhaa-2008 with a longer duration and a similar youth camp named Prajnaa on the West Coast (July 9-13 in the San Jose area) for the first time.

The West Coast residential camp will mark the beginning of a summer season of Sanskrit learning in various regions of the United States including four residential camps. And, like everything in Hollywood, Camp Narmadaa is destined to make great news!

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For more and higher resolution pictures and other details, contact:

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