

HEF hosts Guruvandana in Chicago

Hindu Education Foundation, Chicago Chapter with the help and participation from Abhimanyu Shakha, from North West suburb of Chicago, conducted Guruvandana Program (Teachers Appreciation Day) on May 31, 2009 at Palatine Public Library. The Honorable Mayor of Hoffman Estates, Mr. William McLeod inaugurated the event by lighting a lamp in front of Saraswati Devi's moorty. Teachers from schools from Northwest Suburb of Chicago attended the program. Total of over 100 participants attended the function. The program began with an Exhibition on 5000+ years of Hindu contribution to world culture and civilization. Balagokulam kids gave a guided tour of the exhibition to The Mayor, Teachers and attendees, explaining each exhibit and answering their questions. Parents were also present to provide any clarifications. After the exhibition, the Mayor and the Teachers moved to the main hall where Guru Vandana function was conducted. Prakash Saunshi coordinator for this Guruvandana program provided an introduction. He explained the goals of Hindu Education Foundation and the importance of Guru Vandana program. HEF had launched Guru Vandana event nationwide to bring students, teachers and parent together as one large family. He informed that kids had put forward their desire to conduct the entire function end-to-end by themselves! In the spirit of the agreement, Prakash ji handed over the podium to the kids! Priyanka Bhargava took the podium and provided an overview of the program. She invited The Mayor Mr. William McLeod to inaugurate the Guruvandana Program by lighting of lamp in front of Saraswati Devi's moorty. Kids explained significant of lighting lamp and said that as light removes darkness, knowledge also removes ignorance. They informed teachers about Hindu concept of Guru trinity, 'Mother, Father and Teacher' who play important role in child life. This was followed by group of kids from age 6 to 14 years reciting shlokas on Lord Ganesha, Sarswati Devi and on Guru. Kids provided an explanation and significance of each of the shlokas. This was well received by the teachers and the audience. After this all the kids were invited to present the memento to their teachers. The memento was specially designed for each teacher with their name and a personal message from the child to his/her teacher along with their photograph. Many teachers were visibly moved by the memento. This was followed by a group photograph. After this Kathak Dance was performed by Radhika. This beautiful classical piece was choreographed by Gauri Jog. The dance told a beautiful story of playful Krishna trying to grab butter hanging above and convincing his mother, Yashoda. Radhika's dance won the heart of ever one in the hall. Group of kids performed Jai Ho dance from Oscar winning movie, Slumdog Millionaire. It was an outstanding performance which took the audience by the storm! This was a fitting end to the cultural program designed, choreographed and performed by the kids. Manish Joshi program coordinator invited the Mayor to the podium to provide his feedback. Mayor William McLeod said: "An outstanding event and thank you HEF for having invited me to this event. Several Indians and other communities have moved to this Chicago suburb because of its great educational system. This is because of dedicated teachers we have in our community. India and Hinduism have demonstrated strong ethical environments and shared quality in the diverse ethnic society. We do have common things to share amongst others. Our heritage, tradition, diverse background is excellent. Thanks to Hindu Education Foundation for pulling this tradition and hoping to continue every year." Various Indian organizations were represented which include Jalaram Mandir president Chiraybhai Parikh, Nita Virani of Art of Living and C V Desai of Ekal vidya (One teacher one school). Teachers provided their feedback and expressed to attend such wonderful event in future. Teachers also commented that they learn more about Hindu culture by this program and visiting the exhibition of Hindu contribution to world culture and civilization. [Click here](#) for pictures.