

VOICE OF ASIA Second Front Page COMMUNITY

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Ten glorious years of DAV Montessori celebrated

By Nandita Sharma
and Renu Jain

Houston: Thunder and heavy rain bowed to the blessings of gods and gurus on the DAV Montessori children on May 15. As the evening approached, the sun was shining and the whole Arya Samaj Greater Houston complex was adorned to welcome the guests for the tenth anniversary of the Dayanand Anglo Vedic Montessori School in Houston. With the surge of parents and the chirping of the children, it would be easy to believe that we were visiting a quality school in India, reminding us of our own schools back home.

DAVM, as it is fondly called, is a school which constantly strives to make their students aware of India's Vedic heritage and culture. A conscious and concerted effort is made every single day to highlight and focus on our glorious heritage and culture. The children are taught Hindi, yoga, naitik shiksha, and shlokas in addition to celebrating both Indian and American holidays. The Montessori curriculum of teaching is adopted in our school to introduce these kids to their regular courses. DAVM graduates have excelled in academics as well as extracurricular activities in both Public and Private schools. In IOWA tests of basic skills which are conducted by the school each year, the KG and first grade students have been scoring 2 to 3 grade levels higher in both language and Math.

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Above: Students reciting Veer Garjan with their teachers. Below: A presentation by Yellow Class.



breath taking rendering of the Shiv-sutra Shloka's and the energizing song "Veer Garjan" by the entire school, under the guidance of Mrs. Vineeta Arora and Acharya Praveen Gulati. You could have very well been in a gurukul, for there was so much peace and tranquility. Acharya Gulati ji explained not just the significance of, but also how, the kids are taught to help their parents and show respect by touching their feet.

The M.C. for the evening, Meena Dutt, echoed everyone's feelings of love and tenderness which poured out naturally as the class of 2010 was awarded their graduation certificates. It was a fabulous site to witness 1st grade and kindergarten graduating children walking down the

stage in their blue caps and gowns. One could clearly see the Indian values instilled in these children as they received the certificates by bowing their heads to Meena Dutt ji and taking their position. This was followed by a spellbinding DVD presentation featuring the "DAVM Journey Down Memory Lane".

Dev Mahajan recalled the inception of DAVM when Shekhar Agrawal felt that there was a need within the Indian community to nurture and provide children with a holistic development. Thus was born the idea and DAV Montessori School, which started in 2000 with seven students. Dev ji also acknowledged that ASGH organization is like a tree, the

roots are many and run deep, all pivotal to the growth and success of a school of International stature.

Many members of the community were recognized and applauded for their selfless service, unflinching dedication and commitment to the school since its inception in 2000. Among them were the first two teachers of DAVM, Ms. Chetna Desai and Ms. Madhu Bangia who received the loudest applaud from parents and students.

Arti Khanna, director of DAVM, recalled how her association with young children started as a Montessori teacher fifteen years back. Five years back when she took up the position, she found that instead of a class of twenty-five students

who adored her, she now had school at capacity and a group of wonderful teachers to love and nurture. Under Mrs. Khanna's leadership, supervision and guidance, the school has shown exponential growth each year.

The first batch of DAVM students, the magnificent seven, were brought on stage as they highlighted their early years in the school as well as positive impact their foundation has had and contributed to their overall confidence and academic achievement.

The Green class students, ages 2 ½ years to 3 ½ years, led by Rita Gulati, Monita Mehtaji and Mrs. Sangeeta Gupte put on a superb Rajasthani dance. Shilpa Pokhriyal and Aruna Gummadi choreographed a tribute to the

teachers around the world, presented by the Blue class which left the audience awestruck. The Red Class with Chetna Desai and Sangeeta Vats rocked the house showing power of imagination, how it can capture all the wonderful things of nature. The grand finale performed by the Yellow class highlighted different cultures of India. Madhu Bangia and Shubha Ananth brought out some scenes from different states of India and concluded the show with a special birthday cake marking the 10th anniversary of DAVM. Every single performance was enacted as a labor of love, visible for all to see. The music, the colorful costumes, and the makeup were simply breathtaking. The entire program was presented flawlessly.

Arti Khanna thanked the management committee members, Acharya jis, parents, and reminded everyone that, though only a few were mentioned, she has had an army of soldiers, by way of teachers, volunteers and others who are always in our hearts.

The evening concluded traditionally with a beautiful Shanti Path by Acharya Shridhar ji. Families of current and past DAVM students were treated to a yearbook to commemorate this special occasion.

The DAVM function will always have a special place in the hearts of those who witnessed it; for it clearly exemplified the maxim "you can take an Indian out of India, but don't take the India out of an Indian".

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10 Glorious Years of DAV Montessori School



2010 Graduates of DAV Montessori School

**BY NANDITA SHARMA &
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and first grade students have been scoring 2 to 3 grade levels higher in both language and Math.

The evening started with a breath taking rendering of the Shiv-sutra Shloka's and the energizing song "Veer Garjan" by the entire school, under the guidance of Vineeta Aro-ra and Acharya Praveen Gulati. The atmosphere could have been mistaken for a Gurukul. Acharya Gulati explained not just the significance of, but also how, the kids are taught to help their parents and show respect to them.

The M.C. for the evening, Meena Dutt, echoed everyone's feelings of love and tenderness, as the class of 2010 was awarded their graduation certificates. It was a fabulous site to witness 1st grade and kindergarten graduating children walking down the stage in their blue caps and gowns. One could clearly see the Indian values instilled in these children as they received the certificates by bowing their heads to Meena Dutt. This was followed by a spellbinding DVD presentation featuring the "DAVM Journey Down Memory Lane".

Dev Mahajan recalled the inception of DAVM when Shekhar Agrawal felt that there was a need within the Indian community to nurture and provide children with a holistic development. Thus was born the idea and DAV Montessori School started in 2000 with seven

students. Dev also acknowledged that the ASGH organization is like a tree, the roots are many and run deep, all pivotal to the growth and success of a school of international stature. Many members of the community were recognized and applauded for their selfless service, unflinching dedication and commitment to the school since its inception in 2000. Among them were the first two teachers of DAVM, Chetna Desai and Madhu Bangia who received the loudest applause from parents and students.

Arti Khanna, director of DAVM, recalled how her association with young children started as a Montessori teacher fifteen years back. Five years ago, when she took up the position, she found that instead of a class of twenty-five students who adored her, she now had an entire school to take care of. Under Arti Khanna's leadership, supervision and guidance, the school has shown exponential growth each year.

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Rita Gulati, Monita Mehta and Sangeeta Gupte performed a Ra-jasthani dance. Shilpa Pokhriyal and Aruna Gummadi choreographed a tribute to the teachers around the world, presented by the Blue class which left the audience awestruck. The Red Class with Chetna Desai and Sangeeta Vats rocked the house showing power of imagination, how it can capture all the wonderful things of nature. The grand finale performed by the Yellow class highlighted different cultures of India. Madhu Bangia and Shubha Ananth performed scenes from different states of India and concluded the show with a special birthday cake marking the 10th anniversary of DAVM. Every single performance had the audience spellbound. The music, the colorful costumes, and the makeup were simply breathtaking.

Arti Khanna thanked the management committee members and the parents, reminding everyone that though only a few were mentioned, she has had an army of soldiers, by way of teachers, volunteers and others who helped make the evening a success.

The evening concluded traditionally with a beautiful Shanti Path by Acharya Shridhar. Families of current and past DAVM students were each given a year-book to commemorate this special occasion.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

DAV Montessori celebrates 10 glorious years



Students recite a patriotic song in Hind along with teachers.

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— Nandita Sharma & Renu Jain



The first batch of DAVM students reminisce their first 10 years at the school.

Park

From Page 1

secret nor was it sneaked into the plan.

The resolution is usually worded in broad and general terms and the board is given the authority to fill in the "minor details," supporters of the statue say.

Opponents say a 50-foot statue is not a minor detail that can be added by the board without the general body's approval.

K.R. Thiagarajan, a former chairman of the temple board, last week bolstered the demand for a new resolution when he said the adopted resolution deliberately avoided the word Siva, because any mention of the word would have resulted in the defeat of the resolution.

A.V.N. Reddy, one of the proponents of the park with the statue, said opposition to the plan is not new. Every time a project was proposed like the temple tower, perimeter wall, Kalyana mandapam, youth center or the cafeteria, questions were raised about the need for those projects.

But, eventually, a consensus was reached and the projects have been accomplished.

Proponents also argued that the statue would add beauty to the park and be a major attraction to visitors.

Some said the statue could serve as a focal point of education for children.

Among other objections raised against the statue is that it would be contrary to the traditional rules of temple architecture and the statue could become a point of distraction from the main deities in the temple.

Some even debated if the statue would be the same as a deity and if the statue should be preserved with the same sanctity.

Another concern is the long-term maintenance of a big statue. It could also attract vandals, some said.

If Siva statue is installed, what is the guarantee that there would not be a demand for Hanuman statue tomorrow, a member asked.

Another member suggested installation of several small statues all over the park.

One even proposed a hi-tech idea of three-dimensional "virtual Siva" projected by laser.

Proponents of the statue sought to address each of these concerns.

Some members questioned the very idea of a park. Instead, the area should be landscape with trees and flower beds with minimal expense, and the funds should be used for more scholarships or service projects, a youth member said.

MTS chairman G.S. Gopalakrishna said the temple always followed a democratic process. The construction of the park is no different from other previous projects, he said.

After a subcommittee finalizes the design, input is sought from the general members. The board considered the public input and then finalized the plan.

Once again, the same procedure is being followed now. The board and the temple advisory council will get a report from the subcommittee following the town meetings. The board will then reach a consensus and decide on the future course of action, Gopalakrishna said.