

DAV School Open for 2013-2014 Session

by

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The new session of the DAV Sanskriti School opened on Sunday, August 25th with much enthusiasm from both students and parents. The School aims to inculcate Vedic values and culture in children, with two hours of instruction followed by Prasad. Classes start at 10 am every Sunday. Naitik Shiksha (moral science) and Conversational Hindi are compulsory, and children can choose from a variety of electives like music, dance, yoga, tabla instruction, Hindi reading and writing, vedic math and public speaking. The youngsters also have an opportunity to attend the Havan, and older kids (13+ years) can participate in the Arya Yuvak Mandal (Arya Youth Group), which aims to inculcate in the youngsters a sense of seva (service) and shraddha (devotion) by having them volunteer in non-profit activities that benefit Arya Samaj and the community.

The Sanskriti School is housed in the Arya Samaj buildings at 14375 Schiller Road, Houston with a beautiful annex devoted to classrooms and a hall where the Havan (for youngsters) is held. The school and its activities benefit from the sincere efforts and dedication of its many donors, teachers and volunteers in the school committee who give of their time generously. Besides the Sanskriti School on Sundays, there is also the DAV Montessori School on regular weekdays.

The main building has a large prayer hall where the Yajman (Prayer host) and his/her family participate in a Havan led by Acharyaji (head priest). It also houses the dining hall where the congregation can partake in the Prasad served at the end of prayers. Everyone is welcome to attend the Sunday Satsang and Havan on Sundays at 10am, and participate in the prayer meeting by singing bhajans and listening to the weekly discourse on religious and social topics, and the importance, benefit and application of culture in one's life. The Arya Samaj complex also houses a large library for children and adults, with books on world religions and cultures in English, Hindi and Sanskrit.

The Arya Samaj was founded in 1875 by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, and was started as a reform movement in response to the corruption and atrocities (Sati/untouchability/dowry/education restrictions for women) which had seeped into the Hindu culture. Arya Samaj Greater Houston was founded in 1991, and aims to serve children, youth and adults of the area through spiritual and cultural enrichment by spreading the knowledge of the Vedas. The people of Greater Houston are indeed fortunate to have such a wonderful center for Vedic learning and enlightenment close at hand. Arya Samaj Greater Houston invites all to avail themselves of the learning opportunities at DAV School, and enroll children and youngsters for the New Session. More information can be obtained at the Arya Samaj Houston website (<http://www.aryasamajhouston.org>) or by calling (281)752-0100.

Below is an account of the opening day of the DAV Sanskriti School through the perspective of one of its students, Ms. Smriti Ahuja. Ms. Ahuja and her brother have been attending the school for many years and their parents Sanjay and Kiran Ahuja volunteer in various capacities at Arya Samaj :

Opening day of DAV Sanskriti School

It was the morning of August 25th, and my brother and I were immensely excited as we entered the DAV Sanskriti School building. The foyer was a beehive of activity, filled with parents busy filling out registration forms and asking questions. It was great seeing the old faces and so many new ones. We chattered away excitedly with friends, telling each other what we had been up to in the summer. We were really looking forward to seeing each other again every Sunday.



Soon, all the kids and parents were seated and we started the school year with the Havan. Very soon the air was

filled with the melodious voices of kids and adults chanting the yagya shlokas in unison. Lot of kids, including my brother and I, who have been coming to Arya Samaj since so many years, knew all the

yagya shlokas by heart and it was wonderful reciting them together in one voice.



After the Havan, we were shown a very insightful film on Swami Dayanand Saraswatiji, the great founder of Arya Samaj.

After the movie finished, welcome speeches were given by the management committee members. Teachers and volunteers were also introduced so that parents and

kids could familiarize themselves with faces and names and contact any of them during the year. The kids were then sent off for orientation and meetings with their teachers.

Parents in the meanwhile were given information on their kid's curriculum and the DAVSS school

operations. They were acquainted with the different activities taking place in Arya Samaj over the course of the year, and since this is a volunteer run organization, were requested to volunteer in at least one field of their choice.

The event ended with all the kids and parents together in the foyer reciting the aarti (prayer) together before all of us scampered off to the lunch room to have prasad (food) and once again chatter happily with our friends.