

## **Boston Telugu Community Relives Nostalgia of Ghantasala to Help a Good Cause**

The Telugu Association of Greater Boston (TAGB), in association with the Vegesna Foundation of Hyderabad, presented an evening of classic Telugu cinema music from yesteryears on December 1<sup>st</sup> 2007, to raise funds for the Foundation's service of disabled children. The main artistes of the program were Sri G.V. Prabhakar, a well-known singer from Andhra Pradesh, and Smt. Mani Sastry, also a renowned Telugu singer from the US, along with a supporting cast of local talent, enthralled an audience of about 400 Ghantasala admirers well into the evening. The event also raised about \$14,000 for the social work projects of Vegesna Foundation. In his opening remarks, TAGB President Sri Sreenivas Kaki said that commemorating Ghantasala's contribution of Indian film culture on the occasion of his 85<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary is especially desirable. He added that along with TAGB's current emphasis on cultural programs, there is a strong desire in the community to participate directly or indirectly in community and social service projects. He highlighted the excellent work being done by the Vegesna Foundation for disabled children, and expressed his happiness that this event in support of such a noble cause offers TAGB an opportunity to fulfill the goal of TAGB's involvement in social service.

The cultural part of the evening started with a lamp lighting by a well-known local physician, Dr. Nagagopal Venna and his wife, Smt. Usha. Sri Madhu Chari reminded the audience the timelessness and melodiousness of Ghantasala's renditions. A DVD presentation of the great singer's life and contributions was very well received. The two primary artistes, Sri G.V. Prabhakar and Smt. Mani Sastry not only seemed at times to almost exceed the original master's renditions, but also made it a point to involve the audience in the program by graciously acceding to the many requests made, doing so even in cases when the pre-made tracks were not available and significant improvisations had to be done. Several songs by both artistes were outstanding and deserve special mention. Of them, 'rasika raja tagu vaaramu kaada' and Karunasri's 'pushpa vilaapam', both sung by Sri Prabhakar, as well as the songs 'meerajaala galada' and 'manase andaala brindaavanam', sung by Smt. Mani Sastry, were particularly memorable. The local Boston area artistes also rendered many melodious notes, and proved to be worthy compliments to these outstanding singers.

The Preseident of the Vegesna Foundation, Sri Vamsi Ramaraju, and primary activist Sri Vanguri Chitten Raju presented a motivating film clip of the activities of the Foundation, showing the many disabled children who have benefited from the largesse. They emphasized that funds are always needed for the deserving programs instituted by the Foundation that serve the 400 or so disabled youth, and said expatriate Andhras can help in several ways. One of the schemes available is the Adopt-a-Child program for \$250, which proved to be popular with the community members and resulted in gross collections of about \$14,000.

Finally, the artistes, Sri Prabhakar and Smt. Mani Sastry, Sri Ramaraju and Sri Chitten Raju were felicitated by some prominent local Telugu community members on behalf of TAGB. The Vice-President of TAGB, Sri Surya Jayanti thanked the artistes, the representative of the Vegesna Foundation, and Sri Murty and Smt. Padma Parakala, who partially sponsored the evening's program. He also offered thanks to the members of TAGB Youth group for help with front desk coordination and the popular snack stalls.