

Sankranti Celebrations on an Unprecedented Scale by the Telugu Association of Greater Boston (TAGB)

With about 1200 Boston-area Telugu community members in attendance, the Telugu Association of Greater Boston celebrated the Sankranti festival on Saturday, January 20th, in Littleton, MA. On more than one front, TAGB scaled new heights with the breadth, quality and organization of this program. The program was unique for its exclusive focus on performances by local amateur artistes alone, majority of them children. The organizing committee created an ambience of traditional Sankranti both inside the auditorium and outside, with 'Bommala Koluvu' (display of artistic dolls), enlightening messages on poster boards, scrumptious dinner, etc. Sri Sreenivas Kaki, President of TAGB, in his introductory remarks, mentioned that in its Silver Jubilee Year, TAGB has received Federal Id (56-2627891), and the next step of getting Tax Exempt status is in progress. He also announced that the formation of a Youth Committee, and a plan of action for benefiting the younger generation both in cultural terms as well as in their professional pursuits are in progress. Commenting on the Sankranti program, Sri Kaki expressed his thanks to the community for the overwhelming response to participate by noting that there were program proposals received both from child and adult artists for more than ten hours worth of items, which the Committee had to shrink to about 5 hours.

Most of the key items of the night's programs were by local children. More than 250 children ranging from 5 to 18 years of age, with encouragement and guidance of their devoted parents and music or dance teachers, put up a series of entertaining shows well into the night. Although there was a preponderance of choreographed dancing to recent popular Telugu movie song numbers, the Committee took care to intersperse these items with devotional, classical and folk songs, dances and short plays, thus avoiding monotony and keeping the audience enthusiastically engaged. Irrespective of the kind of role they played, each child (and their parents/team leads) took care to deck them up in attractive make-up and glorious costumes, thus making their presence on the stage even more enjoyable. In a total of 45 items performed by children were a medley of old and new, of pious and racy music, of folksy simplicity and modern sophistication. It was a matter of empowering pride for all in attendance to finally recognize that there is such enormous artistic talent in the Telugu children of Boston area. Perhaps the blessings their parents offered by way of 'Bhogi Pallu' at the beginning of the program were the secret behind their spirited performance!

The few items that the adult artistes performed were a big part of the evening's entertainment value. A parody play on the banal themes of Telugu formula movies tickled the audiences' funny bone. A rendering of about half-dozen classic romantic songs from Telugu films of yesteryears took the audience back to more gracious and elegant times. A couple of novel items, one a stand-up comedy and mimicry, and another a music contest of sorts called 'Ardhakshari' were well-received by the audience. All through the program, comperes Smt. Padmaja and Sri Srinivas Bala added spice to the items with their meaningful commentary and humor.

The youth and adult winners of the rangoli (muggulu) and art competition, selected by judges Smt. Padma Govinda Rao and Smt. Ranjana Kota, were honored with prizes by Sri Baburao Polavarapu, former President of TAGB. Vice President Dr. Surya Jayanthi offered thanks to the participants, to their parents and teachers, to the many volunteers, and to the sponsors (Minerva India Cuisine Restaurant, Bestprintbuy.com, Aadya Consulting and TeluguOne.com) who contributed to the program's success. All in all, the enthusiasm of the participating children and adults, the tireless encouragement of the overflow crowd that exceeded all expectations, and the careful execution by the committee, all contributed to a wildly successful program on a scale never before seen in the Boston Telugu community.

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