

## Purna Vidya Teachers' Training Camp and Carnatic Vocal Music Workshop 2012



This camp was held at Saylorsburg PA from August 12 to August 17 2012. Approximately forty adults and twenty children attended the camp. Pujya Swamiji held satsang everyday, Savithriji Mani organized the Purna Vidya teacher's camp and Maharajapuram Sri Ramachandran conducted the Carnatic Music Workshop. Suddhatmaji taught chanting. Yoga facilities were available during the camp. Meditation was conducted by Janani and Bhajans were presented by Jayanthi

The Purna Vidya Teacher's Training program was conceived by Pujya Swamiji for children and youth growing in the modern world. The native forms of culture and religion are challenged by other forms reaching the children through global media. They have to choose. This program provides knowledge and insight into the vision of Vedas, the literature and religious culture of India. In this retreat the adult students were taught how to offer this program to their own communities.

Savithri Auntie administered this program. During the orientation on the first day Savithriji spoke about her long association with The Gurukulam and Pujya Swamiji. She has been organizing the cultural programs for the Gurukulam for last twenty one years. She talked about her early days and Pujya Swamiji's invitation to be part of the Gurukulam. She told the students about her anxieties and worries about the programs and how she eventually overcame the problems. Today she is a very confident and experienced person thanks to her years of experience and Pujya Swamiji's continuous support.

The goal of the camp was to teach the students a method to organize programs especially for children and expose them to the Vedic culture and knowledge. Savithriji decided to put together a play based on one of the Mahabharata sequences. She selected the actors from the students who would play various roles in this play. Almost all the

students had some role to play. The teaching progressed in exposing the students to various aspects of this cultural event including planning, arranging the scenes, props, acting, directing, music and other techniques involved. The students were practicing several hours every day.

Because of the lack of time the actual play was not presented on the stage but the purpose to teach the students was well accomplished. All students were very happy at the end of this program.

The Carnatic Vocal Music Workshop was designed to facilitate the understanding and appreciation of Carnatic Music. Sri Maharajapuram S. Ramachandran is a renowned Carnatic Vocal Musician. Ramachandranji explained raga, bhava and tala aspects of the music with practical demonstrations. He answered several questions from the students during the camp.

Sri Ramachandranji presented a program based on music he taught during the camp. A group of children sang compositions they have been practicing during the camp including Pujya Swamiji's compositions. The children were very well prepared and performed nicely.

Suddhatmajji taught the chanting of the Shanti Mantras, Guru Vandanam, Sri Hanuman Calisa and the Kshama Parthian. The teaching was intense and stressed the technique as well as the meaning of the mantras. Suddhatmaji answered several questions from the students. The Chanting classes are very



much liked by the students and the students expressed hopes that the classes will continue at the Gurukulam for a long time in future.

The Kitchen Staff worked hard to serve good food. The food was served on time. Priests Sri Ravichandran and Sri Ganesa performed the pujas regularly.

It was a busy camp with variety of programs offered within a short framework of time. All the goals set for the programs were achieved. The general impression of the campers was that such camps should continue in future.

Pujya Swamiji answered all questions from the students during the camp. The satasangs with Pujya Swamiji were informative and enjoyable.

The retreat ended on August 17<sup>th</sup> 2012.

"Report by Arvind Bagat"