

Heroes of Humanity 2009: Celebrating Atlanta's Heroes

Atlanta: The Art of Living Foundation, the International Association for Human Values and Atlanta Unity hosted Heroes of Humanity, an event to acknowledge and award two local heroes, who exemplify the spirit of service through their dedication to uplifting human values in the community, on November 8, 2009 at Atlanta Unity Church in Norcross. Attended by over 300 people from distinct backgrounds, cultures and faiths, the event was a celebration of the human spirit with wisdom, music and meditation. Heroes of Humanity highlighted the Art of Living Foundation's initiative to create a "Violence Free, Stress Free America" through education and humanitarian service.

"Friendliness, compassion, love and caring – these human values are an integral part of every individual. The Art of Living Foundation is dedicated to work towards alleviating the effects of stress through simple and effective techniques that increase joy and enthusiasm in daily life," said Mona Shah-Joshi, Director of the Art of Living Foundation in Atlanta. The non-denominational Art of Living Foundation is one of the world's largest United Nations-accredited NGOs. It offers conflict resolution, trauma relief, breathing and meditation programs for individuals, communities, government, business, youth, prisons and other groups. Founded in 1982, the Art of Living Foundation has grown to become one of the world's largest U.N. NGOs with centers in 140 countries. The foundation and its volunteers work tirelessly in some of the most difficult areas of the world, such as Iraq, Kashmir and Sri Lanka, to find workable, peaceful and sustainable solutions to the cycle of violence and conflict. Through its stress management, trauma relief and self-development programs, the founda-

tion has had remarkable success in turning individuals away from violence and aggression.

In the United States, Art of Living Foundation and its sister organization, the International Association for Human Values (IAHV) are actively involved in offering highly effective stress man-



agement programs for returning war vets with PTSD, schools and universities throughout the United States and corporations including NASA and the World Bank. In Atlanta, Art of Living courses are offered at the Art of Living Center in Sandy Springs. Student organized Yoga, Service and Empowerment (YES!+) courses are offered at Emory University and Georgia Tech. Volunteer teachers have been teaching free trauma relief programs for Bhutanese refugees via IAHV's Refugee Self Empowerment and Integration Project.

"Traditionally, history has honored as heroes those who have come back valiant from war. Today, we honor heroes who embody the spirit of

selfless service," said Ms. Joshi. The Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Human Values Award, named in honor of spiritual leader and humanitarian Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, was presented to Dr. Eddie Morris and Mr. Ralph Parker.

Dr. Eddie Morris is the founder and president of Men of Destiny (MOD), a non-profit organization. MOD enhances the educational experiences of African-American children and currently has more than 435 members in four Georgia schools within two school systems. Dr. Morris also formed a Women of Destiny (WOD) at Bear Creek Middle School, where he currently serves as a social worker. Mr. Ralph Parker, has been working with refugees for over three decades. He started working with Russian refugees in the 80's during the Bosnia crisis. Mr. Parker has received Community Service Recognition for assisting the Clarkston fire victims in 2002, and has served on the Georgia Advisory Council for Refugee Resettlement since the last four years. Mr. Parker has been instrumental in establishing Refugee Emergency Funds at World Relief and Jewish Family Services. Currently, he is working with the Bhutanese refugees in Atlanta and is actively helping in raising funds for them.

Keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Lawrence Carter, first Dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel and professor at Morehouse Uni-

versity captivated the audience with inspirational stories about his heroes—Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Daisaku Ikeda—underscoring that while each hero practiced a different religion, they were united by their shared spiritual and philosophical influences. Atlanta's International Harmony Youth Choir, ages 6-18, sang songs of peace, love and harmony in various languages. Music Director, Joyce Ketchie Carr said, "Harmony embraces the belief that training culturally diverse children to perform together benefits the quality of life in our communities and in our world." Atlanta Unity Choir and Musicians Guild had everyone dancing in the aisles with an eclectic mix of contemporary pop songs, traditional gospel and ancient Sanskrit chants. All musical performers received a standing ovation with a roaring applause. "The melodies were fantastic and so heart warming. I was moved by the songs and the synchronization that resonated in my heart long after the event was over," exclaimed Dorota Niedzwiecki, an architect.

In honor of the event, Dekalb County CEO Burrell Ellis proclaimed November 8, 2009 "Art of Living Foundation Day" and "Atlanta Unity Day." District 2 Councilman Kwanaa Hall proclaimed the day "Heroes of Humanity Day." Atlanta Unity's Sr. Minister Rev. John Strickland was elated with the honor and said that he was extremely proud to be a part of such an extraordinary event, and to have his congregation join with the Art of Living Foundation to present these awards for giving back to the society. "The level of love, dedication and service offered by the Art of Living volunteers is an example to my church. I am deeply thankful to them for bringing to us this beautiful gift of love and blessing all of us," he summed up.

Shiv Mandir Of Atlanta Organizes Ping Pong Tournament

Atlanta: An invitational Ping Pong Tournament held on November 14th at the Global Mall, by Shiv Mandir of Atlanta was a grand success and attracted a large number of table tennis play-

ers from metro Atlanta. There were about 65 players of various rankings, nationalities and ages that included six female players as well.



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There were prize money for the first four places in the singles and doubles matches. All the winners also got trophies. The First and second place female players also got recognized by a trophy while the best child player also got a trophy.

The games were conducted by in the Round Robin format with the initial games being the best of five. The

scoring followed the international standards of games of eleven points. The finals between Petrov and Manas Reddy was something to be admired. The match concluded with a close win by Manas Reddy.

Even with minimal advertising, the response to the event was overwhelming. Shiv Mandir of Atlanta thanked all the participants through a press release issued here. "The support received in organizing this event from Mandir committee and especially from the volunteers like Satyabhaskar Velivela, Ravi Mekala, Prem Sharma is invaluable," said the release. "We didn't expect such overwhelming response to our first sporting event. We are delighted to provide our youth with an opportunity to show their talent and at the same time get them involved in Mandir activities," said a jubilant Surinder Dhar, President of the Shiv Mandir. He further added, "Based on the feedback from our youth members we are also planning to conduct a cricket tournament in spring next year."

Mr. Alok Gupta one of the coordinators, observed "To have a healthy personality; that is at once one with the spiritual world and the world we live in, Hinduism prescribes prayers, good & healthy food and a good dose of physical activity. So, a Mandir, while providing a venue for spirituality, should also endeavor to fulfill the other requirements for a healthy individual".

NKK Celebrates Rajyotsava

BY JYOTHSNA HEGDE

Atlanta: Kannada Rajyotsava which marks the formation of the state of Karnataka was celebrated by Nrupatunga Kannada Koota in Atlanta at the Hindu Temple, Riverdale on 7th November, 2009. In the state

clothes will be sent to Swami Ramakrishna – Vivekananda Ashram in Gadag, Karnataka for distribution and construction.

The festivities also included the Annual Scholarship of \$4000 from the Shanakri and late Narasimhiya Mutteri scholarship fund, established



of Karnataka, India Kannada Rajyotsava is celebrated on the 1st of November each year.

With roughly 400 attendees, local kids and parents presented a range of cultural items such as classical and contemporary group dances, song performances, skits, plays, Bharatnatyam and a glimpse of Mysore Dasara festival.

Kannada Koota also collected clothes in an effort to help flood victims of North Karnataka. Cash donations were also raised to build houses in areas devastated by heavy rains. The money and

by Drs. Annapurna & Subrahmanya Bhat. Ms. Akshata Shirahatti, a senior at North View High School, a truly well deserving candidate with innumerable accomplishments was the recipient of the award. NKK has been awarding qualified and competent graduating seniors for the past three years.

As always, the audience was treated to scrumptious dinner.

Nrupatunga Kannada Koota also runs three Kannada classes in different parts of metro Atlanta and maintains a library of Kannada books. It is involved in community activities such as "adopt a road" program in Alpharetta, Georgia. More information about NKK can be obtained at www.atlantakannada.org.