



Vishva Hindu Parishad of Australia Inc., WA Chapter

### **Bal Utsav- 23rd of April, 2017**

Vishva Hindu Parishad, WA organised their very first event this year, Bal Utsav- a celebration for children. It was a cultural workshop packed with loads of activities to nurture the young minds. The day started at 8:30 am in Mindarie Primary School, Rothesay Heights with registration of all attendees and volunteers.

The workshop started with nitya shloka chanting led by Akila ji followed by Yoga, meditation and pranayam. The mild asanas and deep breathing exercises really calmed the children. They had their morning snack of fruit and juice afterwards.

Traditional games and fun activities were organised for them which everyone thoroughly enjoyed including the parent volunteers. The activities included cricket and kho-kho amongst others. After that the children did some traditional patterns in Rangoli, which is an art form of making beautiful patterns on the floor with coloured sand. Some kids really displayed their talent by choosing difficult patterns. All age groups seemed to thoroughly enjoy this activity.

We then broke for scrumptious lunch after Rangoli. The children had a full Indian vegetarian meal and finger food. Post lunch, we had planned another art workshop for children. We made some beautiful clay Ganesha's and displayed them for later. This was followed by story-telling, in which interesting facts about the Hindu dharma were introduced to children. They were really enthralled by some of the information. This was followed by colouring activity related to story-telling and an informal quiz.

Then we split them in groups where they all had milk and biscuits for afternoon tea. Honourable Mayor from the Council of Wanneroo, Mrs. Tracey Roberts made her appearance towards the end of the workshop and interacted with the children at length. Children were encouraged to recap the whole day and their learning experiences to the gathering. There was a recital of the shloka's learnt earlier in the morning session and chanting of 'Om'. In her speech, the mayor mentioned how impressed she was to see such cultural workshops/ activities happening in her council and their positive impact on children and their families. Then the mayor signed the certificates of participation for each child and handed it to them on stage. Other than their experience on the day, the children also took home their clay Ganesha's, freebies and sweets.

It was a first children's workshop and a huge success with over 25 participants and 6 volunteers. The children wanted to know more about our next workshop and parents were keen to bring them back. The positive feedback from the parents and children has given us encouragement to have many more of these workshops in the future as well. A special word of thanks to City of Wanneroo, Mayor Tracey Roberts and Mindarie Primary School for supporting us. Also thanks to all the volunteers including Akila ji, Kaveeta, Pooja, Suchi, Mina and Saurabh who tirelessly worked with children throughout the day and made it so special.

