

Shishu Bharati Celebrates Indian Arts and Crafts Festival in Lexington, MA

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LEXINGTON, MA—Shishu Bharati last month celebrated Indian Arts and Crafts Festival in Lexington, MA, in which students participated in different types of arts and crafts: Toy guild, Jewelry art, Fabric art, Sculptures & Architectural design, Warli art, Rangoli creations, Clay creations, Paper crafts and Kite stringing.

Culture and artistic creativity manifests the attitudes, values, goals and practices of a nation. India is symbolized by the plurality of its culture. Indian art has been always influenced by its culture and religion. A strong sense of design is characteristic of Indian art and can be observed in its modern and traditional forms. Modern Indian art embraces urban, folk and tribal heritages.



Shishu Bharati aims to educate our Indian-American children of their heritage and culture. Last month, we at Shishu Bharati intended to introduce our students to unique art forms that begin at home. The art forms were inherited by the Indian artists and craftsmen from our ancestors. They are exotic and authentic as they preserve our cultural heritage. They are special since they are hand-made. They reside in rural India but still compete in the international markets.

This year in Lexington High School, we had a glimpse of these arts and crafts in the form of nine phenomenal booths – Toy guild, Jewelry art, Fabric art, Sculptures & Architectural design, Warli art, Rangoli creations, Clay creations, Paper crafts and Kite stringing. The booths in the festival showcased craft projects of our students, an array of artful creations and collections in the exhibits. Each booth had either live demonstrations by our parents and teachers or video clippings of the hand-made goods.

To engage and encourage our students, each booth was exclusively focused on various hands-on craft making activities. Each booth had plenty of give-a-ways to the children. Our 7th and 8th grade students volunteered for this event. Their help to guide and

control the younger children in the hands-on activities in every booth was very impressive. They also offered a helping hand in setting up the booths. A long list of volunteers worked tirelessly to make this event a great success.

The exhibits were well placed and the school premises were colorfully decorated. The welcome table was also decorated beautifully. Every art piece displayed on the table represented each booth. Program flyers and goodie bags were distributed to the incoming visitors.

Toy guild – There was a delightful collection of wooden and bamboo toys, very unique Indian games, regional toys, mask and puppets made by our students. Children made toy fans, button springs, cloth / stick dolls, toy vehicles etc. These invaluable and inexpensive toys did rekindle the memories of many parents as well.

Jewelry art – This booth had an extensive collection of Indian jewelry made with different materials and designs namely, silver, temple, terracotta, Polki, Meenakari, Kundan, stone and bead works. There were also displays of tribal jewelry, jewelry for each gender, jewelry for all parts of the body and project displays of our students. Children were fascinated to make their own terracotta, beads and cork necklaces and collect glitter henna tattoos. Many men were thinking of their wallet upon viewing such a large show of jewelry.

Fabric art – Colorful handloom fabrics from silk to cotton were on display. Embroidery, bead work, stone work, fabric printing, dyeing, chikankari work and wool kitting was either used as demonstration, display or hands-on activity. Children enjoyed making block printed handkerchiefs, fabric flower hair pins and coat pins. Children had an opportunity to use unique Indian design and pattern blocks used by the weavers in the small scale industries, to make block printed handkerchiefs.

Sculpture & Architectural design – Here, our student's art projects on Indian monuments and a variety of sculptures were on display. Children participated in quizzes on monuments & regional sculptures, making sand Taj Mahal and monument stenciling. It was fun and equally educational.

Warli art – There was a huge collection of paintings done by our kindergarten students and project poster boards on display. Since this tribal art is a form of a mural painting, the children had a remarkable opportunity to draw on a huge canvas wall. They were asked to register their thoughts and ideas on the wall in the form of painting. It was a huge hit.

Rangoli creations – Children and parents were drawn to this colorful booth. Water rangoli, flower rangoli, rangoli with grains & millets were some of the highlights. Stringing rangoli patterns with rice flour and white sand were demonstrated by parents and teachers. Children made and painted many rangoli patterns both simple and complex. Many patterns were given away to practice at home.

Clay creations – Plenty of clay diyas done and painted by our kindergarten students were on display. A variety of hands-on activities were done with play dough that includes making clay Ganesha. Children crowded the booth to make a variety of clay creations which they did take home.

Paper craft – This booth was very popular. It showcased, newspaper roll art, paper lanterns done by our kindergarteners, Nehru hats done by our culture teachers and Asura masks done by our 4th graders. Children indulged in making origami crafts, Kathakali Krishna masks, crowns, arm bands, festive houses and lanterns. Paper craft offered to teach & learn and trigger the creativity of the children.

Kite stringing – Children swarmed this booth since attractive kites were given away here. Both boys and girls wanted to learn to string them and take them home. Stringing of kites was demonstrated non-stop by parents and teachers during the whole two hour event.

The skills of the exhibitors, the awesome teamwork by our students, the tremendous effort of the volunteers, parents and teachers as well as guidance and support by the Shishu Bharati committee members were recognized by Special programs coordinator, Anuradha Balasubramanian, in the Vote of Thanks, which was well appreciated with a loud applause.

We had singing and dancing as well. Some parents sung during the event. We concluded the event with Dandiya dancing by our Shishu Bharati community. The event was a huge success and we made some remarkable memories. At the end of the day, the unequivocal thought one was left with was when we will experience this again!