



City Of Ryde Harmony Festival 2006

City of Ryde celebrated Harmony Day on 11th March with gusto at Ryde Public School. This year the Festival was organised and managed through the Ryde Community Harmony Reference Group. This Group is chaired by the Mayor of City of Ryde was formed in November 2004 to promote local community harmony and comprises of twelve local representatives from multicultural backgrounds and six Councilors. The Group is focused on sending a message of a cohesive harmonious multicultural society in Ryde and promotes mutual respect and an understanding of cultural diversity. With this objective the City of Ryde festival working committee set the scene for an international sports and activity day to foster community harmony and well being through healthy life style, inviting Ryde community and their friends to come along to this fun event where there was something of interest to engage all ages.

The Working Committee chose and presented five communities as their Showcase (3 growing communities in Ryde - Indian, Armenian and Korean and 2 established communities - Chinese and Italian) in the festival. The event entailed school children to participate in each other communities' activities, so they can have a better understanding of each other and to promote multi-cultures. The activities included Migrant Information Expo, cultural music and dances, food and sports: Kabaddi, Tae Kwon Do, Tai Chi, Gasing and Bocce. A Bollywood Movie 'Kal Ho Na Ho" was shown in Ryde Lower Oval on 10th March at sunset in conjunction with the Harmony Festival.

The students from Holy Cross College, Marsden High School, Riverside Girls High School and Ryde Secondary College interviewed the representatives of each of the five communities, on migration and community harmony themes and to highlight the ethnic migration in City of Ryde. It was an experience for them to realise that every first migrant generation has suffered plenty of hardship and basically every one strives for similar values, happiness and joy. The students showcased their hard worked projects in the festival with big smiles and great pride.

Indian community is amongst the fast growing communities in Ryde. As a representative on the Council's Community Harmony Reference Group Committee, I had the privilege to organize Indian activities for their festival including sports, cultural and food stall.

Many of our India Club members took active part in this festival. Jay Raman ji looked after the Indian food stall providing delicious hot food including Masal Dosa, Vada, Idli - Sambhar, Chana Bhatara, cooked fresh over there. Preeti Lulla said with great admiration and a big smile that the delicious smell of Dosa was floating in the Westfield car park and attracting people. Nita Tanna and Gillian Patankar took cultural items under their wings.



The dancers and singers in beautiful colourful costumes performed with vigour and splashed their joy on to the audience. Gillian Patankar and her friends also taught children and Parents simple meditation technique to enhance concentration and study .

Harmohan Singh Walia provided Kabaddi contacts. The Kabaddi team under supervision of Mehnga Singh displayed delightful Kabaddi games. It was fun to watch Kabaddi players playing Tai Chi and vice versa complimenting theme of the festival.

Additionally there were Indonesian, Italian, Chinese, Armenian, Palestinian and Srilankan activities, food, cultural items and games. It was a real treat for every one to enjoy.

Children attending the festival received a Harmony Festival passport. They were encouraged to try, watch or participate in an activity unique to each group and get their passports stamped by all the groups to qualify to receive a show bag full of healthy gifts. It was fun, educational and an exciting day for all. The Harmony reference group and the Working Committee members were smiling with content and deserve full marks for this display of great team work, harmony and joy.

Shubha Kumar
President India Club