

Youth Camp, 2010 Baltimore, MD-USA

Sunday July 11th 2010

Afternoon:

- Camp started with the opening ceremony. Introduction of each Shantikunj saint including Dr. Saheb was done by the youth team.
- People from all over: Group 1: 50 students, Group 2: 75 students and Group 3: 60
- Participants hailed from all parts of the world: UK, Canada, US (west coast, east coast, Midwest)
- All camp participants were given a folder complete with the camp schedule (based on age group), rules of conduct, and other handouts. They were also given a camp t-shirt, a camp tote bag, and a camp water bottle.

Monday July 12th 2010

Morning Session: Thought Transformation

- Group One: Thought Transformation lecture by Parth Patel in which he discussed how our thoughts can be both good or bad and like a rock falling into a pond and sending waves rippling outward so too do our thoughts ripple outward from us and affect other people.
- Group Two: Thought Transformation Lecture – Vartika Sharma & Shivi Chandra. Shivi made an interesting point during this lecture about how Adolf Hitler had great power to transform others' thoughts, but he unfortunately used that power for negative ends to the detriment of the whole world.
- Group Three: Thought Transformation Lecture – Mitesh Kapadia and Prof Bhatnargarji. Mitesh spoke about how thought transformation is the process of consciously and willingly transforming our thoughts towards higher ideas. He emphasized that change happens naturally but transformation needs work to happen.

Afternoon session

- Group Two & Three Activity; Creative Building – Teams worked together to put together physical representations of different emotional/intellectual transformations: hate into love, chaos into unity, holding on into letting go, and sadness into happiness. The teams were each given a set of materials and supplies which they had to utilize every bit of to construct dioramas depicting the transformation of each team's choice. The results were highly unique.
- Experiential Session; Dr. Sanon spoke about his personal experiences with Dr. Pranav Pandya. In particular he spoke about his close friendship with Dr. Saheb and also of his humility. Dr. Sanon likened his relationship to Dr. Saheb as similar to the relationship between Krishna and Arjun where Krishna acted as both a mentor and a friend to Arjun. Dr. Sanon also told the story of how his wife one day fell ill and was subsequently cured after staying in the 'operational theater' of Gargi.

- The evening was spent conversing and getting to know one another as this was the conclusion of the first full day of camp.

Tuesday July 13th, 2010

Morning Session: Global Warming

- All groups learned about the impending threat posed by global warming to our surrounding environment, plant and animal life, and even our own lives. Pragna Auntie spoke at length about how she grew up in Uganda as a little girl and had the pleasure of experiencing nature in its purest form. She spoke of how lush, green environments like that are becoming scarcer and scarcer. She posed a question to the youth asking how we would wish for our children to be able to experience the world: as a polluted mess or a lush garden.
- Group Two; Akta Patel conducted this session in which she highlighted the key points behind global warming and also how the earth and nature are highly integrated with our faith and culture in India. The group two kids also had an activity where they were taught to build solar cookers.
- Picnic: The picnic was conducted at a beautiful lakeside park a few miles away from the camp location. The youth played a lot of sports with the shantikunj saints. An interesting event that happened at the picnic was a new participant of the camp – Nita Singh – she almost stepped on the snake but was saved before she put her foot down. Professor Bhatnargarji & Dr Dutta explained that it was a new birth.
- Experiential Session in the evening – RajKumarBhai spoke about the power of Gurudev and how he could see the power of past, present, & future in everyone. This is how he was selected to sacrifice his life and influence others with the mission ideals. He also talked about the pure love that Mataji had given.
- Movie night – Group 1 watched Kung Fu Panda. Group 2 and 3 watched The Great Debators.

Wednesday July 14th 2010

Morning – Revolution in Education:

- Group 1: Nrupaliben talked about Shiksha & Vidhya through the story which the kids could relate and understand the concept. The story talks about how values make a difference in any profession. Selvi Chhabra from NY stated “the doctor should be committed to his profession by adding values.”
- Group 2: Sangeeta Singh from NC. Learned similar content and how DSVV is the model and in combining Shiksha & Vidhya. Their activity was to design a school system and which the lectures could add to values to the Vidhya.

- Group 3: Shivi Chandra from NJ. Learned about self-reliance, creativity, talent, responsibility, and moral values.

Adults:

- Professor Bhatangarji talked about Apne Ang Avayavo Se and Sat Sankalp.

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Afternoon Session:

- Group 1: Cultural program practice for the last day for each of the topic that they learned.
- Group 2 & 3: Speech competition – Topics were:
 - 1) Public Address:
 - Inaugural speech to the public demonstrating future tasks, showing country pride, maintaining citizen hopes and dreams (PICK ANY PRESIDENT and TIME PERIOD)
 - 2) Retrospective Speech:
 - Speech given as a way of remembering the life and accomplishments of a person. (PICK ANY HUMAN BEING AND DESCRIBE HIS LIFE)
 - 3) Acceptance Speech:
 - Thank-you speech after winning an award; who would you thank? Why? Talk about future goals (PICK ANY TYPE OF AWARD)
 - 4) Public Address (commencement):
 - Speech made at graduation explaining the challenges the students been through, the paths you crossed, and the future ahead. (PICK ANY GRADE LEVEL)
 - 5) Welcome Speech:
 - Speech made at the beginning of a ceremony/event to welcome guests and talk about reasons for the opening, challenges experienced, and future aspirations. (PICK ANY TYPE OF LOCATION OR EVENT)
- Each essay had to include these words: SOUL, TRANSFORM, SELF-DISCIPLINE, ENLIGHTENMENT
- The speeches were very informative and in only an hour they came up with very inspiring speeches. These topics were chosen because they can easily applied to one's life using what they learnt during topic sessions.

Evening sessions:

- Experiential sessions: Omakarbhaji said that while he was on India tours, he was saved many times by really bad accidents and never lost faith in the accidents that had occurred. Gurudev, Mataji, Jiji, & Dr Sahab treated him like he was part of their own family.
- Evening shows was concluded with the cultural programs. There were various dances from all over India which was enjoyable.

Thursday, July 15th 2010

Morning – Interreligious Harmony

- Group 1: Nivea Kothari from NY & Bharka Patel from NJ. Learned about various religions. Activity consisted of matching up the symbols for the religions that was taught.
- Group 2: Arti Bhatt from CA & Parth Mangrola from IL. Learned about the definition of religion and various aspect of the religions, and what brings the religions together which is love, prayer, non-violence, and honesty. Dr Datta talked about the storied about SwamiVivekAnand talked about how love brings us together.
- Group 3: Vartika Sharma from Canada the content from Group 2 was very similar. They also had done a skit about how people are stereotyped and how you can solve these issues.

Morning – Composite Health

- Group 1: Krishna Patel from NJ. Learned about the four wellbeings (social, physical, mental, & spiritual). The activity they played is Bingo using the definitions of the Upasana, Sadhana, & Ardhana.
- Group 2: Arti Bhatt from CA & Parth Mangrola from IL. Learned about the four wellbeings (social, physical, mental, & spiritual). The activity they played was about Ayurvedic medicines to teach them about which disease can be treated.
- Group 3: Mitesh Kapadia from NY. Learned about the four wellbeings (social, physical, mental, & spiritual). The activity that they had to do was decide where they were in the four wellbeings in their present lives and where they want to go and how they would get there.

Afternoon Sessions

- Prof Bhatangarji explained about Deesksha was explained to group 2 and 3 so that they can decide to take deeksha in the evening session. It was requested that Ad. Dr Pandya would do Gayatri Mantra during the live session at 8 pm.
- Debate Topics:
 1. Is it reasonable for all people to expect to become **leaders** or must some people always remain **followers**?
 2. When learning to ride a bike a child must eventually ride free of their parent's protective grasp and pedal on their own. When we get older, a similar break must occur between the two, but should the decision to **let go** lie with the child or with the parents?
 3. Does the advent and progression of the internet/technology eliminate the need for reliance on the physical presence of others? (for emotional and intellectual growth)

4. If in the next 100 years the membership of the Gayatri Pariwar (as a percentage of total world population) remains roughly unchanged, then can we consider the mission a success or failure?

Debate number 2 was conducted in this session. Both sides had great arguments to support each side. On one side the kids said that parents have been children too and they don't want us to make mistakes that they have made so that parents should decide when children can *Let go*. They said that knowledge can be learnt at any age but wisdom comes with experience so parents decide the child is independent. We call Goddess Gayatri "ma" because mothers know what is best for their kids. The other side spoke about Bhagat Singh who let go or Gurudev who let go from his family when he was young for a greater cause!