

WestCoastNewsline

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A school which shapes tomorrow's citizens

SAM RAO

Fremont, Calif.

THE distinctive yellow and blue motif greets dozens of kids as they enter Genius Kids Inc — an after-school program in North Fremont. The children, aged between 3 and 5 years old, file in, waving to their parents.

You might suppose there'll be tearful good-byes, some cajoling and comforting on the part of parents.

But no — far from it. Rather, one cannot miss the excitement and purposefulness in the little strides as the kids enter the classroom.

When teacher Jessica and proprietor and founder Rennu Dhillon greet them, they chant good morning with great enthusiasm. Already a three-year-old, has misplaced her book, en route to her chair. The teacher points patiently to it, while Ms Dhillon makes sure that the child fetches it herself.

Thus begins another day at Genius Kids Inc — an after-school-program which has made quite a mark for itself in the Bay area and received kudos from both parents and local school officials.

Established in 1999, Genius Kids is a "learning and enrichment program" for kids. The school's curriculum is oriented towards the creation of confident children and "successful and well rounded citizens" as Ms Dhillon calls them.

Activities ranging from an innovative reading program to public speaking and performance within a framework that incorporates fun and discipline.

"Genius Kids functions like a local district



Genius Kids doesn't just teach reading, writing and arithmetic. It believes in shaping successful and well-rounded citizens.

school and "is definitely not a daycare center" asserts Dhillon.

Dhillon put together the Genius Kids reading program over the course of seven years. "It took me 7 years to put the curriculum together, from the time we started out. Genius Kids now has a 4,000 sq ft campus, with its own teaching methodology."

"I have now managed to save some money. With the curriculum and system being accepted and established, I am ready to expand aggressively. We will first set up branches in Fremont, Cupertino and San Ramon, then the East Coast. We also have plans to expand to Singapore, Africa and India within the next

few years."

The founder-proprietor shrugs impatiently when asked if her plans are too ambitious. "I will be pursuing a licensee-franchise model. The good word about the school has spread and we have already received expressions of interest. We have an accelerated learning and enrichment program. It's not a school but a pre-school that prepares children to be well-rounded personalities along with teaching reading, writing and arithmetic."

The teaching philosophy is simple — child-friendly. Genius Kids determines the methods that are the most conducive for child learning and works with these.

Genius Kids has recently launched an innovative online multimedia reading program available at www.geniuskidsonline.com. The program has been designed and conceptualized by Dhillon. The website was developed in Pune. This animated learning program is available to anyone who has access to a computer and an internet connection.

Dhillon rattles off the success stories. Rahul Joshi, now 6 years old, was selected for the Advanced Mathematics program in Stanford University after scoring a 100% in his entrance exam. Sriuthi Ravishnkar, also 6 years old, could read a newspaper at the age of three years after completing the Genius Kids reading program.

Abhishek Khare has been placed in a special scholarship program in Austin, Texas. The YOUNGster is now working on a funded research paper about the movement of continent of Australia as it was formed.

So popular is the program, that there is a long list of Indian-American and Asian parents, waiting to admit their kids. Some Indian-American parents have even moved into the neighborhood in order to admit their kids to Genius Kids.

Dhillon has recently hired a Chinese American Math major and a Vietnamese American among her staff. She is aided by husband Gill who looks after the business end, and daughter Shana and Sheena, who pitching in to conduct key programs.

"We are all born geniuses, it all depends on how you exercise and use your brain," says Dhillon with a smile, as peals of laughter resound from the classrooms where kids are going through their laughter yoga session.

Kirtans and langar to observe Guru Gobind Singh's birthday

SNIGDHA DWIVEDI

Buena Park, Calif

THE 340th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and last Sikh Guru, was celebrated at Buena Park Gurudwara in Orange County, California, on Friday.

Over 900 people attended the celebrations, also known as Prakash Utsav, at the Gurudwara, which is one of the largest in the area. The ceremony began at seven in the evening and wound up around ten pm.

The evening began with *katha* or religious discourse for devotees. This was followed by a round of *kirtan* by Ranjeet Singh, a renowned music teacher.

A group of women called the Bibiya da Jatha and some children also sang *kirtans*. Hajoori Raagi Ajeet Singh, who performs regularly at the Gurudwara, performed the last round of kirtans.

The evening came to an end with *ardaas* and the distribution of *prasad*.

This was followed by a huge, traditional langar where guests were served food, administered with help from volunteers.

The gurudwara which was constructed about 8 years ago, has a large hall which can accommodate around 900-1000 people.

It runs a Punjabi school on Sundays where the language is taught to around 175 students. Kirtan classes are also regularly organized.



The gurudwara at Buena Park in Orange County, California.

Garba contest to raise funds for Indian charity body

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

LOS ANGELES, CA

THE Indian Sub-Continental Club (ISC) at UC Irvine will hold the fifth annual inter-collegiate Garba-Raas contest titled *Garba With Attitude*, at California State University, Los Angeles, on February 10.

The event will be held at the prestigious Harriet and Charles Luckman Fine Arts Complex in California, and host the nation's ten best teams to compete for \$3,500 in cash prizes, according to a press release.

In the past, *Garba With Attitude* has raised over \$10,000 for various charities. This year, all proceeds from the contest will be donated to Phoenix Relief, a charity whose objective is to provide medical treatment for people living in India's underdeveloped regions.

This year, the participating teams include Boston University, Cornell University, Michigan State University, Northwestern University, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Texas at Austin, University of California, Berkeley, University of California, Irvine, University of California, Los Angeles.

The winner of the contest will advance to a higher level competition called *Best of the Best in Chicago* — a competition among the winners of select Garba, Hindi Film Dance, and Bhangra competitions, the release said.

The Indian Sub-Continental Club, founded in 1985, is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to unite various communities through mutual respect, understanding, friendship, and cultural awareness.