

AID Conference 2004

Report on Cultural Sessions

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Poetry and Cultural Sessions at AID, Austin Conference:

Every year, as the conference sessions go on from 9 am in the morning to 9 p.m in the evening with little breaks for tea, lunch and dinner, it becomes mandatory that there is some room for recreation for the volunteers so that the motivation levels of the ever motivated AID volunteers remain always high. Hence, every year, AID conference always witnesses recreational events at the end of the day. And this year was no different. What made the AID, Austin conference's cultural sessions different was the type of cultural events that were held and the unique way the volunteers were involved. For the first time in the history of AID conference, a "POETRY AND SHAYARI" session was introduced. This was the result of the AID POetry and Shayari group that was formed almost an year back when some AID volunteers from different chapters came together to share their interests in poetry. They felt that, AID should be diverse in nature to keep itself ever vibrant. This group not only thrived but also attracted many volunteers which was clearly evident from the grand success of the poetry event during the AID, Austin conference. Volunteers from different chapters recited poems in English, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu and Telugu which was yet another glorious glimpse of Cultural Diversity that India and AID portrays to the whole world. If some poems reminded of our responsibilities towards society, then there were shayaris that took the audience into the land of romance. If some recited the poems of great poets that walked on this earth, some displayed their poetic talents by reciting their self created poems. The event that was supposed to be for 1 hour continued with full spirit for three and a half hours.

The second day was the day of cultural events. Put in simple words, this event left a permanent impression in the minds of the attendees. The event included skits, film songs, folk songs, songs in Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu which again was a magnificent display of unity within diversity. The event started with splendid skits put forward by the AID chapters of John Hopkins University (JHU) and Austin. Soon after the skits were over, the stage was gently thrown open to the display of talents by the volunteers. Once again, AID Austin volunteers showed that not only they are enthusiastic, vibrant, motivated, not only they are committed and serious, but they are extremely talented too. AID Austin volunteers set the ball rolling with their musical talents by singing hindi and tamil songs. When one chapter displays such an energy, can the other chapters be behind. Soon, the whole auditorium was a witness to some magical talents from different chapters. While a volunteer from AID, Maryland sung a Telugu Folk Song, another volunteer from JHU mesmerized the audience with "Kabir Ke Dohe". And then there was this volunteer who got the audience dancing with his punjabi songs. Once again, an event that was slated to be for 1 hour, went on with full spirit and energy showed by volunteers from different chapters, for full 5 hours.

At the end, there were two thoughts in the minds of the volunteers : "This has been the best conference ever"... " Wish this conference lasted a little longer". And thus the memorial day weekend will remain as a sweet memory in every AID volunteer's mind.