

2011 Agrawal Association of America
Summer Youth Camp
August 12th – 14th
Camp Cho-Yeh -Livingston, TX

This summer, 45 kids and counselors made the trip to Camp Cho-Yeh in Livingston, TX, to participate in the 5th Agrawal Association of America Youth Camp. The camp attendance set a new record and helped make this year's event the most successful to date. The success was made possible by the enthusiasm and energy of each and every participant.

The fun-filled weekend began Friday evening with a series of games to help break the ice. The games were geared to help each camper become more comfortable in their new surrounding and to build and establish new friendships. The kids were treated to Subway sandwiches, chips, and cookies graciously donated by D.V. Subway prior to playing the introductory games. After the light meal, kids jumped, crawled, hugged, yelled, and laughed as the ice-breakers created not only pandemonium but also a strong bond amongst the campers. It was safe to say, camp had started off with a bang! The group was lucky to have members representing the Houston, Dallas, and Monroe (Louisiana) Agrawal communities. After the ice-breakers, all campers retreated back to their cabins where they rested, anxiously waiting for the activity-filled Saturday.

Saturday morning began bright and early as all youth members were led by yoga instructors Shekhar and Hari Agrawal. The kids contorted their bodies while controlling their breathing as they were taught how to perform various asanas and breathing exercises. The positions ranged from simple, beginner levels to more difficult, advanced levels of yoga. After a great morning workout, the kids refueled themselves with a full breakfast before heading to the morning activity session.

The morning activity session started with a staple of all Agrawal Youth Camps - the ropes course. Both younger and older youth members took to the sky as they overcame physical and mental obstacles to conquer Camp Cho-Yeh. The younger campers took to the 3-element zip-line, where kids as young as 6 tight-rope 25 ft high in the air. Upon completion of one of the three elements, each young camper had the opportunity to zip-line 100 ft through the scenic forest grounds of camp Cho-Yeh. About 100 yards away, the older campers took on a more intense challenge at the Cho-Yeh pamper-pole. The older campers had to scale a 30 ft vertical log, balance themselves on top of the pole, and jump to the trapeze bar several feet away. Although the rope courses were very challenging, each camper was able to overcome their fears through encouragement from new friends and take their bodies and minds to completely new levels.

The morning session concluded with a dip in Lake Evelyn. The campers took turns zip-lining, sliding, climbing onto inflatable water-toys, and "blobbing" one other to cool off from the blistering Texas summer heat. Kids were highly entertained as they flew off the slippery-slide, soared off the "blob," and glided down the zip-line into the lake. It was a perfect finish to an intense morning, leaving each camper anxious for the afternoon activities.

After lunch, the campers were issued free time to relax and freshen up. Some kids took this opportunity to play basketball, volleyball, and Frisbee while others caught up on their sleep and choose to relax in their cabins. By 3:30 pm, all campers were ready to go for the afternoon activity session. The younger campers were led by camp staff to the archery and wrist-rocket range where they were taught how to shoot and aim at targets near and far. By the end of the session, each young camper had brought out their "inner Krishna" as many pierced through the targets with both precision and accuracy. At the same time, the older campers took to the battlefield where they competed in 9-on-9 paintball. For many, this was a new experience. The thrill and adrenaline rush filled each trooper as they worked strategically to take out members of the opposing side. As always, everyone was safe, and some were left with small "battle-scars" from where they were "splattered" by paint! The afternoon activities helped strengthen the bond amongst each camper as evident in their high sense of Baniya pride and camaraderie.

As the sun started to set, the campers ate dinner and shared stories of their accomplishments from the various activities throughout the day. After dinner, everyone sat down in one of the main cabins to learn about the values and meaning of being Agrawal. The mini-lecture stressed the importance of helping one

another to overcome life's obstacles. The lecture ended with a friendly camp competition amongst those who exemplified the camp's mission to promote encouragement and compassion. Nine campers (three young, three old, and three counselors) lined up in a row and shoved one jumbo marshmallow after another into their mouths while screaming "CHUUBBY BUNNNY!!!"

To finish off the night, the campers made the ½ mile trek deep into the woods to a secluded campfire site. Under a full moon, campers shared scary stories while munching on homemade s'mores. Many small children closed their eyes and covered their ears as counselors shared scary campfire stories. Even though none of the stories were real, many campers were frightened and decided to retreat back to their cabins. Being the final night of camp, no one wanted to sleep. As a result, a mini-war ensued between the boys and girls cabin as each spent the rest of the night trying to pull pranks on one another.

Sunday morning, campers put on their yellow 'Wal-Street – Baniyas Never Sleep' camp T-shirts and posed for group pictures before heading back to their respective homes. In the end, the camp provided new life-long memories - none of which would be possible without the generous support and sponsorship from the Agrawal community and the Agrawal Association of America Board. We hope that the camp continues to grow and prosper and touch the lives of our Agrawal youth and community. We look forward to seeing everyone again at next year's camp!

Thank You,
Agrawal Association of America Youth Board

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