



CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ

CMSD QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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The first two months of this quarter was all about celebrations at our āśrama. From New Year to the Nineteenth anniversary of CMSD and from Tyāgarāja Ārādhana to Śivarātrī, it was sheer joy throughout. In the month of March, as the world was gripped with Covid-19 pandemic, CMSD responded with prayers, E-Vihar for Bala Vihar, adult sessions and all study groups.



THE MASTER SPEAKS

The Universe is a cosmos and not a chaos. There exists a scientific law; a rhythm of mental relationship in which the world is held together in one web of love.



CMSD celebrates 19 magnificent years!

This year marked CMSD's 19th Anniversary and it was celebrated in a grand way on Sunday, 26 January, 2020. With Pranava Nilayam filled with the vibrations from the chanting of the *Gurustrotram*, the anniversary celebrations commenced by ceremonious lighting of the Chinmaya Jyoti lamp by **Śrī Bose Babu**, a senior member of Chinmaya Mission. Lakshmi aunty shared the significance of establishing a Chinmaya Mission center in San Diego followed by CMSD's history since 2001. Aunty took us down the memory lane and shared the journey of CMSD hosting Sunday sessions at a local temple, UCSD, Copy Club West offices, JCC and now at our own Chinmaya Jyoti āśrama since 2013. Sukumar uncle presented CMSD's goals for the upcoming years and gave us a glimpse of Chinmaya Jyoti phase 2. Nikhil Varaiya, a long-time member and CMSD's treasurer, promoted the different ways in which the members can contribute their time and money for the future of our children and the community, via monthly and yearly pledges.



Vande Bhārata Mātaram - Presentation by Bala Vihar Children

This year, January 26th also marked India's 70th Republic day. What better way to pay tribute to Mother India, than with the Bala Vihar children celebrating the many exemplary Mothers that *Bhārata Mātā* has offered to the world.



Pallavi Kulkarni shares "It was a wonderful opportunity to pay our tribute to Mother India and her illustrious son- Pujya Gurudev. It was overwhelming to see Bala Vihar children glorifying *Bhārata Mātā* as she is the one who gave us all these great mothers, our ideals in life."

The program started off by hoisting the US and the Indian flags and their national anthems. There was a beautiful presentation of the Chinmaya Bala Vihar song by Chinmaya Dhvani youth choir.

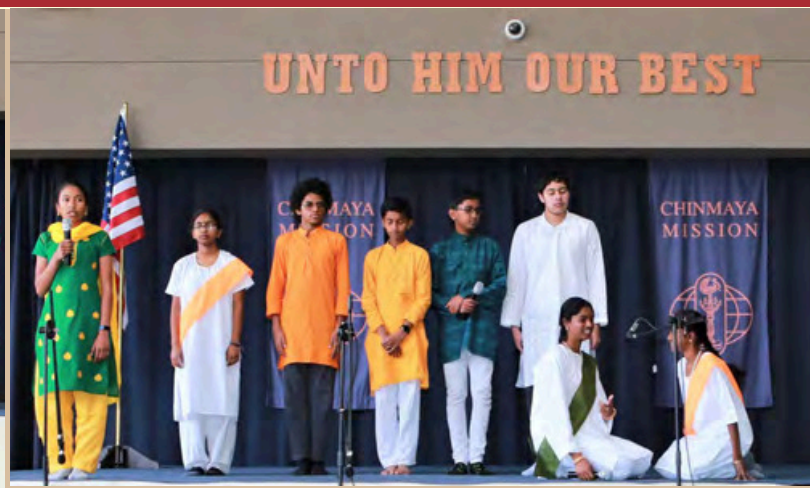




Amarnath Puttur felt that "The beautiful collection of songs sung by Chinmaya Svaranjali and Chinmaya Dhvani were heartwarming."

We were then immersed into the presentations on Mother Earth, three Mother Goddesses Mother Cow, Mother *Pārvaṭī*, Mother *Kausalyā*, Mother *Sītā*, Mother *Suruci*, Mother *Guru* and Mother *Śruti*, Mother *Sumitrā*, Mother *Kuntī*, Mother *Gaṅgā*, Mother *Gītā*, and finally *Bhārata Mātā*.





Lalitha Kumar shared "Each Balavihar class, starting from Pre-K through the high school, showcased the great mothers produced by *Bhārata Mātā* as it relates to their syllabus interspersed with verses from *māṭṛstavanam* by Svaranjali."

Dev Babla, Grade 7, "enjoyed seeing all the mothers' honored through the presentations by the Bala Vihar children."





The celebration concluded with a sumptuous feast of delicacies from different regions of India, served to the members by the Annapurna team.

-Hetal Babla





Welcome 2020! - New Year Celebrations

An auspicious start to 2020 the Chinmaya way – with *Śrī Gaṇeśa pūjā*, *Guru pādūkā pūjā* and *Śrī Viṣṇusahasranāmam pārayaṇā* in Pranava Nilayam at Chinmaya Jyoti. The special communicator had New Year messages from Pujya Gurudev and Mukhya Swamiji. The newly arrived *Kāmākṣī* lamps from India were inaugurated for the *Viṣṇusahasranāmam pārayaṇā* this morning. After *pūjā* and offering to the 3 deities, we sang devotional bhajans in praise of Lord *Viṣṇu* and Lord *Śiva*. The celebration would not be complete without dear Guruji's composition, '*kṣaṇam pratikṣaṇam yannavam navam*'. **Sahanav Ramesh**, Grade 6, offered a well memorized and spontaneous rendition of the *Kṛti* '*Jayati Jayati Bhārata mātā*', almost like a prelude to our upcoming 19th Anniversary theme '*Vande Bhārata Mātaram*'. We concluded with *ārati* and distribution of *prasāda*. A beautiful start to 2020!

-Lalitha Kumar





Tyāgarāja Ārādhana on January 15, 2020

Saint *Tyāgarāja* is considered one of the greatest musical maestros among the Carnatic music composers of South India. He attained Samadhi in Tiruvaiyaru and the *Tyāgarāja Ārādhana* is observed on the day of his *Samādhi*. Rendering of the compositions of the great Saint is a way for the musicians to honor the maestro and also the tradition of Carnatic music. Chinmaya Mission San Diego hosted the Sixth Annual *Tyāgarāja Ārādhana* on the evening of January 15, 2020. The musical celebration featured many local professional musicians paying their homage to Saint *Tyāgarāja*.

The event started with *pūjā* of the presiding deity *Śri Jyoti Vināyaka*. *Aṣṭottara nāmāvali pūjā* of Saint *Tyāgarāja* was performed by Lakshmi Aunty. The stage was set for the musical tribute when Nagesh Nookala recounted the life and works of the devout saint.





Aditi Puttur (CMSD CHYK) presented *kṛti*-s in praise of Lord Gaṇeśa and Guru : śrī gaṇapatini in *rāgam sourāśtram* and *ādi tālam*, *guruleka eṭuvaṇṭi* in *rāgam govrimanoharī* and *tālam khanda chāpu*.

This was followed by the traditional renditions of the *Pañcaratna kṛti*-s, the five gems of *Tyāgarāja*, - *jagadānanda kāraka*, *duḍuku gala nanne dora*, *sādhīñcane o manasā*, *kana kana rucirā*, and *endaro mahānubhāvulu*. On vocals were Subbu Iyer, Lakshmi Appachar, Tarun Rathithra (UCSD), Shubha Bhaskaran (UCSD), Aditi Puttur (UCB) and Keerthana Viswanathan. They were superbly accompanied on the flute by Radhakrishnan Radhachandran, on the violin by Suresh Krishnamurthy and on the *mṛidangam* by Vignesh Ramasubramanian.

There were individual offerings by CMSD Swaranjali Choir members - Sowmian Rangarajan presented *raghunāyaka* and Sai Sree performed *sāmajavaragamana*. In addition, Vignesh Nydhruva presented *Geetārthamu* on the violin and Tarun Rathithra *mārubalka* on vocals. Praṇava Nilayam was filled with the Saint's melodious compositions and divinity for several hours.



The presentation concluded with *mangalam*. It was truly a divine and blessed opportunity for everyone to revel in the music of the greatest maestro *Tyāgarāja*, with the devoted voices and instruments reverberating in harmony through the hall.

-Ashwin Mohan

Below are some reflections from CMSD members

This was the first time I witnessed a *Tyāgarāja Ārādhana Mahotsavam*. And it being at Chinmaya mission, it was an immense pleasure for the music lover in me. The warmth of the beautiful compositions by Saint *Tyāgarāja*, rendered by admirable musicians, failed the biting cold weather. My favorite was "*sādhīñcane o manasā!*" The *rāgam* was rendered so beautifully, it transported me into a realm of bliss. I am also very grateful for the opportunity I was blessed with, to offer a *kṛti*, *sāmajavaragamana* composed by Saint *Tyāgarāja* in *Hindola rāgam*, at His altar. Looking forward to many more ever-welcoming-days of joy with Chinmaya mission.

-Sai Sreelakshmi



The *Tyāgarāja Ārādhana* celebrations at the Ashram were truly a divine experience. It was blissful to immerse self in the *Pañcaratna kṛti*-s and it was a blessing to also offer a *kṛti* composed by the great Saint on this auspicious day.

-Sowmian Rangarajan



Sowmian Rangarajan presenting *raghunāyaka* in *rāgam hamsadhvani* and *deśādī tālam*.



Let us tune up the noble instrument of mind given to us through a careful policing of our motives and thoughts. Let us, with such a prepared instrument, search out the Wealth of Light-Power-Wisdom that is lying in ourselves.

”



Mahā Śivarātrī Celebrations

CMSD members assembled in the āśrama to celebrate Mahā Śivarātrī on Feb 21, 2020. The meditative evening began with the *ṣoḍaśopacāra pūjā* for Lord Śiva. **Ramesh Sairam** performed the *pūjā* under the guidance of Lakshmi Aunty, joined by many Bala Vihar students and CMSD families. Chinmaya Dhvani sang "*Śankara bholā bhālā*." Pranava Nilayam resonated with the beautiful meditative chants of *Rudram*, *Camakam*, *Śri Śivapañcākṣarastōtram*, *Līṅgāṣṭakam* and several other *stotrams*.



Bala Vihar children had an opportunity to do pūjā to their own Śiva Liṅgā, offering akṣata while chanting 108 names of Lord Śiva. The children and adults performed *abhisheka* to the Śiva Liṅgā.



The serene environment of the āśrama provided for a very reflective atmosphere. CMSD member **Padmaja Menon** shares that "...it was an amazing experience for me with the environment being so vibrant...and it was a nice exposure and experience for the children to be able to see the *abhisheka* and be part of it." For **Pallavi Kulkarni**, "it was a joy beyond words to revel in the divine energy and the grace of Lord Śiva..." Members took turns for partaking *prāsada* as the chanting continued inside Pranava Nilayam, getting more and more meditative as midnight approached. A few minutes before midnight, Lakshmi Aunty guided the devotees to meditate on Lord Śiva focusing on the divine *Jyoti* within. *Ārati* was performed to culminate a memorable, joyous and meditative evening.

During the Sunday Bala Vihar session on February 23, 2020, Grades 2 and 9 gave a special presentation on the legends and significance behind Śivarātrī celebrations.

-Mahesh Subramanian



Balance

All of us are familiar with Lord Śiva's beautiful form. He has many unique ornaments such as a snake, a *triśula* and animal skin. There are also several pairs of opposites associated with Lord Śiva. He is the destroyer of all evil things in the universe, yet he is very compassionate. He holds deadly poison in his throat while the pleasant half moon shines on his head. Another distinct characteristic of Lord Śiva is his three eyes. His right eye represents love and his left eye represents justice. Love and justice are complete opposites, but both of them are equally important when dealing with situations in life. Having too much love for someone or something makes one sentimental, and causes emotions to significantly sway one's judgment. On the other hand, solely being just and having no compassion leads one to be harsh and not empathetic. So, how does Lord Śiva manage to keep a balanced frame of mind when he has an abundance of both love and justice? He does so with his third eye - the eye of wisdom. It is only with this wisdom that Lord Śiva is able to look at the world with equanimity. We pray to Lord Śiva so that he guides us in the process of acquiring the wisdom that is necessary for us to become mentally balanced. We need to use this knowledge and make the right decisions without excessive compassion or justice. With Lord Śiva's three eyes, we can also learn to be in a calm state of mind when we face opposites in our life - successes and failures, creation and destruction, joys and sorrows to name a few. As Pujya Guruji writes in his book Hindu Culture - "we should have an inner balance and equipoise in the midst of all good and bad experiences" (94). *Om Namaḥ Śivāya!*

-Arushi Bharadwaj

The Story of *Bhagīratha*

There was once a descendant of the *Ikṣvāku* Dynasty known as *Bhagīratha*. Generations ago, *Bhagīratha*'s ancestors had been turned to ashes due to a curse from Kapila Muni; and were yet to be liberated. After many years of penance, *Bhagīratha* was granted a boon through Brahmaji and Mother Ganga agreed to come down to the Earth from the heavens to liberate *Bhagīratha*'s ancestors. However *Bhagīratha* was warned that the force of her current was too strong and would submerge the whole world! After hearing Mother *Gaṅgā*'s warning, *Bhagīratha* prayed to Lord Śiva with intense devotion. Lord Śiva was pleased with *Bhagīratha*'s prayers, and agreed to help lessen the force of *Gaṅgā*'s waters. Lord Śiva let River *Gaṅgā* flow into His matted locks and let her waters down to the Earth in gentle streams; liberating the ancestors of *Bhagīratha* and connecting the earth and the heavens with the majestic River *Gaṅgā*.

This story symbolizes the flow of knowledge from *guru* to *śiṣyā*. Lord Śiva, the *Ādi Guru*, took the knowledge of the scriptures (River *Gaṅgā*) and brought it down to the Earth in an understandable form; hence the release of *Gaṅgā*'s water in gentle streams. Thus, not only does the story of *Bhagīratha* explain the origins of the Holy River *Gaṅgā*, but also encourages us to revere our *Guru* for the knowledge He has blessed us with.

-Shreya Sapkal

Ugādi

It's the starting of a new year for many Hindus! Every *Ugādi*, or new year, we celebrate the starting of a new era. One of the most commonly performed traditions is eating the *Ugādi pachadi*. In this, there are six different flavors that represent the different feelings that we have in life. These flavors are bitterness, sourness, spice, sweetness, saltiness, and tanginess. When we take in all these flavors we are taking in all the aspects of life, the not so fun parts and the sweet and happy parts! Life is made up of not just one of these flavors, but it is filled with all of them. This aspect of *Ugādi* is really well known and is the perfect representation of symbolism in Hinduism.

-Sindhu

BV Corner

Bala Vihar children make Śiva Liṅgā

On **Feb 17, 2020** Bala Vihar children took part in a project to make *Śiva Liṅgā-s* for *Mahā Śivarātri*.



Punctuality, Practice, and Perfection – the three **P**-s happen if you go to Bala Vihar classes regularly. Then these traits become a part of you. – Pujya Guruji

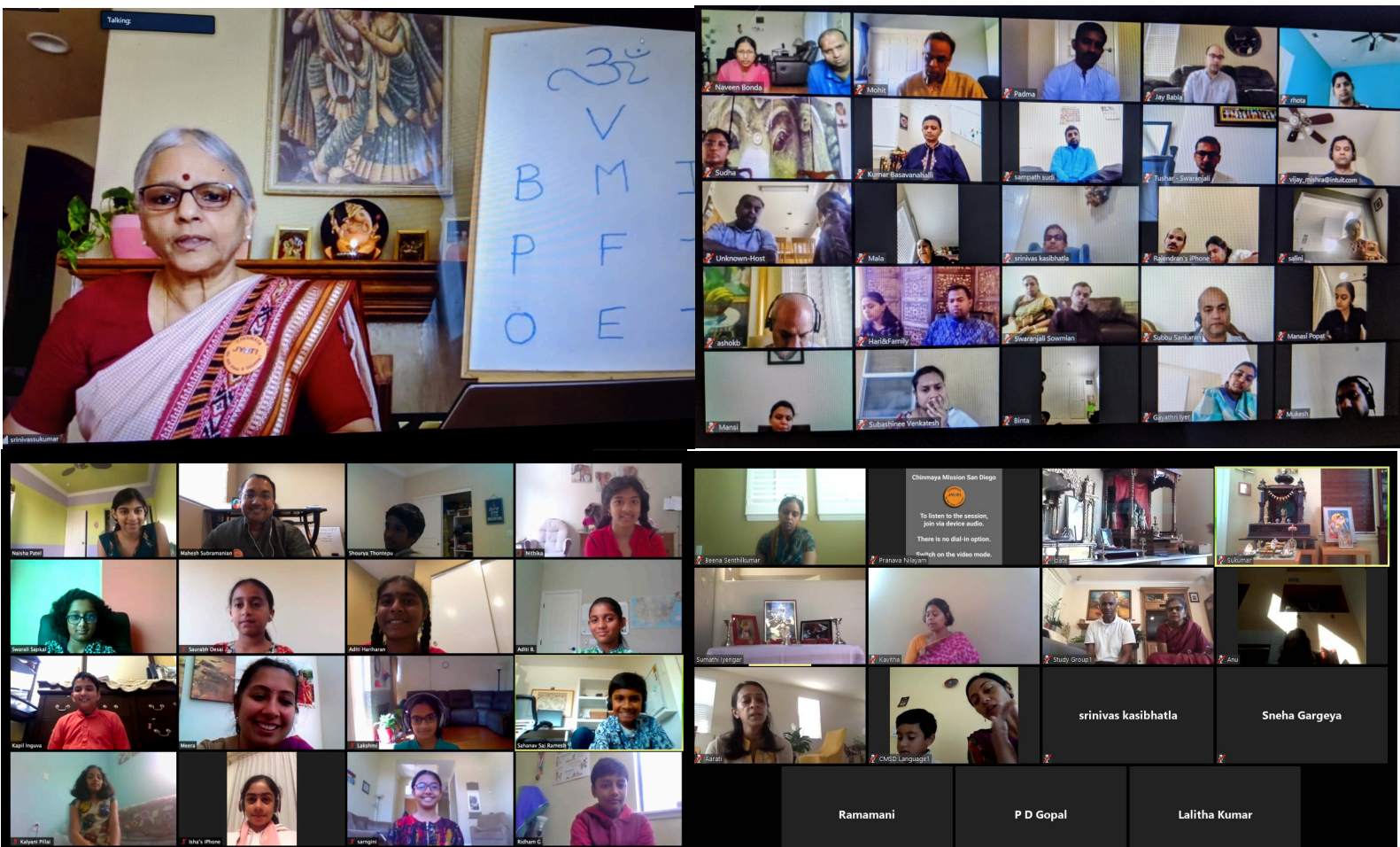
Money comes and goes, a value comes and grows.
Give your children values, instead of valuables.

”

CMSD response to COVID-19

As of March 2020, the United States and the whole world is gripped with Covid-19 pandemic. With the COVID-19 evolving daily, global efforts are focused on lessening its spread and impact. This introduced new dynamics for all Chinmaya Mission centers including CMSD to deliver our programs in a way that safeguards the health and well-being of our CMSD family.

CMSD started offering E-vihar classes on Sundays as of March 15, 2020 using Zoom technology. The session began with special prayers suggested by Pandit Ravichandran. All weekly study classes and language classes are also conducted remotely. We are blessed to receive spiritual knowledge and support during this critical time.



The twelfth year of monthly *Sundara Kāṇḍa Pārāyaṇa* was also held online. A special time feature this time was the singing of the *Sundara Kāṇḍa* in various ragas by none other than Pujya Guruji himself.





CMSD Samskrita Vihar class Batch 5



Nārada Bhakti Sūtra Study group

CMSD helps the community during the COVID-19

CMSD has a close relationship with Interfaith Community Services (ICS) in Escondido. ICS empowers people in need to stabilize and improve their lives through comprehensive programs in partnership with diverse faith communities and people of compassion. ICS provides us with opportunities for community service. Recently, during the holidays, our high schoolers conducted a Food Drive and distributed what was collected from CMSD families to the community through ICS.

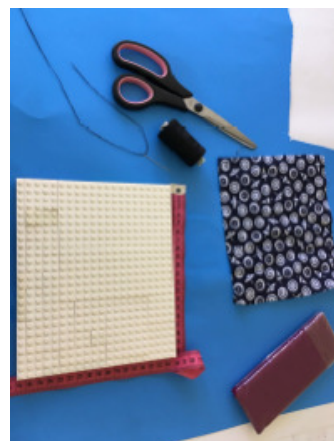
During this time of crisis with the COVID-19 pandemic, ICS is in need of masks for their staff. They work with many vulnerable groups especially the homeless. These groups are not able to take the precautions recommended by the State of California such as self isolation. ICS staff, while dealing with these people who are susceptible to infection, have to protect themselves. Unfortunately, since they are not a medical facility, they are low on the priority list to get N95 masks which are currently in short supply.

Mary Ferro, our main contact at ICS, inquired if CMSD could make masks for their staff since they don't expect to get any from the State of California till June. CMSD formed a team under the leadership of Swaroopa Kalva to design and make 500 masks for ICS. About 10 CMSD families volunteered to make these masks and were given a demonstration of how to make them by Swaroopa in a ZOOM session. These instructions with illustrations are now in a pdf document at <https://chinmayajyoti.org/mask/>. CMSD delivered the first batch off 80 masks to ICS this Monday. They were made with different types of materials and ties, but from the basic design from Swaroopa.



The experience of the CMSD families making these masks has been very positive and inspiring. Mothers are teaching their daughters how to sew and use a sewing machine that has been idle for many years. Children also want to participate and contribute. One mother asked her son to help measure and cut the material for the masks in 17 X 20 cm pieces. He used lego blocks to make a 17 X 20 cm template for his mother!!

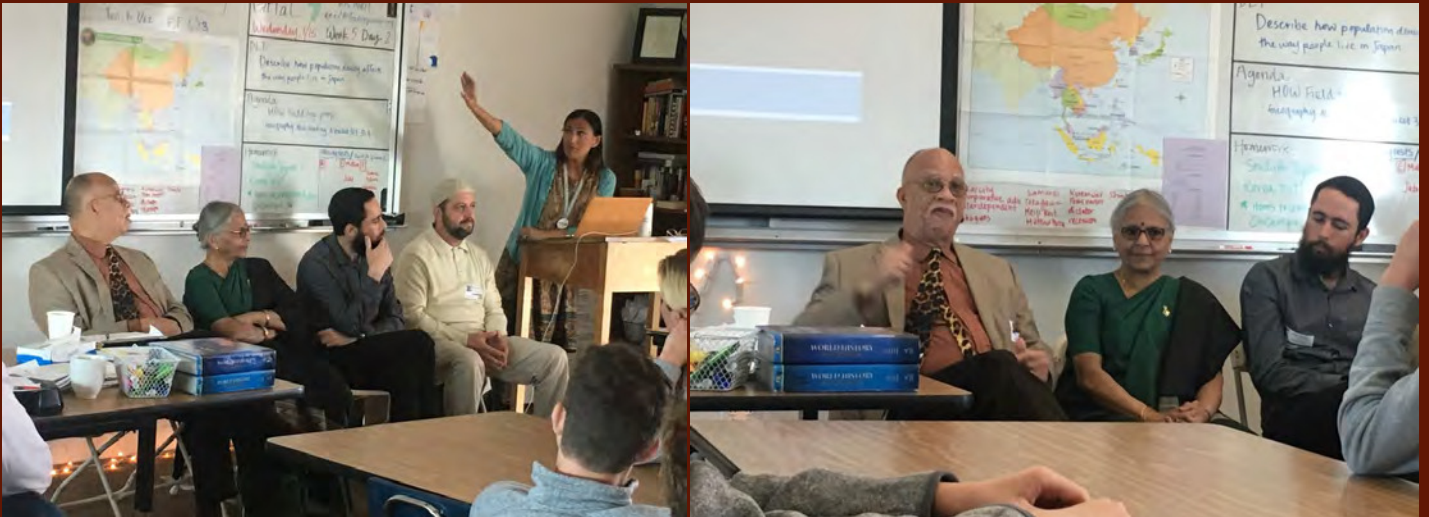
Our children, high schoolers, CHYKs and parents are very fortunate to be able to serve the community at this time of need. The energy and enthusiasm generated by this act of selfless service is inspiring many others at CMSD to join this worthwhile project.



CMSD In the Community

CMSD participates at Parker's Day of Understanding 2020!

"I want to share my deep gratitude for your time and energy on Parker's Day of Understanding 2020!". This was part of the message sent by Christen Tedrow-Harrison, the Director of Diversity and Inclusion to Lakshmi Sukumar who was one of the participants in this bi-annual event at Francis Parker Upper School on **January 15, 2020**.



Lakshmi, along with Imam Taha Hassane, Rabbi Daniel Bortz and Mr. Dwight Wilson (Quaker), was part of a Faith leaders' panel in a class led by Dr. Monica Gillespie, which analyzed the Moral Dilemma of a runaway train and the question of whether you would sacrifice one person to save the lives of five people. Part 2 of the video dealt with the question of whether you would sacrifice a "bad" person who happened to be on the bridge by throwing him in front of the train to stop the train and save six people. The students watched the video and commented on how they would act under the circumstances described in the video, after which Dr. Gillespie asked the four guests for their comments based on their religious faith.



As part of her response, Lakshmi quoted Pujya Guruji "Pray to God; Do not play God". When presented with conflicting choices, we hope that God gives us the ability to choose the right action. The consistent message among all four faith leaders was that the feeling of "otherness" leads to fear, hatred, anger and violence. All faiths believe in the peace, equality and respect for human life, whereas Hinduism goes one step further with respect for all life.

-S. Sukumar



SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA



A person who has got the right vision and right knowledge and sees the entire life in the light of that knowledge, he alone enjoys real happiness.