

CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ

CMSD QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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IN THIS ISSUE OF CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ



CMSD's Twenty-first Anniversary was the main feature in this quarter. **Eighth Tyāgarāja Ārādhana** and **Mahāśivarātrī** festivities added flavors of soulful music and pure devotion! The highschoolers' and CHYKs' Annual MLK Workshop on "**Becoming a Global Citizen**" opened up fresh perspectives for many, and the reflections are noteworthy. In the wake of a surge in COVID-19 cases in early January, 2022, CMSD proactively shifted the Shishu Vihar, Bala Vihar and Adult sessions to E-Vihar for three Sundays.

THE MASTER SPEAKS

"Surrender and serve.

Discover the joy of service by placing at His feet,
not your achievements, but only the sense thereof.

It costs you nothing but brings everything."



Welcome 2022 - The *Chinmaya* Way!



An auspicious start to the New Year! The joyous celebrations began on **January 1, 2022** at *Chinmaya Jyoti* with *Śrī Gaṇeśa pūjā* and *Guru pādukā pūjā*, followed by chanting of *Śrī Viṣṇu sahasranāma* stotram and *Hanumān cālīsā*. The event concluded with bhajans and a New Year's composition by Pujya Gururji unfolding pristine words.... "That which is ever new and fresh, that alone is good, real and beautiful. May this New Year bring you greater goodness, happiness, and success."



Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya Production Screening

On **January 2, 2022**, the CMSD family enjoyed viewing the first CMSD stage production that was offered on May 8, 2005 at the lotus feet of Pujya Gurudev.

A perfect way to learn about the life of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*!



Member Reflections:

“I could appreciate all the hard work , preparation and coordination that went into making this play. My key parts of interests were right from *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*'s birth, his struggles and his contribution to various *ślokā* and most importantly his efforts to unifying and establishing the main thought currents in Hinduism. We need more *Śaṅkarācāryas* to keep Hinduism alive.”

- Hariharan Janakiraman

Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya Production Screening



Ādi Śaṅkarācārya's play was very enlightening. The main part I liked in this play was the songs composed by Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya beautifully weaved alongside his life story. Ādi Śaṅkarācārya not only spread the *vedāntic* knowledge to the world, but he also lived as an example of how a spiritual *sādhaka* should be by leading a detached life.”

- Banu Hariharan

“I really enjoyed the production, and it gave me a great introduction on what I will learn later in Grade 6 BalaVihar. I especially enjoyed Chinmaya Dhvani.”

- Achintya Puttur, Grade 6

“The screening of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya was a very engaging experience. This experience was helpful because in the near future my sacred thread ceremony is going to be held in *Kāladi*, the birthplace of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya.”

- Adhvay Iyer, Grade 5

“I enjoyed the play and the two parts I liked the most are: 1. When Ādi Śaṅkarācārya was bit by an alligator, he did not get scared about his life. Instead he convinced his mother to agree to his wish of becoming a *Samnyāsi*. 2. When Ādi Śaṅkarācārya was offered precious items by the king, he did not accept them. Instead he asked the king to give them to poor people. I am thankful to Ādi Śaṅkarācārya for giving us so many *ślokā* and bhajans.”

- Anshika Hariharan, Grade 4

Ādi Śaṅkarācārya established the Highest knowledge, which we are able to learn now. The play and the visuals were important because they captured the story effectively.

- Tarika Singaram, Grade 6

Homage to Śrī Tyāgarāja



On **January 22, 2022**, CMSD celebrated **Eighth Tyāgarāja Ārāadhanā** – the *Mahāsamādhi* of the great *bhaktā* **Śrī Tyāgarāja**, on the same day when it is celebrated in Tiruvaïyyuru located in the state of Tamil Nadu. *Śrī Tyāgarāja*’s musical compositions are a vast pillar of Indian Carnatic music and enjoyed by millions around the world. Born in the 18th century Tamil Nadu, *Śrī Tyāgarāja* composed music (called *kṛtis*) as “*upāsanā*” – love for the Lord. Hence his works are called *Nadopāsanā*. *Tyāgarāja* is among the seers who showed that the art forms such as music and dance are not just entertainment (for pleasure or “*bhoga*”) but also for enlightenment (to unite with the Higher or “*yoga*”). His *kṛtis* are on different deities though he was especially fond of Lord *Rāma*. His works are filled with the highest teachings of *Vedānta* and so some of his followers call his works as *Tyāga Brahmopaniṣat*.



Tyāgarāja Ārāadhanā at CMSD began with a reverential *pūjā* by **Lakshmi Aunty**. On behalf of Chinmaya *Kalā Jyoti* team, **Nagesh Nookala** presented a succinct background of *Śrī Tyāgarāja* and **Amarnath Puttur** introduced the musicians. It is customary to render the *pañcaratna kṛtis* on *Ārāadhanā* day. These are the five gems of his compositions. The first three *kṛtis* praise the Lord and the last two praise the *bhaktās*. Listening to them is *upāsanā* (devotion) in itself.



Homage to Śrī Tyāgarāja



We were fortunate to have an opportunity to cherish heart-warming performances by three very talented local musicians - **Devesh Vashishtha** (vocal), **Shankar Guhados** (vocal) and **Radhakrishnan Ramachandran** (flute). They took the audience to great heights with their melodious renderings of the *pañcaratna kṛtis* in beautiful synchrony and interludes of voice and flute. They also offered other *Tyāgarāja kṛtis* individually.



Sowmian Rangarajan offered the beautiful *baṇṭurīti kolu kṛti* in *rāga hamsanādam*. There were soulful individual offerings by several young artists. Young talented artist **Nivedya Krishnan**, Grade 5 BV student, offered *gīrījā sūtā* in *rāga bangāla* seeking protection of Lord *Gaṇeśa*. **Chinmaya Dhvani** children offered *vara līla gāna lola* in *rāga śaṅkarābharaṇam* in praise of *Bhagavān Viṣṇu*. **Adarsh Radhakrishnan** played *sujana jīvana* in *rāga khamās* on the flute and sang *yocana kamala locana* in *rāga darbār* dedicated to Lord *Rāma*.



Homage to Śrī Tyāgarāja



The program concluded the traditional way, wishing the well-being of all at the feet of Lord *Rāma* with Śrī Tyāgarāja's *maṅgalam kṛti* in *rāga sourāshtram*.

Hemadarshani Rajendran (Grade 10) shares, “I remember learning about the six modes of devotion in Bala Vihar, *kīrtanam* being one of them. Today I was transported after hearing the beautiful *kṛtis* of Tyāgarāja. Music is said to be the universal language and in today's festival I experienced that firsthand.”

For **Akhila Koneri**, “It was a treat! The heartfelt rendition of the *pañcaratna kṛtis* by the performing musicians was bliss. As the tempo and energy of the *kṛtis* changed they weaved a new tapestry of notes. Salutations to the saintly musician Śrī Tyāgarāja for opening his heart to us through his timeless works.”

As expressed by **Padmaja Menon**, “I thoroughly enjoyed listening to the songs on Tyāgarāja *Ārādhanā* Day. Celebrating the *Ārādhanā* day gave me an opportunity to listen to the different compositions and also the wonderful renditions on instruments.”



CMSD Celebrating 21 Years in the 21st Century



The **Twenty-first Anniversary celebrations at CMSD** held on **January 30, 2022** marked another beautiful beginning with renewed energy and inspiration! This year's theme was **Sakhyam - Friendship**. The program began with a Chinmaya Bala Vihar song by **Chinmaya Dhvani** and beautiful *subhasitas* read by **Pallavi Kulkarni**. Shishu Vihar (SV3 and SV4) and BalaVihar (K-12) presented friendship through the lens of the topics and stories covered in their classes. Each presentation had a unique title that indicated a different element of friendship such as the **Unusual** friend, the **Guiding** friend, **Beware** of this friend and **Mind**, my friend.

CMSD Celebrating 21 Years in the 21st Century



Shishu Vihar 3



Shishu Vihar 4

CMSD Celebrating 21 Years in the 21st Century



Kindergarten



Grade 1



Grade 2

CMSD Celebrating 21 Years in the 21st Century



Grade 3



Grade 4



Grade 5

CMSD Celebrating 21 Years in the 21st Century



Grade 6



Grade 7

CMSD Celebrating 21 Years in the 21st Century

UNTO HIM OUR BEST



Grade 8

UNTO HIM OUR BEST



Grade 9

CMSD Celebrating 21 Years in the 21st Century



Grade 10



Grade 11

CMSD Celebrating 21 Years in the 21st Century



Grade 12



The presentations concluded with a beautiful song *maitrīm bhajate* sung by our very own CHYK, **Devesh Vashishtha**, accompanied by **Amarnath Puttur** on tabla.

CMSD Celebrating 21 Years in the 21st Century



After the presentations, all the members were taken down memory lane of the past few anniversary celebrations through a fun video presentation. **Sukumar Uncle** and **Nikhil Varaiya** mapped the beautiful journey of CMSD, and announced the details on the initiation of the Capital Campaign. This was followed by *ārati* and the **CMSD Pledge** to keep the **Chinmaya Jyoti Glowing!**



CMSD Celebrating 21 Years in the 21st Century



The celebrations concluded with a delicious homemade potluck lunch served by CMSD *sevak-s* and *sevikā-s*.

Reflections:

"I enjoyed all the presentations. My favorite was the song "*khāte bhi rāma kaho pīte bhi rāma kaho*" by Grade 3. It felt good to be back in person with friends."

- Neev Babla, Grade 4

"Powerful teachings and values from our scriptures were depicted beautifully by all the kids across all grades at the anniversary celebrations. What really stuck with me as a reminder was - a special and true bond of friendship can be formed between strangers, a parent & child, rich & poor, and above all *Bhagavān* & devotees."

- Dipti Babla



Satyam Śivam Sundaram - Mahāśivarātrī Celebrations



On February 27, 2022, creating a spirit of Śivarātrī during the BV session, Grade 2 children enacted two plays, one with the story of *Brahmā* and *Viṣṇu* trying to find the end of the mysterious light beam, and another story of the hunter and tiger. They energetically conveyed the stories with fun and vibrant costumes. Grade 9 children showcased symbolism behind the different aspects of Lord Śiva, including river *Gaṅgā* flowing from his matted locks to the crescent moon adorned on his head and his blue neck that holds poison.



Satyam Śivam Sundaram - Mahāśivarātrī Celebrations



Chinmaya families gathered with devotion and reverence to participate in the auspicious *Mahāśivarātrī* celebrations on **March 1, 2022**. The blowing of the conch shell heralded the proceedings and Chinmaya Dhvani invoked Lord *Gaṇeśa* with the song "*Namastestu Gaṇapate*". Led by **Lakshmi Aunty**, the gathering chanted the *saṅkalpa* in unison to partake in the rituals.



Having ceremoniously welcomed the sweet and simple Lord *Śiva*, the beautiful and mesmerizing ritual of *abhiṣekam* was performed. **Lakshmi Aunty** made sure to teach the little children about the significance and offerings during the ritual before it commenced. The *Śiva Līṅga* was lovingly bathed with *pañcāmṛtam*, milk, curd, honey, Ganges water, lemon juice, coconut water, sugar and rice flour.



Satyam Śivam Sundaram - Mahāśivarātrī Celebrations



The picture of the blissful *Bholenāth* that adorned the *pūjā paṇḍāl*, with his eyes closed, reminded us that the joy is all in the inner world, the “*antaḥkaraṇa*”. The sound of the *abhiṣekaṃ* water trickling down the *Līṅga* interspersed with the sacred vedic chants of the *Śrī Rudram camakam* in the background. The *yajñasālā* resounded with the chanting of *Śiva Aṣṭottaranāmāvali*, *Līṅgāṣṭakam*, *Śiva pañcākṣara stotram*, *Śiva mānasa pūjā*, *Kāla-bhairavāṣṭakam* and heartfelt renditions of *bhajans*.

As the evening was transformed into night, the group with single minded remembrance chanted “*OM namaḥ Śivāya*” imprinting the image of the Lord, just as our Gurudev had done in his childhood, into the minds. Children too took turns to lead the group and in all directions the senses were drowned in this charged energy created by the *saṅga* with the Lord.

Just as **Lakshmi Aunty** ceremoniously planted two *Rudrākṣa* seeds in the Ashram on this auspicious night, we as a family plant our minds firmly on *Śiva* and welcome the new dawn.

“This very night is a blessed opportunity for the worldly minds to “wed” the Supreme consciousness, the Truth - Lord *Śiva*”, **Swami Swaroopananda**’s simple yet powerful message set the mood for the meditative night. As the group meditated together on the Lord of lords, sheath after sheath in us soaked up the essence!



CMSD Ongoing Events

Monthly *Sundarakāṇḍa Pārāyaṇā*



January 22, 2022



February 19, 2022



March 19, 2022

Monthly *Samskṛti Pālakās* Meeting

Going Back to the Roots: This quarter's *Samskṛti Pālakās* meeting opened up another occasion to discuss the challenges that we face in today's multicultural environment in order to raise children with *dhārmik* values. **Lakshmi Aunty** shared her personal experiences in the light of scriptural teachings to get an insight into the vedic way of raising children. We learnt how parents should passively observe their children to look for their genuine interests. As parents, we should enable our children to pursue and fulfill their divine purpose in life.



The meetings this quarter were held on: **January 16, 2022** and **February 13, 2022**.

CMSD In The Community

Workshop On “Ethical Dilemmas” At Francis Parker School

Lakshmi Aunty represented CMSD at a panel discussion at Francis Parker School on **February 17, 2022**. The panel consisted of a variety of religious faith traditions, and examined several ethical quandaries from differing perspectives. The moral dilemma discussed pertained to a runaway train and whether one would sacrifice a single life to save the lives of more people. The participating students commented on how they would act under the described situations, and the panel commented based on their religious foundation.



Aunty beautifully expressed how based on *sanātana* dharma **All Life is Sacred** and how one lives one's life on a daily basis is directly translated into the purity of mind and intentions; thereby determining the quality of decisions and actions. Quoting Gandhiji's words at his last breath "Hey *Rāma*", **Aunty** powerfully brought out the significance of Divine Living!

Shishu Vihar/Bala Vihar Corner

SV3: Class Craft Activity - Valentine's Day Gift for Pujya Gurudev



Grade 2: Winter Project - Diorama on *Bālakṛṣṇalīla*



Shishu Vihar/Bala Vihar Corner



Shishu Vihar/Bala Vihar Corner

Grade 4: Diorama on Rāmāyaṇa



Grade 4: From the Pot of Devotion fertilized with Knowledge, blossoms the flower of Hanumānji bejeweled with gems of intelligence, strength, courage, fearlessness, freedom from disease, freedom from fatigue, eloquence and fame.



Shishu Vihar/Bala Vihar Corner

Grade 5: Children Enjoying Parachute Project

After learning *Daśāvatāra Stotram*, Grade 5 children made parachutes representing the descent of the Lord. If our prayers are offered with a pure heart, *Bhagavān* listens and comes in any form to fulfill our wishes and to protect us! The classroom was filled with divine chanting of *Daśāvatāra Stotram*.



RIDDLE GURU FIRE

KEY LEARNINGS

Fire is brilliant.
Fire is important for
daily life.
Fire is power full.
Fire is non attached
Fire is Pure!
Fire is FROM FIRE

HOW I CAN APPLY A QUALITY FROM FIRE

I can apply the quality of being pure by getting rid of all my negative thoughts and feelings in a purified thought and can also spread positive things and don't only make myself pure, but others too.

RIDDLE GURU WATER

KEY LEARNINGS

Water is clean!
Water is unattached
Water is life giving
Water is life giving

HOW I CAN APPLY A QUALITY FROM WATER

I can apply the quality of being unattached by getting rid of all bad thoughts and feelings in a good and an other worldly things!

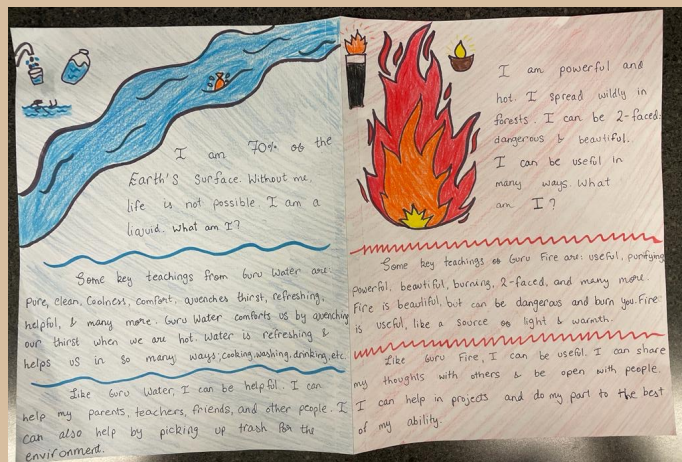
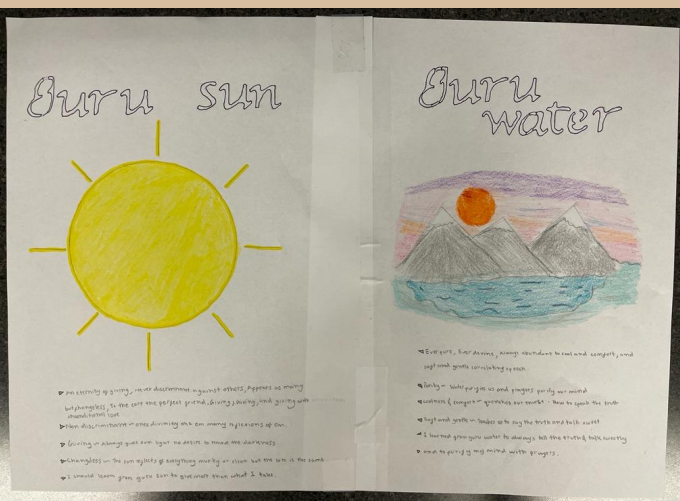
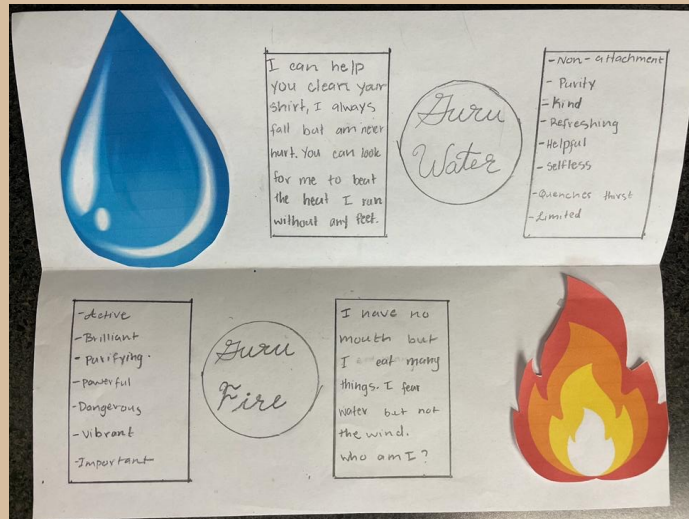
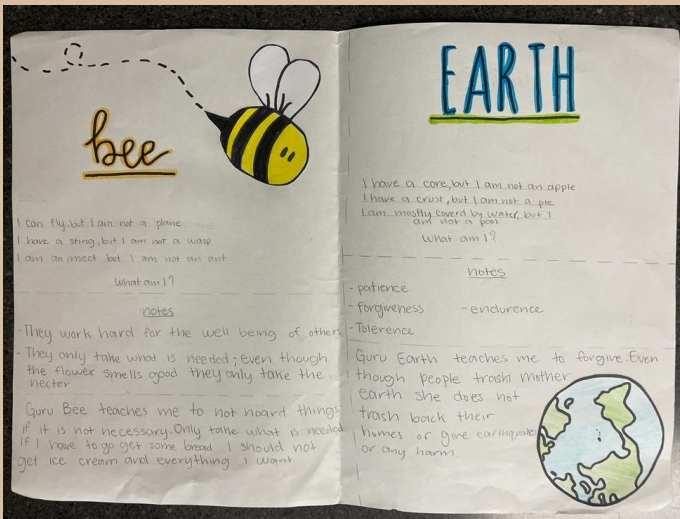
RIDDLE GURU EARTH

KEY LEARNINGS

Earth is the center of the universe.
Earth is the source of all life.
Earth is the provider of all resources.
Earth is the giver of all knowledge.
Earth is the giver of all love.
Earth is the giver of all happiness.
Earth is the giver of all peace.
Earth is the giver of all joy.
Earth is the giver of all life.

HOW I CAN APPLY A QUALITY FROM EARTH

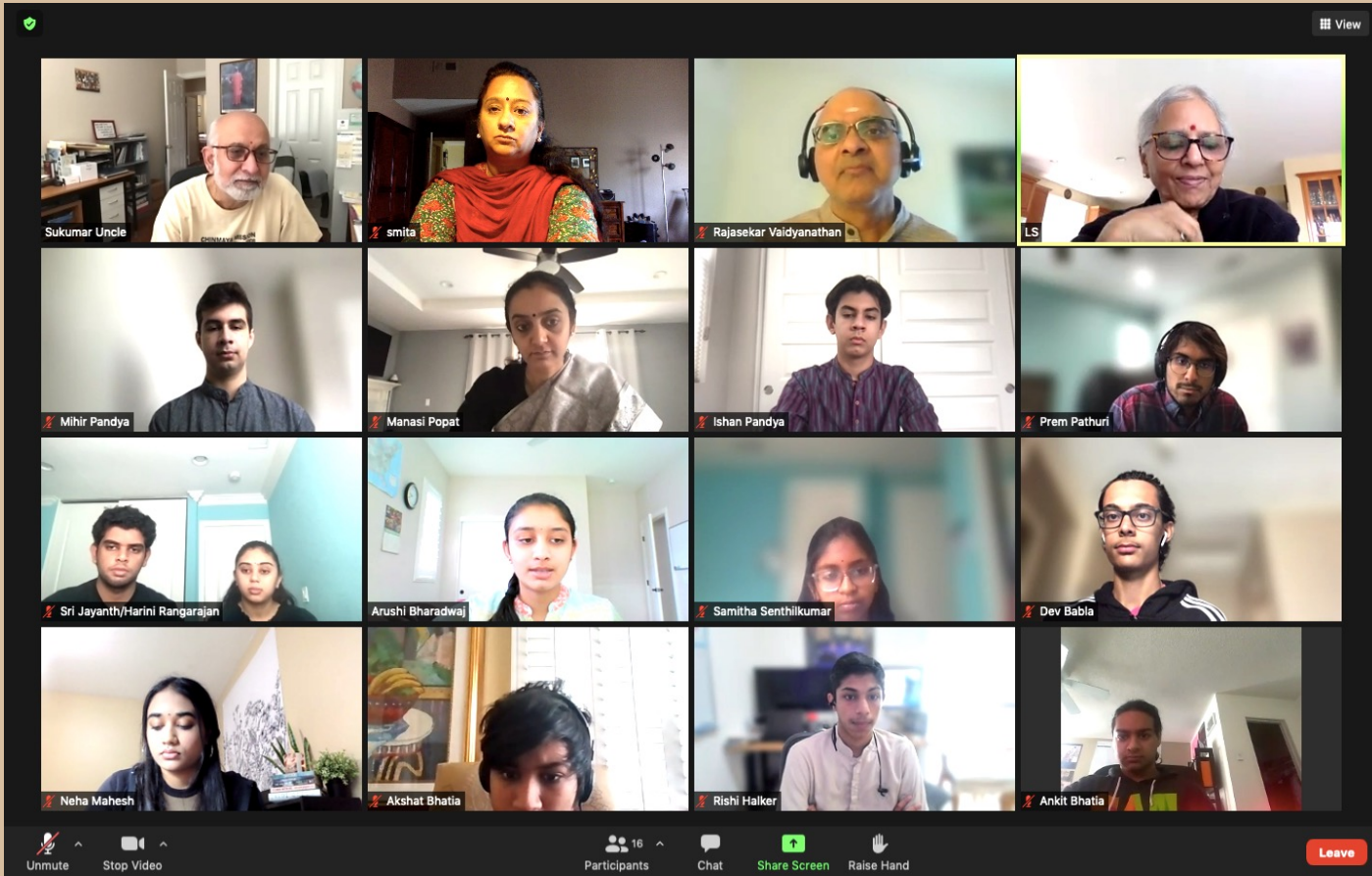
I can apply the quality of being the center of the universe by being the center of my life and the center of the lives of others. I can apply the quality of being the source of all life by being the source of all life for myself and for others. I can apply the quality of being the provider of all resources by being the provider of all resources for myself and for others. I can apply the quality of being the giver of all knowledge by being the giver of all knowledge for myself and for others. I can apply the quality of being the giver of all love by being the giver of all love for myself and for others. I can apply the quality of being the giver of all happiness by being the giver of all happiness for myself and for others. I can apply the quality of being the giver of all peace by being the giver of all peace for myself and for others. I can apply the quality of being the giver of all joy by being the giver of all joy for myself and for others. I can apply the quality of being the giver of all life by being the giver of all life for myself and for others.



BV CHYK and Youth Corner

Annual MLK CHYK Workshop

On **January 17 2022**, CHYK alumni and high schoolers delved into the topic of **“Becoming A Global Citizen”** facilitated by **Lakshmi Auntie** via an interactive, in depth zoom session. Being a part and serving the whole as a responsible global citizen was discussed at length. Discussions revolved around personal responsibility towards the whole, *dharma*, generosity, service, selflessness, and the spirit of giving to name a few.



“During the MLK workshop, I learned that being a global citizen involves being an active member of my community and adapting to society while sticking to my roots. As a global citizen, I must **“stand as one family”** with everyone in the world with the **attitude of service.**”

- **Arushi Bharadwaj, Grade 11**

“I learned a lot about expanding my perspective to encompass awareness, responsibility, and service on a larger scale, all starting with changing the scope and attitude of my thinking to focus on helping my community. It was great to discuss with others that brought forth great examples of this global view in current circumstances and also discuss the prevalence of those principles in Hinduism and the CMSD curriculum.”

- **Sri Jayanth Rangarajan, Grade 12**

BV CHYK and Youth Corner

“We have been given the privilege to be part of this world. As part of this privilege it is our responsibility to ensure the well-being of all. This starts at the thought level of the individual. It is only by purifying our thoughts and aligning them with the values that have been instilled in us, can we make an impact on the world around us.”

- **Prem Pathuri, CHYK**

“Through the course, I learned more about what it means to be a global citizen – the significance of being a part of a larger community and contributing to society. I left the workshop inspired to serve and contribute to society.”

- **Neha Mahesh, Grade 10**

“I enjoyed the round table aspect of this workshop with a free-flowing conversation. I was able to learn what a global citizen is, but more importantly, I saw how I could be a global citizen myself, whether it be through helping others at my local school gym or participating in community service. I enjoyed this discussion and hope to attend more soon.”

- **Ankit Bhatia, CHYK**

“Being a global citizen is about selflessly providing for your community. The actions do not have to be too big, but they must be done with the right intentions. The purpose must solely be for the benefit of other people.”

- **Akshat Bhatia, Grade 12**

“To me this workshop on global citizenship was really relevant to the times we are living in currently, and definitely drove home the point that we must consider ourselves not only as individuals but as a part of a much larger whole, and that for better or for worse, we are connected to each other. One of my goals in life should be to make a lasting impact on my community and by extension the world by first acknowledging the responsibility that I have towards others and myself to be a responsible global citizen.”

- **Rachna Halker, CHYK**

“My understanding of being a global citizen is - an individual who puts others before themselves to help strengthen the community. We also discussed the meaning and importance of the closing prayers. Chanting with understanding the meaning created a great impact on my mind! Towards the end of the workshop Auntie shared a quote by Pujya Gurudev “When opportunity knocks, we are out or sleeping in.” This quote really resonated with me as I realized that I should take every opportunity that comes my way in all aspects of my life.”

- **Dev Babla, Grade 9**

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SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA

Our goals should be so inspiring that the challenges become fun in the journey of reaching our destination.

