



CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ

CMSD QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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The highlights of this quarter were the 103rd Chinmaya Jayanti celebrations and the 19th Annual Program presentations by our Bala Vihar students. Mothers' Day was celebrated the Chinmaya way with *matṛ pūjā* and special lunch. *Śrī Rāma Navamī* and *Hanumān Jayanti* were celebrated with *pūjā* and meaningful class presentations. The 2018-19 session concluded with the Bala Vihar Awards and Graduation ceremony presided by Swamini Kaivalyananda of CCMT Archives.



THE MASTER SPEAKS



Even though you have not conquered the battles of the world, you become the world-conquerer when you conquer the mind.



Chinmaya Jayanti CELEBRATIONS AT CHINMAYA JYOTI -May 8 ,2019

On the evening of May 8, 2019, Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda's 103rd birth anniversary was celebrated in great solemnness at Chinmaya Jyoti. The Guru *pādukā pūjā* was conducted by Lakshmi Aunty. The graduating seniors and many CMSD members participated in the celebrations. The entire Pranava Nilayam reverberated with the *aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvalī* (108 names) of Gurudev creating a deeply meditative and blissful mood. With a spirit of deep gratitude and devotion for the whole lineage of gurus, the entire *āśrama* chanted *Tapovana ṣaṭkam* and *Guru pādukā Stotram*. The *pūjā* then culminated in *ārati* following which *dinner-praśada* was served.



Chinmaya Mahimā

- Presented by Grade 6

Sixth grade class presented Chinmaya *Mahimā* on this special occasion. It is indeed a privilege for the students to offer a beautiful song written by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda glorifying the life of Pujya Gurudev. The song has a very soothing tune, and with the chorus repeated every few verses – the entire *āśrama* reverberated Chinmaya Gurave Namoh Namah!



Bhagavad Gītā Chanting Competition

The *Bhagavad Gītā* Chanting Competition was held on April 27, 2019. 28 Bala Vihar children and 10 adults chanted verses from the 18th chapter of the *Gītā*.



CMSD 19th Annual Program Presentations

Samskr̥ta Vihar Presentation on June 2, 2019

The *Samskr̥ta* Vihar students presented a variety of intriguing elements including the Glory of *Samskr̥tam* with a beautiful song that urges the protection of the divine language, a simple fable expressed in *Samskr̥tam* language, a story of a mouse and a sage depicted in *Samskr̥tam* with translation in English. The concluding presentation was Chapter 7 of *Bhagavad Gītā* coming live for the audience in prose order as prepared by the students. The students performed with the *bhāva* that truly touched all the hearts and kindled love for this divine language.



Chinmaya Kala Jyoti Presentation on June 2, 2019

The Bharatnatyam presentation exhibited leg work, hand gestures and head/eye movements and the students brought it all together in a beautiful dance. The subtleties of the hand gestures were beautifully explained as where the hand is, the eyes follow; where the eyes go, the mind follows; where the mind is, there is the feeling and where there is feeling, there is *rasa*, sweetness or an appreciation of art.

Tabla students presented the *kaidas* and *tukras* based on *teen taal*. The introduction and explanation of the presentation by the students made the performance even more enjoyable.

UNTO HIM OUR BEST



Annual Program - Language Classes

The highlight of the Tamil class presentation was the song on Lord Muruga, a *mangalam* song from the *Thiruppugazh*. *Thiruppugazh* has a central place in Tamil literature and it is different from classical Tamil. The children sang melodiously, adhering to *śruti* and *laya*. Not only was the song on the Tamil God Muruga but has a deep philosophical meaning, which aligns with our *Vedantic* teachings. The poet *Arunagirinathar* is beseeching *Lord Muruga* to help him realize the ultimate Truth by showing him the inner meaning of His six faces. Kudos to the Tamil teacher team for their sincere effort.



Hindi student performances from Levels 1 - 4 clearly showed how much the kids enjoyed learning the language as they presented Hindi sentences, fun songs and verses that they wrote themselves. Level 2 students presented a small yet funny skit in Hindi and Level 3 presented the Bala Vihar song.

-Hetal Babla, Lalitha Kumar and Manasi Popat



Bala Vihar Presentations on June 9, 2019

Pujya Gurudev's words, "Children are not vessels to be filled but lamps to be lit", were evident during the Annual Program presented by students in Pre-K through 8th grades. It was heartwarming to see the youngest children from Pre-K and K perform with so much enthusiasm, all chanting prayers and showcasing what they had learned throughout the Bala Vihar year. The older grades had more detailed presentation with costumes and props to showcase their respective curriculum. It looked like the *Vedic* period of India came alive on Sunday. One could clearly see that children enjoyed the year, and had put in tremendous practice and efforts for their annual presentations. Lakshmi Aunty's vision of the theme "Love Is...." is simple yet powerful, and teachers and students created a synergy in bringing its beauty on the stage creating Love All Around. The opening song, "Bhārat mā ke lāl ham" and the finale song, where the entire Bala Vihar student body sang and performed, "Love Is...God in every heart"; reminded of our pledge "we stand as one family".



It is indeed Pujya Gurudev's incredible vision for future of Hindu Culture that is inspiring all of us to continue to learn *Vedanta* and was made visible during the Annual BV presentation. **Mona Pandya** shares "To listen to PreK and K present the *slokas* was amazing, it was indeed an admiration to see how kids can remember and chant all these *slokas* with so much confidence. Amazing A to Z values by the 1st graders. *Kṛṣṇa* song by 2nd graders is still ringing in my mind and heart. It was so beautiful to see them dressed like Gopā-s and Gopī-s. Beautiful play of Rāma and chanting by third and fourth grades. It has inspired me to read *Rāmacaritamānasa*. Lots of hard work put in by 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th graders too."

-Uma Aggarwal



Swamini Kaivalyananda visits CMSD on June 16, 2019

This year's high school presentations, award and Graduation ceremonies was special with **Swamini Kaivalyananda's** presence. Swamini amma, who is from CCMT archives, was in San Diego as part of a bigger tour to conduct interviews and gather additional information for the archives department of Chinmaya Mission. She presented her project of archiving all the letters by Pujya Gurudev, and shared some wonderful insights into Gurudev's love for his devotees through personalized letters.

The high school presentations on this year's theme "Love is" were remarkable and thought provoking.

The 9 th graders beautifully presented the three pillars of Hindu Culture *Satya*, *Ahimsa* and *Brahmacarya* and chanted the *Gaṅgā Stotram* that kindled inspiration and awe for Mother *Gaṅgā* who inspired Pujya Gurudev to bring the wealth of spiritual knowledge to us all. The practical use of the learnings at Bala Vihar was interestingly brought out by 10th graders in their presentation, which conveyed the message of performing duties/actions without expectation of the results in '*yajñā bhāva*'. Love is living with spiritual values as presented by 11th and 12th grade students was very powerful especially in today's age of convenience and hoarding. This was particularly highlighted to the topic of Seven social sins as given by Mahatma Gandhiji. **Mona Pandya** shares " Thanks to all the wonderful teachers, Lakshmi Aunty and Sukumar Uncle who have put in so much time, energy and compassion to teach kids good values.

-Sreedevi Akkala





Bala Vihar Graduation - Class of 2019

The graduating children were presented with certificates, and were welcomed into the CHYK group by the alumni after taking the oath. It was indeed a very special moment, especially for some of the children who grew up with the Mission throughout their lives. Swamini Kaivalyananda's presence at the graduation ceremony, her genuine enthusiasm, encouraging words, and her smile added another level to this very special event.



CMSD Parent Reflection

This year's CMSD graduation was especially important and significant as it marked the end of one chapter in my parenting journey. The youngest has successfully graduated from Bala Vihar. The overwhelming emotion I felt was gratitude and love. Chinmaya Mission has been such an integral, constant, stable force in our lives we don't know life without it. We have been surrounded by this loving, supportive family. As I look back at our 19 years with CMSD I realize—without doubt—we made the right decision when we committed ourselves to the Mission. As a parent we have many choices and are often pulled in so many directions as to what to do with our kids. Yes, it does take a village to raise a child and I am so grateful to have this incredible village that has literally raised my kids.

-Bhuvana Garcia

Bala Vihar Awards -June 2019



This year's **award ceremony** was special with **Swamini Kaivalyananda's** presence and children receiving their awards with her blessings. All the children were excited for the awards ceremony that acknowledged the outstanding students in their annual quiz and those with perfect attendance. Awards were handed out for *Gītā* chanting competition as well as Chinmaya Slokanjali. All the bala *sevaks* and yuva *sevaks* were recognized for their *sevā*, which certainly inspired many children to join Gurudev's army of *sevaks*, and offer their best unto HIM. Hindi Language students were also recognized for completing Level 4.

"I have heard a lot about the yearly Balavihar graduation ceremony at the US centres, but, never had an opportunity to be part of it. At Chinmaya Jyoti, I witnessed it directly and experienced moments of joy to see Pujya Gurudev's vision being fulfilled. To keep Children engaged and inspired with Balavihar activities for more than 13 yrs is a herculean job. Sukumarji's & Lakshmi amma's commitment to the cause was vividly seen as an expression of joy on the kids and the parents, which makes this a unique Chinmaya Family. May the entire Guru paramparā's blessing always be with you to carry on further and for the other phase of expansion that you are envisioning."

-Swamini Kaivalyananda





Śrī Rāma Navamī and Śrī Hanumān Jayanti

Śrī Rāma Navamī was celebrated on **April 13, 2019** with Śrī Rāma pūjā, bhajans, Rāmarakṣā stotram, āratī and prasādam. Āratī was at 12 noon to mark the birth of Śrī Rāma. The rāmājanma chaupai-s were sung by all.

Grade 3 students presented the birth of Śrī Rāma. The play commenced with depiction of the unhappy childless king Daśaratha who was advised by Sage Vasiṣṭha to perform the yajña and distribute the pāyasam among his wives leading to the birth of Śrī Rāma.



This year the Śrī Hanumān Jayanti celebrations at CMSD, held on **April 20, 2019**, were especially memorable as the festivities coincided with the monthly Sundarakāṇḍa Pārāyaṇa. The aṣṭottara pūjā to Śrī Anjaneya was followed by the mellifluous chanting of the Sundarakāṇḍa in Raag Malkauns. This was followed by bhajans and the celebrations concluded with āratī and prasāda. In addition, the singing of Śrī Hanumān Cālīsā on this special day brought great energy and enthusiasm among the attendees. During the Sunday Bala Vihar assembly, the children of Bala Vihar fourth grade offered a presentation on Hanumān. Everyone present in Pranava Nilayam was overjoyed to see a fourth grader dressed up as Hanumān energetically dancing to the tune of the Hanumān Cālīsā.



Manasi Popat shares "This month's *Sundarakāṇḍa* at CMSD was extra special with *Hanumān Jayanti* celebrated during the same time. All the little children joined at the front and lead *Hanumān Cālīsā* towards the end, which was a beautiful expression of love and devotion. It is said that in kaliyuga – taking the name of the lord is enough to enable one to cross the ocean of *Samsāra*, and we are blessed here at CMSD, where we can soak in the powerful chanting every month and uplift our minds! "

Sujata Kulkarni adds "The beautiful and soulful chanting of the *Sundarakāṇḍa* made us feel the presence of *Hanumān-ji* inside Pranava Nilayam. It was one of the most memorable *Sundarakāṇḍa Pārāyaṇa*."

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.

”



CMSD Open House

CMSD open house was a wonderful way to experience all that Chinmaya Mission San Diego offers. Many facets of our activities are unknown -- especially to our new members, and this event truly highlighted how the Mission activities are geared towards the spiritual upliftment of the entire family – comprising of all the different age groups. CMSD open house gave an opportunity to the members of the larger community of San Diego to walk through all the Bala Vihar classrooms, and experience the in-class environment and personal interaction with the respective teachers. The *āśrama* was enlivened with the members, *sevaks/sevikas* and children enthusiastically visiting/representing every booth/class. The subtle classical instrumental background music added a divinized element to the atmosphere.

-Manasi Popat



Strī Śakti -A CHYK Devi Retreat in San Diego

The one day workshop, held on **May 25 2019**, conducted by **Lakshmi Aunty** was attended by three CHYKs and one mother.

"We began the retreat with a beautiful chanting of *Viṣṇu sahasranāmam* , and had a good discussion about this vital topic. All the attendees, myself included, learned and benefited from the exclusive *Devī* time and the experience of Amma in this regard was invaluable. We went through a detailed explanation of the *mahimā* of *Devī* , beginning with *Devī* as the inherent *Śakti* of *Īśvara* and the ways her *mahimā* manifests as qualities (compassion, fearlessness, etc.) Then the cosmic manifestation - that through her power the Lord takes the three-fold agent-ship of *Brahmā* , *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* . This led to more questions by the CHYKs desiring to understand the nuances of this relationship.

The group asked questions and discussed regarding the role of women in the modern society, conducting oneself and projecting the proper inner equipoise. We also studied the writings of Swamini Sharadapriyananda as it pertained to the role of women, as well as reflecting on her illustrious work in the name of *Nārāyaṇa*."

-Brni. Akalka





Mothers' Day and celebrations on May 12, 2019

Mother's Day celebrations at Chinmaya Mission San Diego are festive and distinct. Children and adults pay respects not just to their own mothers but also to the Divine mother by whose grace all of us are sustained. The *mātr pūjā* to the tune of *mātr stavanam* by Guruji invokes love and gratitude in our hearts. A sumptuous meal follows, leaving everyone happy and satisfied, mentally and physically.

-Meera Nichani



CMSD in the Community: Interfaith Community Events

On June 5, 2019 a panel of Interfaith leaders came together to share their basic beliefs and discuss **how the community can help them in times of crises**. This topic was chosen in the aftermath of the recent attack inside the Chabad of the Poway synagogue. The common ideas were expressed so we see less of the differences, Prayer, Being Together, Mutual Respect. Lakshmiji represented Hinduism and stated that Hindu philosophy is based on prevention. She expressed her view that there is only one Solution, the one that comes from a spiritual perspective. One of the leaders, a Japanese sensei stressed that the openness in 'I don't know' is important. It was heartening to see the interfaith leaders to come together and express how they wanted to be helped by the community.

On **Sunday June 23, 2019**, the interfaith leaders came together at the Ner Tamid Synagogue in Poway to discuss "**Religion and Ecology**." Speakers from various faiths, including Lakshmiji, spoke on how the ancient wisdom of the various religions advocate the same truth: to respect and preserve Mother earth. Members of CMSD rendered a beautiful song in sanskrit symbolizing a plea from the trees to save them. Prerana Kelkar, Rachna Halker and Harini Rangarajan also created a poster that was apt for the event.

Swamini Kaivalyananda shared - "Having participated, I realized that I would have missed something if I had not come. Various religious people talking about" Religion & Ecology" was informative. CMSD's participation along with the Balavihar kids was a treat to the heart. The presentation of the ideas and the song sung by our Chinmaya Family made the atmosphere divine. May children absorb these ideas and implement in their lives..."

-Lalitha Kumar & Radhachandran Padmanaban



"Re-education through Rāmayaṇa" at Shri Mandir - April 27 2019

On the occasion of *Rāma Navamī*, Lakshmi Aunty spoke at Shri Mandir in San Diego. **Nagesh Nookala** shares his experience: "ReEducation through *Rāmayaṇa* talk, offered very practical tips on how to inculcate teachings of *Rāmayaṇa* into our daily life. For me, the key take away was the practical application of teachings of *Rāmayaṇa* and I enjoyed this presentation. Before the start of the program, Pandit Raghavachari of Shri Mandir spoke about his association with Chinmaya Mission many decades ago. He also spoke about the yeoman service done by Chinmaya mission to Indian culture especially through the Bala Vihar programs that prepare the future generations.



Celebrating Pujya Guruji's birthday on June 30, 2019

On June 30th, Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji turned 69 years and was memorably celebrated in San Diego as Śrī Tejomaya Jayanti, with a *Guru pādukā pūjā* and musical offering. This day also marks the 17th anniversary of Chinmaya Dhvani at CMSD. For over 30 years, Pujya Guruji has delivered profound teaching through *bhajans* that he himself wrote, composed and sang. On this special day, Chinmaya Swaranjali beautifully rendered several of Pujya Guruji's divine compositions and also his favorite *Bhajans*. Lakshmi explained the deep import of the *Bhajans*. In his composition "He Prabho Vinatī hamārī". Pujya Guruji inspires us on how to pray to God and what to ask from him. Let us pray to Him to be His always. In his heart-rendering composition, "Guru kī śaraṇa me", Pujya Guruji pours out that his highest spiritual practice is to stay established and serve at the feet of his *Guru*. We bow to this great *Guru Paramparā* with gratitude. In a more jovial tone, Guruji in his bhajan "Śyama sundara ko to ānā hi hogā" complains to the Lord that having told us to focus only on quality of our actions, the Lord needs to deliver too, by coming into our hearts. In his profound composition "jisa hāla me, jisa deśa me", Pujya Guruji inspires us to remember the Lord in whatever state we are in, whichever garb or whichever enjoyment or illness we are in. Finally, we invited Guruji into our homes and hearts with the concluding song "āvo Guruji hamne tujko pyār se bulāya hai" composed by Lakshmi in 2008. Oh dear Guruji, please come and fill us with service (*seva*), divine company (*śatsang*) and spiritual knowledge (*jñāna*). We closed the morning with the birthday song seeking his blessings always.



SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA



*Hold yourself responsible for maintaining standards
greater than what others expect from you.*