



CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ

CMSD QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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IN THIS ISSUE OF CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ

The highlights of this quarter were the 105th Chinmaya Jayanti celebrations and the 21st Annual Program presentations by our Bala Vihar students. Mothers' Day was celebrated the Chinmaya way with *mātr pūjā*. *Śrī Rāma Navamī* and *Hanumān Jayanti* were celebrated with *pūjā* and class presentations. The 2020-21 session concludes with Annual Day presentations by the High school BV students, followed by the Awards and Graduation ceremony.



THE MASTER SPEAKS

*There is no companion like Solitude.
One who knows how to tune himself to the
inner silence, even in the midst of the din and
roar of the marketplace, enjoys a most
recreative solitude.*



Chinmaya Jayanti Celebrations

May 8, 2021 marked the **105th Jayanti of Pujya Gurudev**. This special occasion also provided the first opportunity, after a year of lockdown due to Covid-19, for a gradual return to our *āśrama* for celebrations. A small set of families, whose children had participated in the Chinmaya Gitanjali earlier, were invited to be present in person and seated in the courtyard, while strictly following COVID guidelines.



After an invocation by Chinmaya Swaranjali, who offered “*Ao Gurudeva*” Lakshmi Auntie performed the *Guru pādukā pūjā* with CMSD members, those present in person and others participating via zoom, joining along in the chanting of the *aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvalī* (108 names) of Pujya Gurudev. The chanting of the meditative *Tapovana ṣaṭkam* and *Guru pādukā stotram* marked an offering of gratitude and deep reverence to the *Guru paramparā*.



Chinmaya Dhvani offered the uplifting song “*Chinmayam Vande Jagadgurum.*” This was followed by the chanting of chapter two from *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* led by the students, who had previously offered Gitanjali *sevā*.



The sixth grade students of CMSD Bala Vihar presented *Chinmaya Mahimā* over Zoom. Each student presented a verse from the beautiful composition by Pujya Guruji that glorifies the life of Pujya Gurudev.

- Ashwin Mohan



CMSD members dancing to '*Cilaṅga Keṭṭi*', one of Pujya Gurudev's favorite bhajans.

Member reflections

It was wonderful to be back at the *āśrama* after a long hiatus and participate in Pujya Gurudev's birthday celebrations. Children offered a nice *bhajan* after the *pūjā*. It was quite a memorable experience to have chanted the *Bhagavad Gītā* in person, along with several other families. After the culmination of the event, we enjoyed delicious *prasādam*.

- Sowmian Rangarajan

It was a beautiful experience to witness and remotely participate in the celebration of Pujya Gurudev's 105th Jayanti at our Pranava Nilayam. Listening to the chanting of the ashtottaram and other stotrams as well as reveling in the words of Pujya Guruji's composition "*Chinmaya Mahimā*" is a constant reminder of the glory of the great Master and how blessed we all are to be under his grace.

- Priya Venkitaraman

CMSD 21st Annual Program Presentations

Language Classes Presentations on June 6, 2021



CMSD's 2021 Annual Program very aptly brings in the focus on “**The Art of Communication - Power of Speech**”. The students of Tamil *Pallikoodam* initiated the program with a melodious recitation of the song "*Thamizhththai Vaazhthu*", which is a tribute to the Goddess of Tamil Language followed by a serene rendition of "*Vellaitamarai Kadavul Vaazhthu*", a tribute to Vagdevi (Goddess of Speech - Saraswati) written by the Saint Bharathiyar. Grades 3 & 4 sang playful "*Kuzhandhai Padalkal*" or children's rhymes.

Taking examples from the prominent literary work *Thirukkural*, Grades 3, 4, 6 & 7 presented three *Kuralgal* (short couplets) in reference to effective communication and explained their meanings in both Tamil and English. The students concluded that the knowledge acquired through the ear is far superior than any other knowledge, whilst speaking provides only useful information in the conversation.

The students of Hindi *Pāṭhaśālā* beautifully brought to light the different nuances of communication - *Vānī* (Voice), *Karuṇā* (Compassion), *Samyama* (Restraint) to name a few. Grades 1 to 3 demonstrated their understanding of these concepts by reciting relevant *dohā* by poet *Rahīm Dās*, and elaborated on it using stories from *Rāmāyaṇā* and *Pañcatantra*. In the midst of the presentation, the soulful song "*Itinī śakti hame denā dhātā*" reminded all that only through His Grace can our hearts be cleansed, and it is from a pure heart that springs forth the qualities of sweetness and sensitivity in our speech.

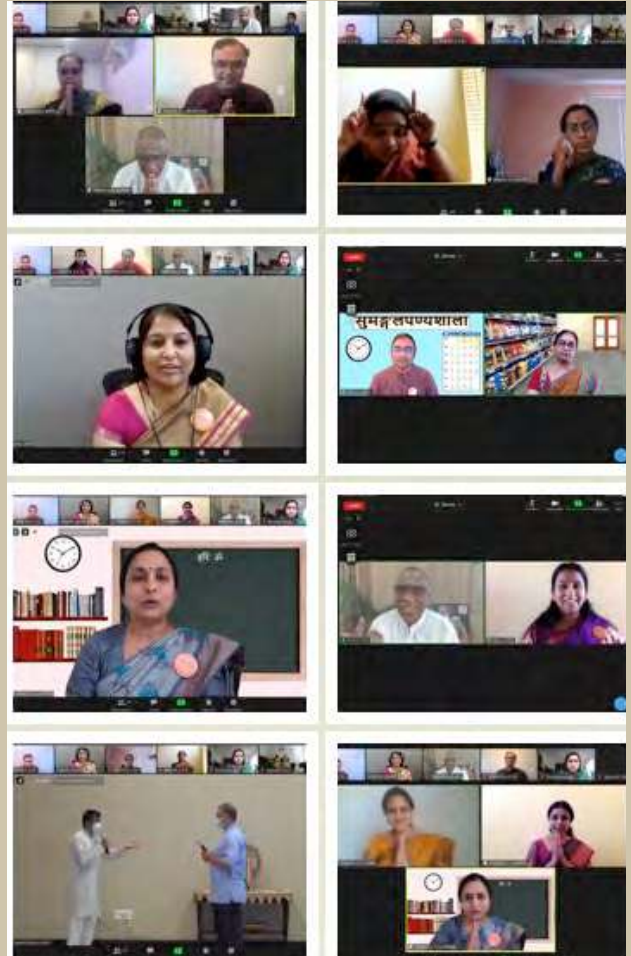


Towards the end of the program, participating children questioned the audience - "*Kab aur Kase bole?*" *Kab aur Kase sune?*" "*Kab cupa rahe?*" (*When & How to speak? When and How to Listen? When to remain silent?*). In conclusion they stated - "*Vākpaṭutvam ek kalā hai jiske liye abhyās jarūri hai.*" (Eloquence in speech is an art that is forged only through continuous practice).

The focus of the presentations by **Samskrta Vihar** Grades 1 through 5 students was "*Samuccāraṇaṁ*" - correct pronunciation of the words used in speech. Mispronunciation of the words conveys an entirely different meaning, the students portrayed this with a series of skits. The conversation between a shopper & her friend ends up in a hilarious situation when the shopper uses the word "*grahapraveśa*" (Planet entry in place of "*grhapraveśa*" (Housewarming), while sharing the happy news.

The students next piqued the interest of the audience by engaging in some clever riddles. These riddles brought to light the degree of refinement and inherent beauty in the language of *Samskrta*. Aptly summarized by **Pallavi Kulkarni**, *Samskrta* is a refined language and platform to carry forth the rich Indian culture and the ornament of mastered speech is an embellishment that never fades.

- **Akhila Koneri**

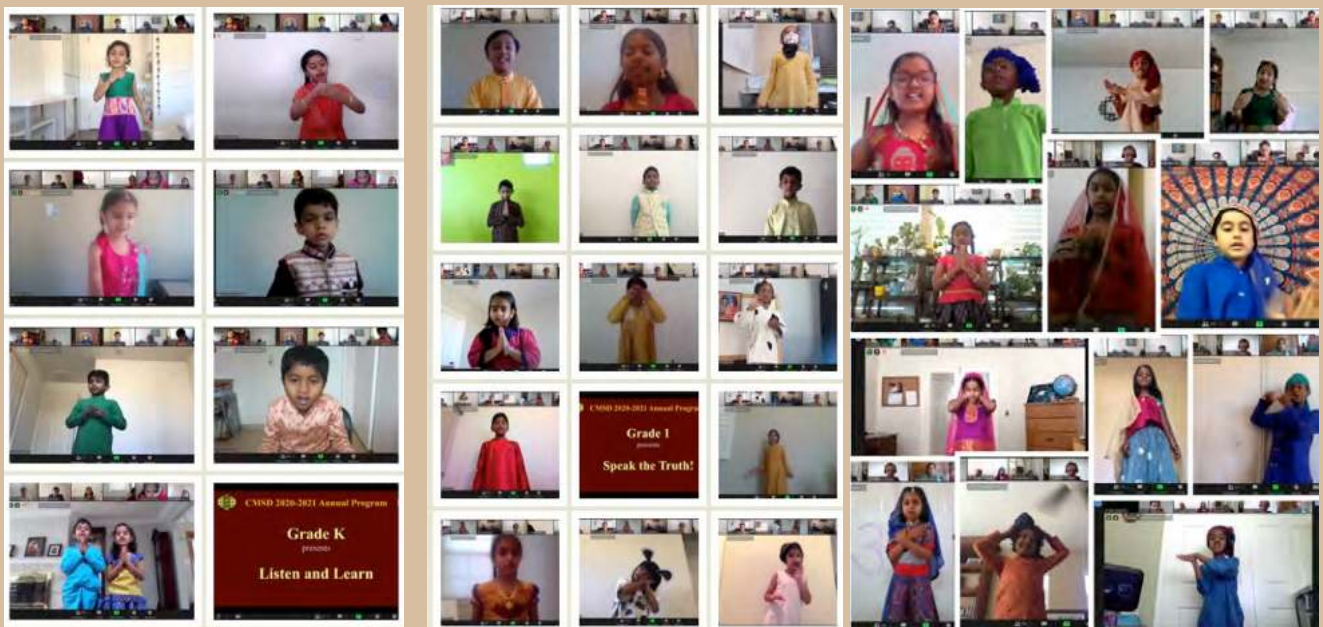


Bala Vihar Presentations on June 13, 2021

Shishu Vihar and Bala Vihar children presented on Zoom with a lot of enthusiasm & energy.



The Shishu Vihar children chanted the daily prayers and sang songs along with displaying their art work in the background.



Grade K

Grade 1

Grade 2



Grade 3

Grade 4

Grade 5

Grade 6



Grade 7



Grade 8



The audio-visual team skillfully transitioned between Chinmaya Dhvani students singing in the *āśrama* to slide presentations and then the virtual Bala Vihar presentations. Each Bala Vihar class presentation started off with a Samskrta Vihar student quoting a *subhāṣita* followed by its English translation. Students then presented the importance and value of the Art of communication through stories, lessons and/or songs learned during the year. Stories such as the *gopīs'* love for *Kṛṣṇa*, speaking like *Rāma*, Gurudev's communication style and *Yudhiṣṭhira* dialogue with the *Yakṣa* are some examples that kept the audiences' attention captured during the presentation.

Jay Babla shares “It was great to see students present what they have learned throughout the year and merge that with the theme of Art of communication.”



Grade 9



Grade 11 & 12



Grade 10



Grade 11 & 12



This year June 20, 2021, marked the first day of in-person session at CMSD after over a year. It was such a joy to watch the Bala Vihar high-school annual day presentation along with Grade 12 graduation physically in the *āśrama*. The whole *āśrama* was echoing with the beautiful chanting of the Guru stotram and the *Rāma nāma*. The day wonderfully coincided with Father's Day, reminding all of HIS grace! The high school students carried the theme of Art of Communication superbly in their annual day performances. Grade 9 presented the theme by showcasing a student election and how one should think before they post online. The Grade 10 class took a ride in the magic school bus to *Kurukṣetra* and showcased the communication between *Kṛṣṇa* and Arjuna right before the *Mahābhārata* war. Grade 11 and 12 students highlighted the positivity, impact and the values demonstrated in the speeches given by Swami Vivekananda, President Lincoln and Mahatma Gandhi to ignite change among the masses.

- **Hetal Babla**

Bala Vihar, Slokanjali and Gitanjali Awards



Chinmaya Slokanjali awards



Chinmaya Gitanjali awards

Samskrta Vihar awards



BV Perfect Attendance awards

Following the presentations, Lakshmi aunty and the Bala Vihar teachers recognized many students in each grade for Perfect attendance and Outstanding performance. Environmental friendly e-certificates were distributed for Chinmaya Gitanjali and Chinmaya Slokanjali, Language and Kala Jyoti programs.

Bala Vihar Graduation - June 20, 2021

The 12th graders then walked down memory lane with Lakshmi Aunty sharing slides that captured their many special & cherished moments spent at CMSD through the years. The graduating students were very touched.



All the graduates were presented with a Certificate of Achievement and a small Chinmaya Jyoti lamp. The BV graduates will carry forward their Bala Vihar teachings as they embark upon the new beginnings; and keep *Chinmaya Jyoti* glowing.



As per CMSD tradition, the CHYKs initiated the new graduates with the CHYK pledge. The afternoon concluded with the families of the graduate students serving homemade boxed lunch to all the attending mission members.



Congratulations and Best Wishes to CMSD's class of 2021. - **Hetal Babla**

Isha Popat, Grade 7 student, shares: "The graduation started with an emotional throwback of the lives of the graduates, going from pre-k to 12th grade. The students were asked questions based on their learnings from Bala Vihar, and my favorite response was the one given to the question: Which is your favorite line in the Chinmaya Mission Pledge? The reply was "We stand as one family", which was further expanded to relate it to the current situation of the pandemic. It really touched me because of how authentically it connects to this year and how the world only thrives if its people are united. It was really heartwarming to hear all the dads speak about the growth of their graduating children from Chinmaya Mission. It really inspired me to put my all into growing spiritually. To conclude, the graduation ceremony was really special, and I feel blessed to be part of such a wonderful mission."

BV Graduates' Reflections

What does Chinmaya Mission and Bala Vihar mean to me?

There is no one I can be more grateful to than Gurudev for bringing me to my Chinmaya Mission San Diego family. I joined Bala Vihar in 5th grade, and along with the teachings of *Bhāgavatam*, I was introduced to Chinmaya Kala Jyoti- the arts of tabla and Chinmaya Dhvani, and began learning Hindi. The lessons and discussions at Bala Vihar were genuinely the highlights of my week because there were countless thought-provoking discussions that have really changed the way I think and carry myself through each week.

The value that was the most difficult for me to implement was *sthita prajñā*. It was gradual, and by no means am I all the way there, but everyday I am making the conscious decision to be in the present. Bala Vihar put me on the right path of thinking and making the right choices, and I am so incredibly appreciative of every single teaching.

I felt myself growing closer with my CMSD family preparing for the *Māhāsamādhi* Camp of 2018, connecting with the high schoolers while co-facilitating mentorship sessions and interacting with our amazing CHYKs, tabla classes, Sanskrit classes, Hindi classes, preparations for presentations, our grand *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata* productions, huge lunches, *sevā*, workshops, and more.

What I took the most from my experience so far has been gratitude and appreciation, the value of *sthita prajñā*, and family. In 8th grade we learned about the 3 Gs- God, Guru, and *Grantha*- and how we need to show our gratitude every single moment of every single day. With Chinmaya Mission, my faith has grown so much, and I owe everything to God, Gurudev, all of my teachers, and the scriptures from which we gain this wisdom. I now have an unbreakable bond with my CMSD family, and I only intend to extend my Chinmaya Mission family as a CHYK, as I move onto the next stage of my education in college.

Harih Om!

Prerana Kelkar

BV Graduates' Reflections

When I first joined Bala Vihar, I was reluctant like many other young kids because I thought it merely meant waking up early on a Sunday morning. Over the years, however, I have realized that it means so much more than that. To me, Chinmaya Mission and Bala Vihar not only facilitate learning, growth, and transformation, but also mark the beginning of my quest on truly understanding myself.

From arrays of stories and analyzing characters of the *Mahābharata* to philosophical class discussions, the insight and experience that I have received at Bala Vihar are such that cannot be found anywhere else. It was only through Bala Vihar and stimulating class discussions that I truly began to question the meaning of my existence and life. Because of this, I have learned to recognize what is truly important in life, that chasing objects of the external world and materialistic goals will not bring me happiness because the true power of contentment and bliss lies within me. I can firmly say that these lessons and teachings have been a big part of my character development and have shaped my own understanding of the morals I find important and how I interact with others in the world.

Through the environment and the strong sense of community at the ashram, I also felt more connected to my culture and our values. As such, I hope to join a CHYK group in college and continue growing my mind in a community that fosters these values and traditions that have made up a large part of my life and will remind me of home even miles away.

As I move forward from high school into college and onward, I feel extremely grateful to all those who have selflessly devoted their time and energy to guiding me with these teachings and shaping my mind. Bala Vihar has given me the tools I need to live with meaning and purpose and discover the happiness within myself, and the curiosity that will always propel me to probe at the deeper questions in life and grow spiritually. I know that the values and lessons I have learnt will always continue to shape my path and better me as an individual, so that I may better the world around me as well.

Harih Om!

Shreya Choksi

BVGraduates' Reflections

Throughout all my years in school I have made many friends from different backgrounds. Even though I would talk with them often, I found it hard to really connect with them due to our cultural differences. As the years passed, I found this problem to grow more prevalent, and it was at this point that I realized I needed a community outside of my school life to fill in what I was missing. Only after reflection did I realize that the community I was searching for was at CMSD Bala Vihar all along. I have found that not only did I learn more about my culture, but I also made connections with other students across multiple grades. In the end, while my reflection may be short, my lesson learned is that CMSD Bala Vihar is not only a place to learn, but also a community to embrace.

HariH Om!

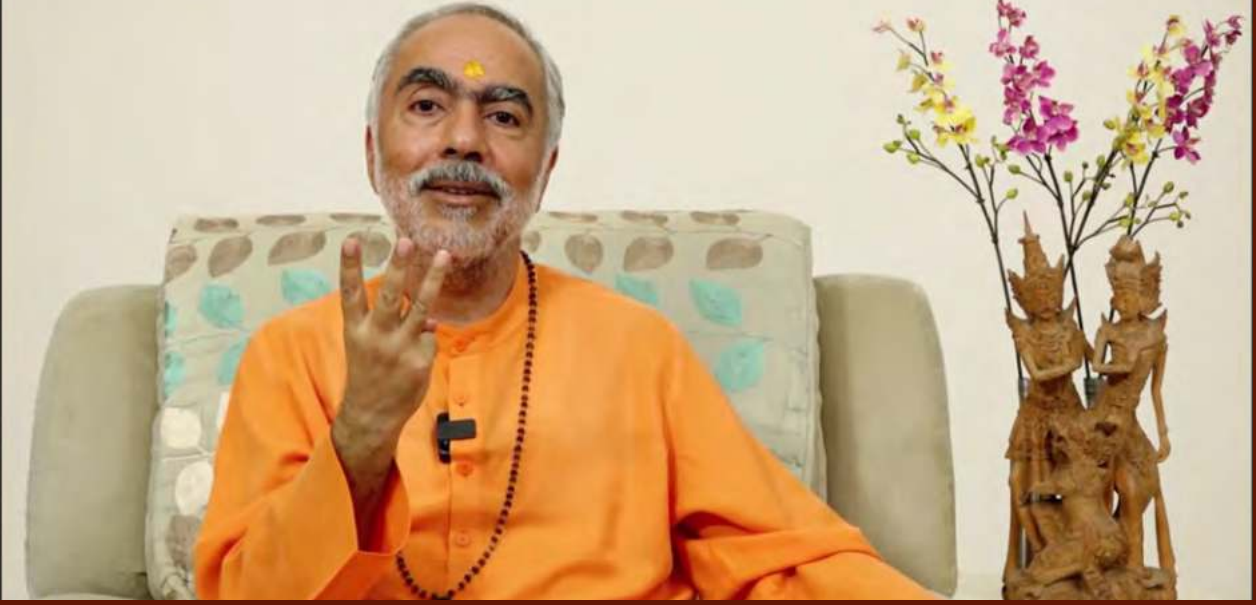
Anishvar Singaram

The past 14 years of attending Bala Vihar have truly been a life changing experience. From learning the alphabet, to retaining values from the *Bhagavadgītā*, Bala Vihar has meant more than “waking up every Sunday to go to the temple”; I saw it as an opportunity to grow spiritually as a person and culturally. I am genuinely grateful that I was one of the handful of students to be able to attend Bala Vihar and it would not have been possible without all the hard work and passion of Gurudev. All the knowledge I have gained from Bala Vihar has been very relatable and applicable to all parts of my everyday life, especially in high school. Picking up values from the *Bhagavadgītā*, Self Unfoldment, and studying the life of Gandhiji has had a strong impact on my life and I will strive to continue applying these values. As I move onto the next chapter in my life, I will always be anchored by these values. To name a few values that have always stuck with me: constant even-mindedness toward desirable and undesirable outcomes, straight forwardness, and purity of the mind. In pursuit of my degree and a job, I will always stick by all the other important values Bala Vihar has given me. I will use knowledge and skills to assist everyone in my community and give back to others. Thank you to everyone at Bala Vihar who has been a part of my experience; family, friends, and teachers: they made it a very fun experience and I would not have made it here without them!

HariH Om!

Arjun Babla

Rāmāyaṇa - The Inner Journey



The *Jñāna Yajña* by Pujya Swami Swaroopanandaji on "Rāmāyaṇa - The Inner Journey" was conducted from April 3 to April 10, 2021. This virtual event was hosted by the eleven centers of Chinmaya Mission West zone region. Pujya Swamiji beautifully brought out the teachings and representation of each of the *Rāmāyaṇa* characters in the journey of the spiritual seeker.



Every day, the program began with a special presentation by each of the west zone centers. On April 4, 2021, CMSD showcased excerpts of its production "*Chinmaya Rāma*", which was offered in May 2016 during Chinmaya Birth Centenary Celebrations.

On April 10, 2021, Swamiji led a live Q & A for all the participants. An e-copy of the mananam book, 'In the company of Sages' was distributed as *Yajña prasāda* at the end of the event.



All those attending the *Yajña* were deeply touched and enthusiastically participated in the interactive session with Lakshmi auntie every evening following the lecture. Particularly impressive was the joyful expression of the Bala Vihar children in attendance who grasped the subtleties in the teachings of *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Member Reflections

I had a unique experience throughout this week - *Satsaṅga* with Swamiji and Auntie. Swamiji ending each day with the meditative thought of Lord *Rāma* was beautiful. The CMSD *satsaṅga* with Auntie helped get clarity of Swamiji's talks that day. I understood that we should only earn to protect *dharma* and have only one desire which is *Mokṣa*.

During the *satsaṅga* with Lakshmi Auntie, the fact that we must leave our comfort zone to serve in this world caught my attention. The example of Swami Vivekanandaji's message to his disciples to become a *upayogī* first and then a *yogī* was insightful. The entire *Rāmāyaṇā* was captured in verse 50 of *ātmabodha*. Both Swamiji and Auntie described how we overcome our *rāga* and *dveṣa*, conquer this flickering mind with single pointed thought towards Lord *Rāma* and gain the everlasting peace within - *ātmā rāma virājate*.

Thank you Auntie for taking time to give us a chance to reflect on our scriptures and use them in our daily life. I am also very thankful to the whole *Guruparamparā* for making us a part of *Chinmaya Jyoti*, San Diego.

-Gira Pandya

I really enjoyed Swamiji's talk. I learned that *Hanumānji*, with Lord *Rāma*'s blessings, overcame all the obstacles on the way to Lanka, searching for Mother *Sītā*. Similarly, I can also overcome the six sharks (as taught in Grade 5), which obstruct my higher goals, with my devotion to Lord *Rāma* and Pujya Gurudev.

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Śrī Rāma Navamī on April 21, 2021



On the day of *Rāma Navamī*, the audience was treated to a divine rendition of *Śrī Rāma Stuti* and *aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvali pūjā*. At noon, which is the birth time of Lord *Rāma*, *Rāma-Janma-Caupai* was chanted, and *bhajans* were offered by the Chinmaya Swaranjali group. A beautiful song from the home production - Chinmaya *Rāma* and *Vedasāra Śiva Stotram* enhanced the celebrations.

- **Srividya Brahmakal**

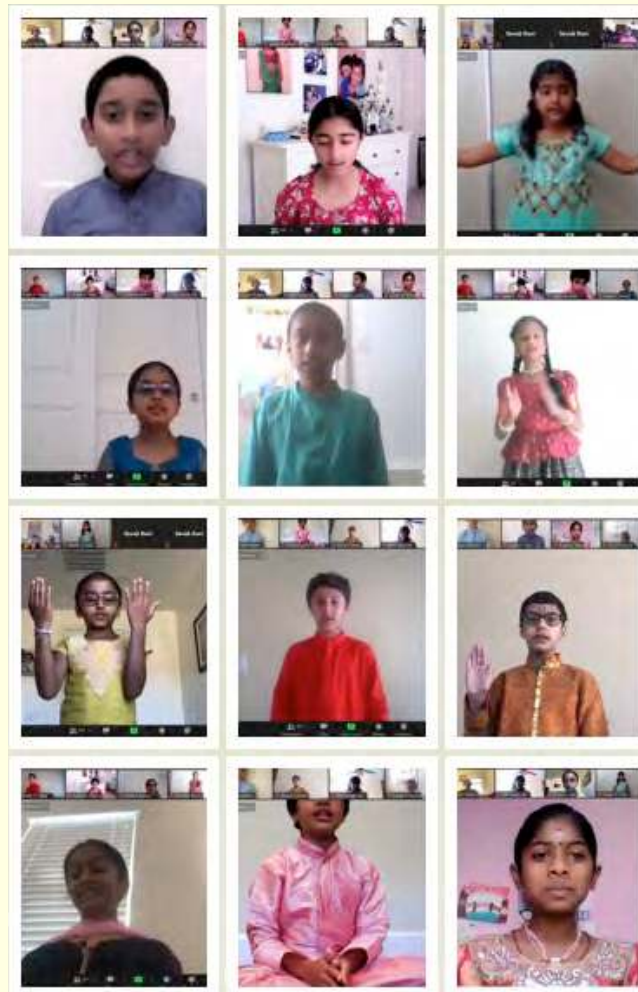
Member Reflections

Nita Halker, Grade 3 teacher reflects, “The celebration of the birth of that Lord *Rāma* whose very name means bliss was indeed delightful. Listening to Swami Swaroopanandaji’s “*Rāmāyaṇā - The Inner Journey*” talk the week before made it doubly special. Our minds were tuned to the Lord by chanting his 108 names and witnessing the *pūjā*. Singing the “*Rāma-Janma-Caupai*” exactly at the time of his birth at noon was the best part of the celebration. It made me feel as though we were all in Ayodhya welcoming the Lord. May Lord *Rāma* dwell forever in my heart.”

Jayanthi Shanmugan says, “I am happy that I was able to attend this event, along with my daughter. It is indeed a blessing to be able to even witness the *pūjā*. Our children learn a lot from these well-planned *pūjās* and events. In fact, my daughter was looking forward to the *pūjā* this morning without me having to remind her. The whole event helped many of us focus on the Lord the entire time and really set aside everything else and dedicate that time to God.”

Akhila Koneri writes:

“Lotus-eyed radiant *Śrī Rāma*. Covered in the reverent offerings of flowers & tulsi leaves, drenched in notes of music that resonate your virtues, You bring ‘*ānandam*.’ You, who teach us sweet surrender,
You, who teach us the essence of gratitude,
You, who delights everyone's heart,
Your coming is our blessing.
Śrī Rāma. Jaya Rāma!”



On April 18, 2021, Grade 3 Bala Vihar students chanted *Nāma Rāmāyaṇā*. Chinmaya Dhvani also offered a bhajan in praise of Lord *Rāma*.

Śrī Hanumān Jayanti

On April 27, 2021, the worldwide Chinmaya Mission family soaked in the mesmerizing *Hanumān Jayanti* event -- ‘**Sanjeevan Hanuman Returns**’, which was in continuation of the post pandemic 2020 virtual global relay chanting of *Hanumān cālīsā*. As a remarkable element for this year’s celebration, we were able to get the auspicious *darśana* of *Rāmadūta Bhakta Hanumānji*, virtually, as he leaped across from *Śrī Chinmaya Rāmadūta* temple in Karur, Tamil Nadu, India to *Śrī Bhakta Hanumān* temple in *Ramboda*, Sri Lanka. It was beautiful to watch *abhiṣeka* and *pūjā* offerings at both the temples followed by 108 times chanting of the *Hanumān cālīsā* by our global Chinmaya Family in various *rāgas*.



Under the guidance of Lakshmi Aunty, CMSD Swaranjali team rendered *Hanumān cālīsā* in three beautiful *rāgas*.



At *Chinmaya Jyoti Hanumānji* was adorned beautifully with red and yellow flower garlands. The members enjoyed chanting *aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvalī* during the *pūjā* followed by *Hanumān cālīsā*. We all experienced the peaceful atmosphere of the *āśrama* through Zoom.

Grade 4 BalaVihar students who are learning about *Hanumānji* and his qualities through *Rāmāyaṇā* offered chanting of *Nāma Rāmāyaṇā* and *Hanumān cālīsā*, and also presented a story of *Hanumānji* during BV session on Sunday. These small *vānaras* were very excited to share what they learned with *Hanumānji*.

- Sujata Kulkarni



Mothers' Day Celebrations



This year's Mother's Day Celebrations were held over Zoom on May 9, 2021 after the regular Sunday Bala Vihar sessions. Following the beautiful invocation songs by CMSD CHYK Aditi Puttur and Sevak Tushar Sathe, it was time to chant the *Mātṛstavanam* - a beautiful composition by Pujya Guruji. Lakshmi Aunty led the chanting of the verses with the meaning of the verse read out by CMSD Sevak Ashwin Mohan. Over the Zoom session, one could view all the Bala Vihar children seated at the feet of their mothers, and offering them flowers as each verse was read out. It was indeed a beautiful way to conclude a weekend of celebrations at CMSD.

- **Ashwin Mohan**

Member Reflections

In our Hindu culture, we revere our mother every day, not just once a year. CMSD has a unique tradition to celebrate this special occasion every year, which touches one deep in the heart. This year too, despite the covid pandemic, the celebrations continued. CMSD's Chinmaya Swaranjali offered *bhajan* to inspire in us the courage & self-confidence that a child feels in the physical proximity of her/his own mother. Thinking of my own mother, grandmother and aunts who have nurtured me is both humbling and inspiring for me. Their endurance, tenacity and unfailing cooperative endeavor (*yajñabhāva*) inspires a great nudge to trudge-on in the path they have so gently paved.

- **Sumathi Iyengar**

Celebrating mother's day had always felt like a "Hallmark" day, probably because we had never experienced it the "Chinmaya way". While my 3 year old daughter enjoyed playing with the flowers in her hand, and making an activity out of arranging flowers in geometric patterns on my feet, I got a chance to consciously pay tribute to my mother, grandmother, and my mother-in-law, making it extremely special.

- **Srividya Brahmakal**

CMSD Ongoing Events



The monthly *Sundara Kāṇḍa Pārāyaṇā* were held on April 17, 2021, May 29, 2021 and June 19, 2021. The event in June marked the opening of the *āśrama*, following the COVID-19 reopening guidelines and adhering to the statewide opening rules and regulations effective June 15, 2021.



CMSD Mothers as Samskr̥ti Palakas

The vision of this group is to groom mothers as custodians of Hindu *samskr̥ti*. CMSD mothers come together for an informal and interactive monthly meeting that addresses the many areas of self-development, healthy lifestyle as per the scriptures, role and duty of mothers, upbringing of children with the right values, food habits, taking pride in being a Hindu, etc. This is yet another wonderful platform at *Chinmaya Jyoti* that provides the much needed social interaction and creates a healthy support group for CMSD mothers. The first meeting of Samskr̥ti Palakas was on April 11, 2021 with monthly interactive session on May 9 and June 13, 2021.



CMSD Food Drive - Annadanam

On April 17, 2021, and May 15, 2021, CMSD high schoolers organized a food drive for Interfaith Community Services. They were able to collect many non-perishable food items, including cases of water and cereal through generous member donations.

- Arushi Bharadwaj, Grade 10

Chinmaya Gitanjali

CMSD's Annual *Gītā* Chanting Competition



BV Students from various grades waiting for their turn to chant the *Bhagavad Gītā*

Chinmaya Gitanjali was held on **April 23, 2021**. BalaVihar children and adults chanted the first 38 verses from the *Sāmkhya Yoga*, second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. In all there were 43 BalaVihar children, 2 CHYKs, and 16 adults who participated in the competition. The winners will be announced at the end of this academic year in June.

- **Srividya Brahmakal**

BV Youth Corner - Painting and Storytelling Workshops



On May 1st and 2nd, the High School Mentorship program organized two workshops for the younger Bala Vihar children to introduce and discuss the topics of sustainability and different forms of devotion. Both these workshops were undertaken via the medium of storytelling and painting, respectively. There is a strong underlying interconnectedness between the two topics, as one cannot but live with a higher vision of sustainability and conscious living when one undertakes everyday activities as a form of worship to the Lord. In the painting workshop, we discussed how *Bhagavān* is everywhere and in everything we do. We learnt how different forms of devotion can be undertaken in our day to day living, such as singing the Lord's praises, chanting his *nāma* as *japa*, or writing stories while thinking about the Lord. The workshop was centered around the theme - Everything we do should be for the Lord! The topic of Sustainability in today's day and age was creatively explored in the storytelling workshop. After acting and telling various stories from our scriptures that teach us about sustainability, we discussed the importance of sustainability and why it is our duty to take care of our planet. Both workshops were on very important topics, and were introduced and discussed in a fun and enjoyable manner using videos and interactive games.

Hemadarshani Rajendran, Grade 9 shares: "The workshops were a great learning experience for me as well as many other high schoolers. I enjoyed using arts and storytelling to convey a bigger theme of sustainability and devotion. Many times we are taught many lessons and topics but actually teaching those lessons we learnt was a totally different experience."

Aathmika Radhachandran, Grade 9 adds: "I really enjoyed the opportunity to teach younger kids the importance of sustainability and how they can make small changes in their lives! Writing stories with these underlying messages and acting them out reinforced my understanding of sustainability as well. I look forward to more opportunities like this! "

Earth Day Presentation by High School Students

The high schoolers have been learning about sustainability this year through multiple documentaries, articles, and workshops with Lakshmi Aunty. They presented a slideshow on their understandings and reflections on sustainability as an Earth Day offering to spread awareness about the sustainable choices we as a community can make to save our planet ! The Chinmaya Mission Family was encouraged to take action and to make sustainable choices in their daily lives. They motivated us with the Chinmaya Mission Spirit of We Can, We Must We Will!

- Hemadarshani Rajendran, Grade 9

Chinmaya Jyoti - A sacred haven for all beings!



A beautiful dove finds its home on a sturdy ladder at *Chinmaya Jyoti* during the past year of lockdown. Indeed how harmoniously nature has embraced our *āśrama*!

BV Corner - Grade 2 Spring Break Project



Grade 2 students submitted *Kṛṣṇa* Dioramas for their spring break projects.

Celebrating Pujya Guruji's Birthday

June 30, 2021 marked the 71st birthday of our Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji. This was celebrated in person at our āśrama. Pujya Guruji's compilations and bhajans on Lord Rama were offered at HIS feet by Chinmaya Swaranjali. Few melodious highlights that reverberated in *Pranava Nilayam* and filled our hearts with love and devotion were *Avo Guruji*, *Guru Kṛpāñjanā* and *jaya jaya gunā sagarā* to name a few. The program concluded with the birthday song for Pujya Guruji - *Janmadinamidam ayi priya guro*. This day also witnessed 19th Anniversary of Chinmaya Dhvani in San Diego.



Member Reflections

We were very happy and blessed to offer Guruji's various compositions. My favorite composition is *śyama sundara ko to ānā hi hogā, aaj mere ghara aye Ramji*. It was a great experience and the whole one hour was a bliss. We all enjoyed singing the bhajans. We concluded it with the birthday song for Pujya Guruji - *Janmadinamidam ayi priya guro* where we pray to the Lord that may Guruji always shower his blessings upon us in our spiritual journey.

- Sujata Kulkarni

On the occasion of the 71st birthday of Guruji, CMSD members celebrated an evening filled with music. Chinmaya Swaranjali's offerings of Guruji's compositions were melodious and filled with devotion.

- Mamatha Puttur

Listening to the songs by Guruji and about Lord Rama was such an uplifting experience. I especially loved that the bhajans were all so joyous and it was nice to see everyone singing and clapping to the beat!

- Prerana Kelkar



Swami Tejomayananda

Spirituality provides one the motive to practice goodness independent of the reactions, responses and experiences of other people.

