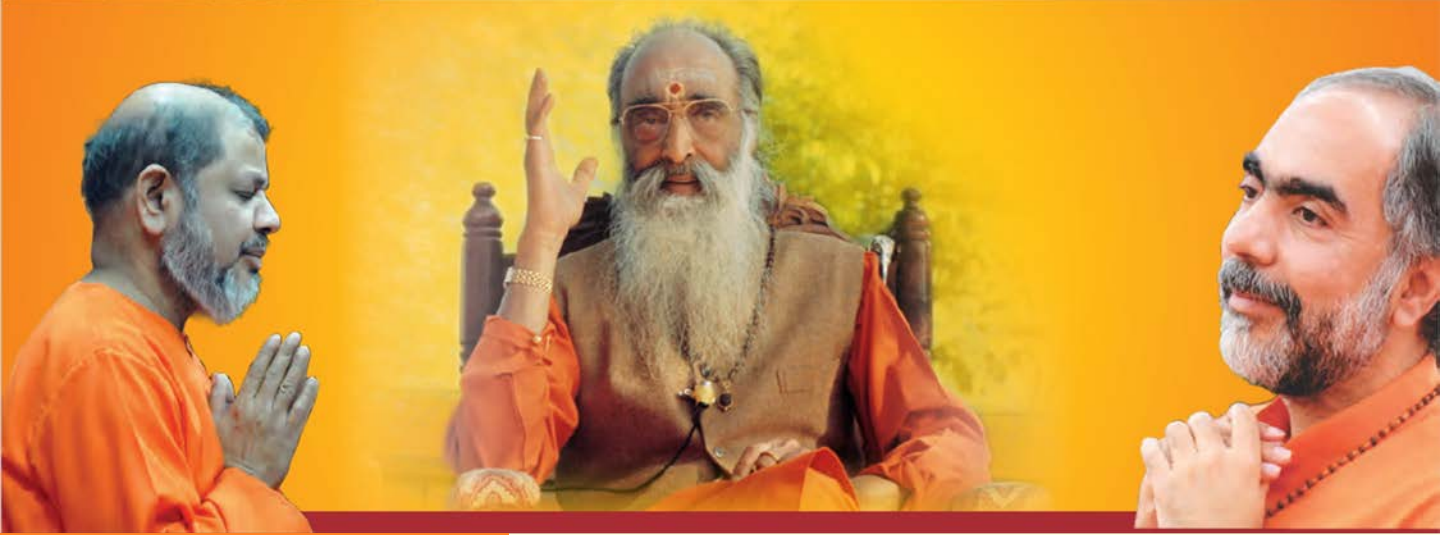


CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ

CMSD QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



IN THIS ISSUE

Śrī Hanumān Jayanti Celebrations	2
Chinmaya Gītāñjali	2
Biographical Movie: "On A Quest"	2
Chinmaya Jayanti Celebrations	3
Celebrating Mothers' Day	5
CMSD Information and Registration Session 2023-24	6
10th Anniversary of Jyoti Vināyaka Sthāpanā	6
CMSD 23rd Annual Program	7
CMSD 19th Summer Youth Camp	14
CMSD Ongoing Events	18
Shishu Vihar/Bala Vihar Corner	19

The key features of this quarter were the 107th Chinmaya Jayanti celebrations, the 23rd Annual Presentations and the BV Graduation Ceremony. Mothers' Day and Tenth Anniversary of Śrī Jyoti Vināyaka Sthāpanā were observed in a special way. The quarter concluded with the Nineteenth Annual CMSD Summer Youth Camp.



THE MASTER SPEAKS

"With one hand.. hold on to His Feet, and with the other hand continue working. There is no other way. Insulated with loving contemplation of Him and His Glory..... go through life, meeting bravely and efficiently all the problems that stand crowding around...."

Śrī Hanumān Jayanti Celebrations



Śrī Hanumān Jayanti was celebrated on **April 6, 2023** with *aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvali pūjā* followed by the chanting of *Hanumān cālīsā*.



The celebrations continued into the Sunday assembly on **April 9, 2023** with a presentation by **Grade 4** children describing the birth of *Hanumānji* followed by the chanting of *Śrī Nāma-Rāmāyaṇa* and *Hanumān cālīsā*.

Chinmaya Gītāñjali

CMSD's twenty-third *Bhagavad Gītā* Chanting Competition was held on **May 6, 2023**. Budding chanters from Shishu Vihar set the bar very high for the 40 participants, who chanted Chapter 3 (*Karma Yoga*) of *Bhagavad Gītā*. Each participant was judged for memory, pronunciation, presentation and overall effect.



Biographical Movie: “On A Quest”

On the occasion of the upcoming 107th Chinmaya Jayanti, CMSD hosted the screening of the movie “On A Quest” on **May 7, 2023**.

By watching the enlightened masters in the movie, we get a glimpse into their humility, simplicity in living, alertness, perseverance, compassion and forgiveness.



In the words of **Bhamini Gobiraj**, “There is only selflessness in a *Guru* who works tirelessly for the benefit of the whole of humanity.”

Chinmaya Jayanti Celebrations



The 107th birth anniversary of Pujya Gurudev was celebrated on the evening of **May 8, 2023**. It was a solemn occasion for all CMSD family members to gather and offer devotion to the great Master. Pujya Gurudev's *padukā*-s were reverentially carried from *Praṇava Nilayam* to the dias by **Ravi Halker** accompanied by **Lakshmi Aunty** and **Sukumar Uncle** with a soulful rendering by Chinmaya Swaranjali "*Āo Gurudev*" in the background.



Lakshmi Aunty performed the *Guru Pādukā Pūjā* as everyone chanted along the *aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvalī* of Pujya Gurudev. The courtyard was reverberating with the chants of *Tapovana ṣaṭkam* and *Guru pādukā Stotram*. **Grade 12 graduating children** were blessed to witness the *pūjā* while sitting at the feet of Pujya Gurudev's altar.



CMSD Swaranjali choir offered *bhajans* such as *Ānandamaya Caitanyamaya* and *Cinmayam vande jagadgurum*. **CMSD Dhvani** sang *Guru brahma rupa jāno* and *Guru hamāre*.

Chinmaya Jayanti Celebrations



The soulful singing touched the hearts of all, especially young children who were enjoying the rhythm! Later in the evening, all the CMSD members danced to the tune of *O Chinmayā Terā Darśana Pāya* and one of Pujya Gurudev's favorite song *Cilaṅga Keṭṭi*.



The *pūjā* culminated with *ārati* and the offering of the Chinmaya *Maṅgalam* as well as the serving of *prasādam* and dinner to everyone present.



CMSD Bala Vihar Sevika Chitra reflected, “It’s a true blessing to be under our Gurudev’s guidance and to learn our *dharma* of life. What a perfect day to show our gratitude to Pujya Gurudev for all his guidance to do the right thing and to live by it!”

Arushi Bharadwaj (Grade 12) expressed, “At the *pūjā*, I was able to keep my mind focused on the divine form of Pujya Gurudev while chanting and offering flowers. The *pūjā* reminded me of the valuable teachings I have gained from Bala Vihar and of my gratitude to Pujya Gurudev. I will strive to continue practicing the values I have learned here as I graduate and go to college.”

Celebrating Mothers' Day



May 14, 2023 marked Mothers' Day celebrations at CMSD – the Chinmaya way! The event commenced with Pujya Guruji's beautiful composition *Mātr̥ Stavanam* sang by **Lakshmi Aunty**. CMSD Sevak, **Ashwin Mohan**, repeated the verses along with its profound meaning that struck a magical chord with all the hearts!

This heartwarming ritual inculcates in the children the essential values of reverence, respect and gratitude. At the same time it creates a humbling experience for all the Mothers – as we all realize how insignificant our role is in the grand scheme of things. It is only the Divine Mother's grace and loving care that sustains everything and every being - ceaselessly!



Grade 1 children presented *Mahālakṣmī Aṣṭakam* which was followed by *ārati*, Chapter 15 *Bhagavadgītā* chanting and potluck lunch.

Member Reflections:

Mothers' Day celebration was very different, it showed us how to spend quality time with kids and teach them respect for their Mother. - **Mausmi Raj**

Mothers' Day was a great experience for me because this is the first time I celebrated it spiritually...I would like to Thank our Chinmaya Mission family for passing good values to our kids and I feel so grateful that we are connected with this organization. - **Shobhna**

Today on Mothers' day *pūjā* I liked offering petals to my Mother...I also liked the sweets given at the end of the *pūjā*. - **Darsh** (Grade 3)

This is my most favorite day of Chinmaya Mission. I got to do *pūjā* to our mom and sing *Mahālakṣmī Aṣṭakam*... the food was really yummy, the most favorite food that I liked was yogurt rice and some of the sweets too! - **Aaditri Bathija** (Grade 1)

Celebrating Mothers' Day



CMSD Information and Registration Session 2023-24

The CMSD Information and Registration session was conducted on **May 20, 2023**. The session began with a brief introduction of the Shishu Vihar and Bala Vihar Program followed by experiences shared by current Bala Vihar students. Later on the session was opened up for general Q & A and registration.



10th Anniversary of *Jyoti Vināyaka Sthāpanā*



CMSD celebrated ten years of *Śrī Jyoti Vināyaka Sthāpana* on **May 23, 2023**. It was a joyous event, reminiscent of the welcoming of *Śrī Jyoti Vināyaka* to *Chinmaya Jyoti* in **June 2013**. **Lakshmi Aunty** shared some wonderful memories of the miraculous arrival of *Śrī Jyoti Vināyaka* to San Diego.

10th Anniversary of *Jyoti Vināyaka Sthāpanā*



Special offering of 108 *modakam-s* with *aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvali* was performed on this auspicious occasion. The celebration culminated with beautiful *bhajans*, dance, *ārati* and *prasādam*.

CMSD 23rd Annual Program

The CMSD Annual program presentations this year, as in the recent past years, were spread over three weekends - Languages, Shishu Vihar - Bala Vihar classes. The theme for the 2023 Annual Program “**Great Disciples**” was the string on which the presentations from the different classes over three weeks were strung together like lustrous pearls.

Language classes Presentations - June 4, 2023



On **June 4, 2023** members of *Chinmaya Jyoti* gathered to celebrate its 23rd Annual Program with Bala Vihar and Adult students from the following language programs: Tamil, Hindi and Sanskrit.

At the outset of this presentation, the Bala Vihar students of the ‘**Thamizh Pallikoodam**’ (Tamil School) began with an invocation of Tamil typically as the Divine

Mother known as the ‘**Tamizh Thai Vaazthu**’, followed by a recitation of the verses on Lord *Muruga*, the patron God of Tamil. The Tamil students then narrated the story of Swami Vivekananda as being the greatest disciple of *Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa*. Swami Vivekananda was aptly spoken as one who sacrificed His life not just for India but for the whole world.

CMSD 23rd Annual Program



The **Level I** students of **Hindi Pāṭhaśālā** enacted the story of "Arjuna & Cīḍiyā Ki Āṅkh" to portray that a great disciple has a quality of firm abidance in the goal pointed to him by his *Guru*.



Level III-IV students depicted how the great *Sūradāsa* followed the instructions of his *Guru* with "*Śraddhā*" (Faith) and "*Viśvāsa*" (Belief), never once questioning the ways of his teacher to finally overcome his temper.

Level V-VI students through their presentation of a small skit on *Toṭakācārya* showed us how the teacher always holds dear a student who does not take pride in his knowledge. *Ādi Śaṅkarācāryaḥ* saw in Giri what none of the other students saw, his humility, his loving service to his *Guru* and his eagerness to learn.



Level VII-VIII students enacted the young Narendra's journey in seeking God and finally meeting his revered Master *Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa*. Through Swami Vivekananda we learn the qualities of being fearless in our enquiry of God.



The **Saṁskṛta Vihar** students began their presentation with the recitation of *Māheśvara Sūtrāṇi* by students of **Batch 8**. The story "*Buddhimān śiṣyaḥ*" was enacted by **Batch 7**.

The message of the story was "Do not judge anyone just by his outer appearance." **Batches 5-6** portrayed the unflinching devotion of *Ekalavya* through the story "*Ekalavyasya Gurubhaktiḥ*".

CMSD 23rd Annual Program



Batches 2-4 presented the story “*Uttama śiṣyaḥ Āruṇiḥ*”. A true *śiṣyaḥ* is the one whose devotion to his *Guru* is unshakeable and is reflected in his resolve towards performing his duties.

Story of “*Mātangah*” was enacted by **Batch 1**. In this story, the *śiṣyaḥ* -*mātangah* is blessed by his *Guru Bhairavānandah* at the end of his education with a *mantram* that allows him to take any form. The story outlines that even a wise man will be disrespected if he does not respect his *Guru*.

Shishu Vihar and Bala Vihar upto Grade 8 Presentations - June 11, 2023



After dedication to our *Gurus*, Bala Vihar teachers broke the ice with a humorous story of some devotee pigeons, a sage and a hunter. The sage warns the pigeons about how the hunter could lure them with grain and trap them with his net. The pigeons while mindlessly repeating the sage's advice “Do not eat”, fall into the trap while the children in the audience squealed and giggled, some even exhorting the pigeons not to eat the grain.

Lakshmi Aunty then explained the import of the story for all devotees, and recounted how it was a favorite story of Pujya Gurudev to his disciples. The significance of the theme was beautifully summarized by **Aunty**, “Each one of us is enrolled in the “university of life”, destined to become great disciples to the *Guru* who never fails to guide us.”



The entire program highlighted the role and importance of **Bala Vihar** in the growth of our children. The program began with the invocatory song: “Chinmaya Bala Vihar *lāyegā navīnatā..*” declaring the vision of the BV program.



The grade-wise presentations then started with our youngest children in **Shishu Vihar 3** who came on stage with their mothers and stole our hearts while asking us to follow Gurudev and “pray, pray, pray”.

CMSD 23rd Annual Program



The theme of God and prayers continued with **Shishu Vihar 4** who said their daily prayers and **Grade K** who sang "My God is so Great, so strong and so mighty..." and also emphasized obedience with the story of *gajamukha*, the mouse-vehicle of *Gaṇeśa*.



Grade 1 enacted the BV Alphabet values vigorously. It was heartwarming to see the older children in the audience remembering their younger days and mouthing the songs or acting out the values from their seats with BV smiles.

Starting with **Grade 2** and continuing through **Grade 8**, we saw the stories of great disciples enacted. **Grade 2** did a skit on *Kṛṣṇa* as a disciple at the *āśrama* of *Sāṇḍīpani Ṛṣi*, while **Grade 3** showed *Rāma* as a disciple with Sage *Viśvāmitra*.



Grade 4 expounded the greatness of *Hanumān* with many small stories of his exploits and devotion to *Rāma*.



Grade 5 and 6 followed suit with *Prahalāda*'s devotion and the story of *Giri* and *Totakāṣṭakam*.

CMSD 23rd Annual Program



Rāma as teacher, and *Vibhīṣaṇa* as disciple, formed the focus for the **Grade 7** presentation on the *Vibhīṣaṇa Gitā*. The entire assembly clapped rhythmically with the recital of the *Gitā*, and it was a soulful experience.

Grade 8 concluded the grade-wise presentation with short episodes on Arjuna from the *Mahābhārata*. They capped it with a "We will follow Arjuna" that had the audience smiling and clapping energetically.



Finally, the entire BV student body came on stage to sing **Swami Sivananda's "Eighteen -ities"** song. It was a fitting finale to the day's engrossing program that glorified great disciples who illustrated such values.

Bala Vihar Grade 9 through Grade 12 Presentations - June 18, 2023

On Sunday, **June 18, 2023** the Bala Vihar high-school students (**Grade 9 through 12**) captivated the audience. Students used songs, skits, game show, sports interview to reinforce the theme of "**Great Disciples**". The children effectively imparted gems from the Vedanta such as self-control, selflessness, detachment and single-pointedness toward achieving the goal of self-realization



CMSD 23rd Annual Program



Grade 11



Grade 12



Following the Bala Vihar presentations, **Lakshmi Aunty** and the **Bala Vihar teachers** announced Perfect Attendance, Chinmaya *Ślokāñjali*, Chinmaya *Gītāñjali* awards and Language classes' certificates.

Bala Vihar Graduation: Class of 2023

After the Bala Vihar Annual performances and awards, it was time for **Grade 12 Bala Vihar Graduation**. The ceremony was initiated by the convocation chants found in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. Each student was presented with a certificate and a *Chinmaya Jyoti* lamp from **Sukumar uncle**, their Bala Vihar teacher. Some graduates shared the values from Bala Vihar learnings they are taking to the next phase of their life while others shared their favorite quotes by Gurudev.



CMSD 23rd Annual Program

The ceremony concluded with melodious singing of the *dīkṣānta gītā* or graduation song by Guruji. Per tradition, **Grade 11** children “pushed” the graduating children and the CHYKs received them with open arms. With Gurudev’s blessings, the students were initiated into the CHYK family with a pledge. Lastly, the students cherished the pictures & memories of participating in various CMSD events and programs throughout their Bala Vihar years. The celebrations were complete with a sumptuous lunch organized by the parents of the graduates and volunteers creating an atmosphere of joy around the ashram.



Member Reflections:

The annual program was spectacular, and the children exhibited great enthusiasm. - **Malini Sharma**

The presentations by the high school seniors were fun and engaging while they touched upon the stages of life and the sense of duty. It was nice to see the teachings of the *Bhagavadgītā* being incorporated and applied to this day and age....I especially liked how the graduating students internalized what they had to take away from years of attending Chinmaya Mission. - **Vidya Anantharaman**

Teachings from Bala Vihar will guide my daughter, **Neha Mahesh**, as she transitions from high school to college and throughout her life’s journey. It is evident that our scriptures helped all the graduating kids to build a positive attitude while staying rooted in their heritage. Thank you to **Lakshmi Aunty** and **Sukumar Uncle** for the love and guidance throughout her school years. Our heartfelt gratitude to Pujya Gurudev. - **Ramya Mahesh** (Parent of Graduating Student)

Hearing all of the answers of the graduating class of 2023 was really insightful and made me feel really inspired to keep going on my journey. - **Aditi Hariharan** (Grade 9)

CMSD 19th Summer Youth Camp

The Nineteenth Annual Summer Youth Camp: **Symbols, Symbols Everywhere; Tell me Why I should Care!** commenced with an orientation on **June 25, 2023** followed by a week-long camp. All the campers along with their families joined on **June 30, 2023** evening for a closing ceremony and a potluck dinner.

During the camp, children journeyed from the everyday symbols into the realm of spiritual symbols that enable contemplation on the formless Reality. In the words of **Charu Saravanakumar** (Grade 5), “It was very interesting to learn about every little detail about each symbol. It is so amazing how God thought of every little detail of our lives....”

Padmaja Menon, BV *Sevika*, shared, “The ease with which **Aunty** explained the concepts and significance of the symbols that we see in our day to day life was so amazing and made me realize that all the teachings that I listen through study classes are all embedded in our surroundings and rituals that we have...”

The *āśrama* was transformed into a *Gurukula* wherein each day began with prayer and chanting. The vibrant tune of *Kāla Bhairavāṣṭakam* during the morning session energized all the campers for the day!

The campers were encouraged to maintain proper sitting posture and engage in active listening. The afternoon session of yoga provided a perfect opportunity for the campers to stretch and flex. Everyone gathered in *Praṇava Nilayam* for Chapter 15 *Bhagavadgītā* chanting before lunch.

Children gathered around **Aunty** in the courtyard for an intimate Q & A session after activities. To be able to think, reflect and clear doubts itself is a wonderful step towards blossoming of the mind. Each day concluded with soulful singing and dancing followed by *ārati*.

One of the youngest campers’ Mother, **Ritu Chandiramani**, expressed, “Prayan came back home cheerfully everyday and had energy to do more. I was able to see the positive impact of being in the *āśrama* and chanting daily.”

Akhila Koneri, BV *Sevika* added, “I saw how games and *kīrtana-s* are great teaching tools for little minds. They not only engage but also imprint and stay with children longer.”

Campers’ Reflections:

This camp has helped me realize how truly grateful I should be of this creation that the Lord has made for us. One symbol which really stuck with me is how Lord *Gaṇeśa* only has one tusk which shows how the Lord has made himself choiceless. I too should do this in my life to be focused on the right things. - **Isha Popat** (Grade 9)

I never really deeply thought about the meaning behind most of the *pūjā* steps. After this camp, I have a better understanding. In this camp I have learned so many things that I would have never learned in school, or even Bala Vihar. - **Dhrithi Anumandla** (Grade 6)

CMSD 19th Summer Youth Camp

I learned so much from the symbolism of India's flag to the different names of *Gaṇeśa*. The food was delicious, and I loved doing yoga poses everyday. My favorite activity was sculpting *Gaṇeśa* out of clay. My favorite symbol is *Rangoli* or *Kolam*. It symbolizes happiness and prosperity. - **Neev Babla** (Grade 5)

After this camp I am able to notice small details in every symbol I see and now I am starting to pay so much more attention. I can sit straight for much longer after practicing and I loved learning so many new *bhajans*. - **Nimay Popat** (Grade 5)

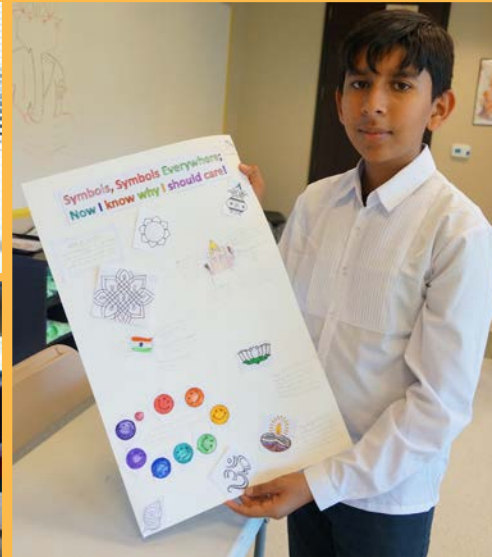
The best part about the camp was the hike. I enjoyed singing *Hanumān cālīsā* along the way. - **Prayan Aneja** (Grade K)



CMSD 19th Summer Youth Camp



CMSD 19th Summer Youth Camp



CMSD Ongoing Events

Monthly *Sundarakāṇḍa Pārāyaṇā*



April 22, 2023



May 20, 2023



June 17, 2023

SatSevā

With the arrival of Spring, CMSD members gather every Saturday morning to join hands in beautifying the āśrama through a variety of *sevā* opportunities.



Shishu Vihar/Bala Vihar Corner

SV3: Class Activities



SV4: Class Activities



Shishu Vihar/Bala Vihar Corner



Grade 10 Project: Salt, Water, and Desires



We performed an experiment which symbolized selfish desires and what can be done to make them 'good' desires. Salt, representing desire, was added into a small amount of water, representing oneself. It was noted that it had an unpleasant salty taste. That small amount of salty water was then poured into a much larger container of water representing many people. The salty taste disappeared, and the water tasted as though it was pure.

This experiment shows that if desires are selfish, they will pollute a person, but if put towards a higher purpose that benefits all, they help the individual also. Action done without selfish desires, in other words done with a "*yajña*" spirit, is called *karma yoga*. By practicing *karma yoga*, one will not only purify oneself, but also benefit the world around them. -**Ankita Katarkar**

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