

CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ

CMSD QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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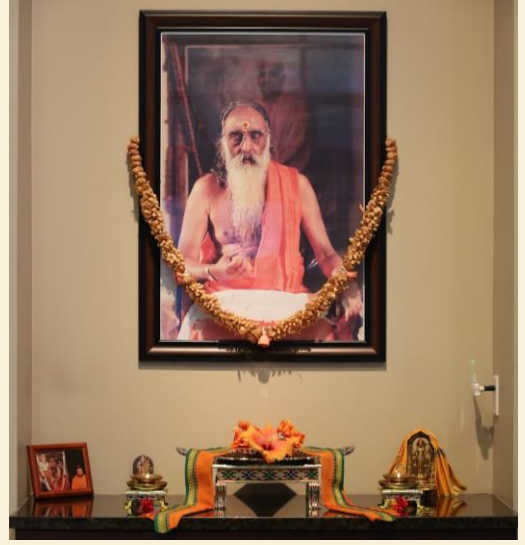
CMSD's **Twenty-Fourth Anniversary** celebration with a presentation on '**Lord Dattātreyā's Twenty-four Preceptors**' was the main feature in this quarter. Devotional festivities were observed during the **Tyāgarāja Ārādhana** and **Mahāśivarātrī** celebrations. Annual MLK workshop on '**Growing in Self-Confidence and Faith during challenging times**' was conducted for the highschoolers and CHYKs. The quarter ended with a workshop '**An Overview of Sanātana Dharma**'.



THE MASTER SPEAKS

"To forget oneself totally, one's mind should keep awake at every moment. A mind that has forgotten the past and the future, that is awake to the now, to the present, expresses the highest concentration of intelligence. It is alert, it is watchful, it is inspired. The actions of a man who has such a mind are exceptionally creative and perfect. Verily to forget oneself totally, is to be in perfection."

New Year Celebrations



On **January 1, 2025**, we reverentially welcomed the new year at the *āśrama* with the chanting of *Śrī Viṣṇu sahasranāma stotram*, *Gaṇapati Atharvaśīrṣam*, and *Gaṇeśa Aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvali* followed by *Śrī Guru stotram*, *Śrī Hanumān cālīsā*, *naivedyam* offering and *ārati*.



New Year Celebrations



Shravani Prem read **Pujya Gurudev's quote**, "The non-stop forward gush is ever from the unknown future to the present and immediately the present becomes one with the endless past. None can turn back the clock of Time.....but Vedanta cheerfully shows us how we can wind it up!!!"

We also read **Pujya Swami Swaroopananda's message**, "New Year is just another day to renew Yourself", which beautifully segwayed into singing of Pujya Guruji's *nūtana varṣa abhinandanam* song, "That which ever remains fresh and new moment to moment, that alone is *Satyam, Śivam, Sundaram*".

We closed with Aunty's special message for all - "May Pujya Gurudev's blessings be with all and may we continue to better ourselves!"

- Smita Bhatia

Śrī Tyāgarāja Ārāadhanā



On Saturday **January 18, 2025**, our center celebrated the distinguished saint *Śrī Tyāgarāja* who is known as the father of Carnatic music. The *Tyāgarāja Ārāadhanā* tradition commenced eleven years ago at CMSD, on the same day as the *Mahāsamādhi* of this great Saint in *Thiruvaiyāru*. *Pañcaratna kṛtis* were led by Devesh Vasishtha.

In the morning, Aunty led a heartfelt *pūjā* of *Śrī Tyāgarāja*. Chinmaya Swaranjali offered choice *kṛtis* at the feet of the *Guru*. In the evening, 18 eminent musician visitors offered the renowned *pañcaratna kṛtis* - 5 precious jewels compositions of *Śrī Tyāgarāja*. Amarnath Puttur introduced the musicians' team and Nagesh Nookala explained each *kṛti*.



Śrī Tyāgarāja Ārāadhanā



The guest artists were Devesh Vasishtha (vocal), Radhakrishnan Ramachandran (flute), Raamkumar Balamurthi (*mṛdaṅgam*), Mahesh Vasishtha (*mṛdaṅgam*), Shankar Guhadós (vocal), Rohith Chandrasekar (vocal), Amshumanth Murthy (flute), Raam and Adarsh Radhakrishnan (flute), Suresh Krishnamurthy (violin) and Nivik Bharadwaj (violin). Surabhi Jagadish and Sumathi Vinay provided vocal support and Usha Rao Devesh accompanied on violin for some of the *kṛtis*.



Individual *kṛtis* were also offered by some of our members, CHYK and Bala Vihar students including Sindhu Narasimha, Akshara Mutsyala, Dhvani Iyer, Samaya Ram and Vidhya Bharath. Achintya Puttur accompanied the singers on *mṛdaṅgam* for their individual offerings.

In the words of a CMSD member, **Deepthi Anipindi**, “I believe certain moments in life are destined.....I felt this deeply today while attending the *Tyāgarāja Ārāadhanā* at our *āśrama*. Coming from a family that holds music in the highest regard, it felt like a divine connection. The music was pure bliss - a truly beautiful way to honor *Tyāgarāja*. It was undoubtedly Gurudev's blessings that made this experience possible. We are deeply grateful to Him and to CMSD for providing this wonderful opportunity.”

- Sumathi Vinay

CMSD 24th Anniversary Celebrations



On a beautiful Sunday morning of **February 2, 2025**, CMSD celebrated its 24th anniversary with a special presentation '**Lord Dattātreya's Twenty-four Preceptors**'. The event commenced with auspicious chants of *Gaṇapati Atharvaśīrṣopaniṣad* followed by *Śrī Jyoti Vināyaka pūjā*.

Sukumar Uncle started the formal portion of the program by recollecting memories from the 1990's about Gurudev's vision and how CMSD started on January 28, 2001 with the blessings of Pujya Guruji. San Diego is where Pujya Gurudev left his Jyoti and the *āśrama* is appropriately named *Chinmaya Jyoti* in the city of Poway. Coincidentally, Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, the headquarters of Chinmaya Mission in India, is located in a similarly named location of "Powai" in Mumbai. This was the first of many coincidences and numerous miracles that continue to amaze us to this day and give us the firm conviction of the presence of Pujya Gurudev and His blessings guiding us.



The program commenced with a beautiful invocation by Chinmaya Dhvani and Chinmaya Swaranjali students '*Jayati Jayati Bhārata Mātā*' - singing the glory of Bharat Mata (India) which was followed by a *Guru Vandanā* "*Satya pālaka Dharma rakṣaka*" as a humble offering to Pujya Gurudev.

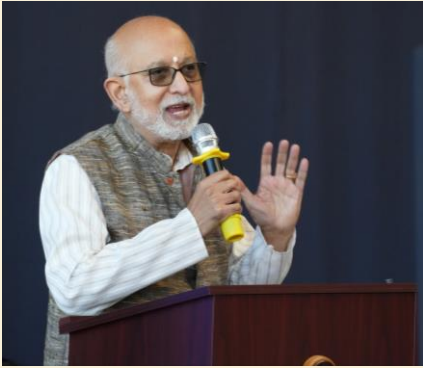
The children's presentation on '**Lord Dattātreya's Twenty-four Preceptors**' was a wonderful way to show the important lessons in the story. By acting out how Lord *Dattātreya* learnt from different aspects of the creation like nature, animals, and everyday objects, the children helped everyone understand that wisdom can come from anywhere around us.

CMSD 24th Anniversary Celebrations

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CMSD member **Srividya Brahmakal** expressed “As we started year twenty-five, Sukumar uncle showed the developments to come in the next year with phase two, that we as a family are very excited about!”



The grand finale with the song ‘*Viśvameva Guruh*’, a composition by Pujya Guruji exquisitely capturing the essence ‘the whole universe is my teacher’, was an ideal conclusion for the event.

- Apoorva Gouni and Gayathri Vishwanathan



CMSD 24th Anniversary Celebrations



Member Reflections:

“The young presenters did a great job explaining the teachings of Lord *Dattātreyā* in a way that was very interesting and meaningful. It was inspiring to see their confidence and their ability to memorize philosophical topics and narrate it so well. Kudos to the Bala Vihar kids for their hard work and an outstanding presentation! A sincere thanks to Lakshmi Aunty and all the Bala Vihar teachers for their dedication and effort towards this presentation. Their guidance and commitment made this session a memorable experience!”

-Anjana Prasad

“I feel blessed to be part of this wonderful program. The entire program was performed by children showcasing their hard work and giving their best. Great learning, wonderful program and amazing place where children learn the value of our Indian culture.”

- Babita Dhalia

CMSD 24th Anniversary Celebrations

“This program was truly an eye-opener. Each creation of this universe has such simple yet deep vedantic teachings that we can imbibe in our daily lives to be happy.”

- Ritu Chandiramani

“The play was a wonderful depiction of how the world can be your teacher. Children across all ages presenting some deep thoughts and concepts was an amazing experience as always. The efforts of the children shone through brightly and it is a testament to Lakshmi Aunty's vision and the dedication of the Bala Vihar teachers.”

- Srividya Brahmakal

“Being in the presentation as a *sevikā* was a great learning opportunity. It was a great privilege to be able to observe and learn through various aspects of the script creation and execution. Working with the children to bring out the lines with the correct understanding and then grooming every aspect till the final offering was a great first hand learning experience as a Bala Vihar *sevikā*.”

- Sandhya Srinivasan

“I learnt a lot in the presentation, for example, from Python I learnt not to be picky about meals and from honey-gatherer I learnt not to hoard wealth. My favorite *Guru* is Wind because no matter how dirty it is, Wind is always clean....”

- Lauhith Bonda (Grade 4)

“...from the program I learnt so many values and lessons from each *Guru*.. Additionally, in the last two months of rehearsing, I tried not only memorizing my lines but also understanding their meaning as well, which made me more confident in saying them. Our program was very informative, and I will reflect on and use *Dattātreya*'s teachings every day.”

- Medha Bonda (Grade 6)

“The key learning that touched me was *Guru* honey-gatherer which teaches us not to hoard things or be attached to something. This touched me most because there are many people in the world who can not get the stuff they NEED or get necessities that we have today, so when I hoard I am affecting other people around me.”

- Tanvi Patidar (Grade 6)

“From this production I have truly learnt that learning can take place anywhere and everywhere. I just need to sit still and cultivate a connection with the universe around me. From the smallest movements to the largest, there is always something to learn. And keeping this mindset will allow me to grow and thrive.”

- Isha Popat (Grade 11)

Mahāśivarātrī Celebrations



On Sunday, **February 23, 2025**, the students of Bala Vihar **Grade 2** presented the legends of *Śivarātrī* - the story of *Brahmā* and *Śrī Viṣṇu* trying to find the end of a bright beam of light and the story of a hunter and the tiger where Lord *Śiva* blessed the hunter after the hunter unknowingly offered *bilvā* leaves onto *Śiva Liṅgam*. Their presentation ended with the chanting of the *Śiva-Pañcākṣara-Stotram*.

Thereafter, **Grade 9** presented the significance behind *Śivarātrī* and chanted *Śrī Gaṅgā-Stotram*.

Mahāśivarātrī Celebrations



By the grace of Swami *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, CMSD members gathered in *Praṇava Nilayam* for *Mahāśivarātrī* celebrations on Wednesday, **February 26, 2025**. The occasion was marked by the introduction of the Chinmaya Dhvani junior choir (consisting of Grade 1 and Grade 2 Bala Vihar students) who invoked Śrī *Jyoti Vināyaka* by singing *Jaya Jaya Girijā Bāla Gajānana* and later *Om Śiva Om Śiva Parātpara Śiva*. Chinmaya Swaranjali adult choir then welcomed the Lord with the joyous *Bholā Śankara*.



Mahāśivarātrī Celebrations



CMSD *sevaks* **Bharath Ramaswamy, Chandrasekar and Nagesh Nookola**, guided by **Lakshmi Aunty**, performed the *ṣoḍaśopacāra pūjā* as the *āśrama* reverberated with the recorded chanting of *Rudram* and *Camakam* by Pandit Ravichandran while *abhiṣekam* was performed on the *Śiva Līngas*.

All the Bala Vihar children who were present also got an opportunity to perform *abhiṣekam* for the Lord. The devotees also chanted *Līngāṣṭakam*, *Śivapancākṣarastotram* and other *Śiva-stotrams*. The chanting was interspersed with various *bhajans*.

As it neared midnight, Lakshmi Aunty led the group in meditation and chanting of “*Om Namah Śivāya*” leading up to the *Śiva āratī* and chanting of the *śivāparādhakṣamāpaṇastōtram*.

- Ashwin Mohan



Ādi Śaṅkara Production Screening



A special screening of CMSD's first stage production '*Ādi Śaṅkara* - His Life and Teachings' was hosted on **March 15, 2025**.

An Overview of *Sanātana Dharma*



On **March 23, 2025** CMSD conducted a workshop on Hinduism, wherein Lakshmi Aunty explained the basic tenets of Hinduism, also known as *Sanātana Vaidika Dharma*. About 50 members including children were in attendance. The well-thought-out questions raised by the children were very encouraging to hear. It is always inspiring to revisit this topic and feel a sense of pride in belonging to this great culture. This was followed by another in-depth Q&A session on **March 30, 2025**.

- Nagesh Nookala

An Overview of *Sanātana Dharma*

Member Reflections:

“The workshop helped me understand how much of a rich culture I belong to and what it means to be a Hindu.... A lot of my questions were answered about reincarnation and staying on the path of *dharma* no matter what obstacles I face in life. It also helped me know the power of *Japa* and how it can help me whenever I need God’s help and guidance.”
- **Anshika Hariharan (Grade 7)**

“It provided me with invaluable insights into our rich Hindu heritage, which is often misunderstood or underappreciated..... It offered me the opportunity to ask questions that I had never found answers to elsewhere. I learned about the concept of unity in diversity and how individuals from all walks of life can reach God. Most importantly, the workshop reinforced that Hinduism is not just a religion but a way of life.”
- **Amogh Hongal (Grade 8)**

“....Some key takeaways I got from it was the difference between the Lord incarnating and us reincarnating, the importance of the cow in our culture, how every religion’s essence is the same. Lakshmi Aunty also talked about how to conduct ourselves and address our culture to people at large.”
- **Aditi Hariharan (Grade 11)**

“The Hinduism workshop was an engaging and informative session that gave an overview of *Sanātana Dharma*, a universal religion that helps each one of us to realize our own divine nature...Being born as a Hindu and growing up in India, I had some idea of Hinduism, but these sessions gave a new perspective of understanding and realization of the vastness of Hindu Scriptures, and how little I know of it...more importantly an opportunity to learn it the right way.”
- **Dhanasekaran K**

“Hindu thought is vast....but the enriching two Sunday afternoons spent in lecture and Q&A format, opened our minds to the structure of *Sanātana Dharma's* 18 bodies of knowledge, the differences between *dharma* and *sampradāya*, and the overarching framework that *Dharma's* purpose is for helping us to lead beautiful, purposeful lives.”
- **Monali Varaiya**

“....One aspect that struck me was that while most other religions had one sacred book, Hinduism is based on several scriptures....Aunty brought out the key aspects of each of these, especially how each of these are intricately linked and how they collectively function as the foundational knowledge for the practice of Hinduism....As a beginner student of 'Self-Unfoldment' and a regular participant in the Sunday Sessions, I consider myself blessed to get authoritative and reliable knowledge at CMSD. I now have a sense of direction and feel more eager to pursue my study.”
- **Manoj Hariharan**

“...It was truly heartening to see the youth actively participating in the workshop. The kind of questions they asked showed me the depth of their thinking. The workshop was in line with Pujya Gurudev’s vision of teaching Hinduism to Hindus. I came back home with appreciation and gratitude to have another opportunity to hear about the glory of our *Sanātana Dharma*.”
- **Nita Halker**

CMSD Ongoing Events

Monthly *Sundarakāṇḍa Pārāyaṇā*



January 25, 2025



February 2, 2025



March 22, 2025

CMSD Ongoing Events

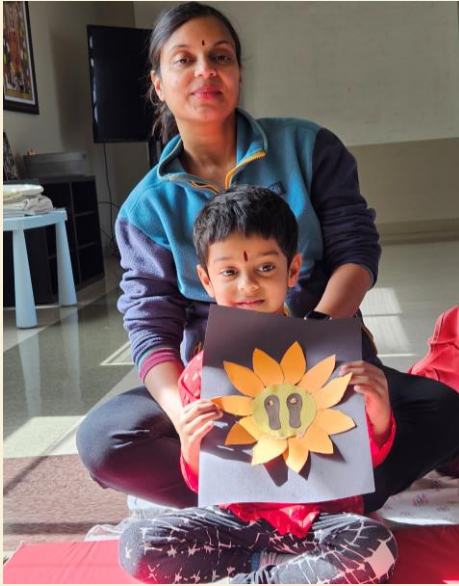
Saṁskṛti Pālakās meet



During this quarter, the *Saṁskṛti Pālakās*' meetings were conducted on **January 12, February 9 and March 9, 2025**. Primary topics for this quarter included Kitchen Vedanta - discussing practical ways for conservation and resource management in the kitchen, the role and importance of mothers as the nucleus of the household, motherhood as a *sādhana* for our spiritual growth, understanding the deeper meaning of *svadharma*, and the importance of introspection in order to guide us through various doubts and make the most informed choice that brings us closer to the path of inner clarity and peace.

On March 9, 2025, Aunty started with a discussion based on a book '**Life of Vision**' written by Pujya Guruji. The dialogue centered on the significance of a wedding in our culture, emphasizing the beauty of a householder's life through service of people as worship of the Lord.

Shishu Vihar Corner



Bala Vihar Corner



Pre-K daily prayer time during Bala Vihar sessions and Indian flag coloring for Republic day.

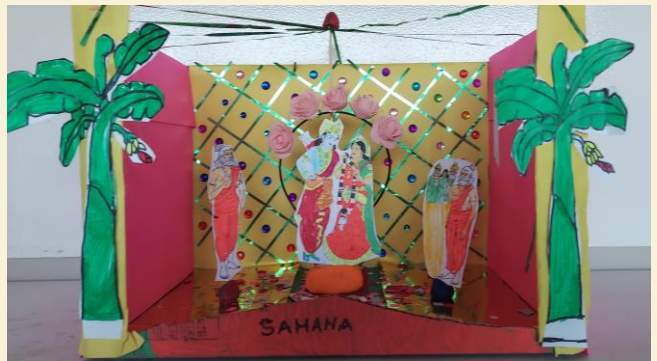


Grade 2: Winter Project - Diorama on *Bālakṛṣṇalīla*

Bala Vihar Corner

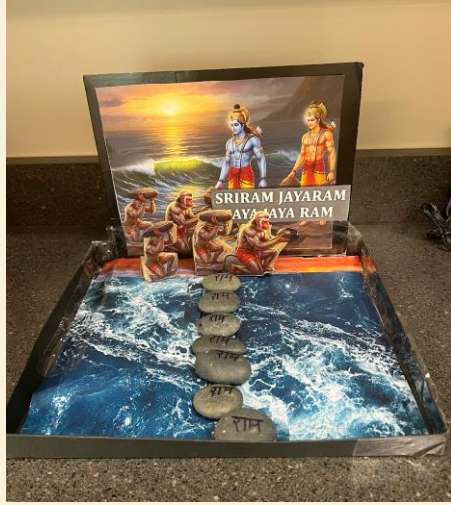
Grade 2: Winter Project - Diorama on *Bālakṛṣṇalīlā*

Bala Vihar Corner



Grade 3: Diorama on Rāmāyaṇa

Bala Vihar Corner

Grade 4: Diorama on *Rāmāyaṇa*

Annual MLK CHYK Workshop



On **January 20, 2025**, CMSD conducted its Annual MLK CHYK Workshop on ‘**Growing in Self-Confidence and Faith during challenging times**’.

Below are some reflections from students attending the workshop:

“Attending the workshop with fellow peers and CHYKs was a great opportunity to reflect on the daily doubts I face and how I can overcome them, especially as I prepare for the next stage of my life. Under confidence is rooted in comparison with others. However, I have to remember that I have my *svadharma* to fulfill. Since my path is different from others, I should only compare myself to my past self as I strive to be better each day. To discover my purpose, I have to do what brings me fulfillment. Finding my purpose may take time, so to facilitate the process I must have unwavering faith in the higher, keep an attitude of gratitude, introspect objectively, set manageable goals and have consistency in practice.”

- **Nidhi Babla, Grade 12**

“From the CHYK MLK Day workshop I learned that faith is the foundation that combines intellect and emotion, guiding me on the path of *dharma* and allowing me to make decisions with confidence. By seeking spiritual knowledge, setting realistic goals, and acting with humility, I can continually grow, ensuring I make progress towards my goals every day.

- **Arushi Bharadwaj CHYK**

Chinmaya Pradipika Team

Parag Kelkar, Ritu Chandiramani, Reshma Rao, Smita Bhatia, Seema Biradar, Manasi Popat
and the CMSD Photography Team.