

HARI PATRIKA



Chinmaya Mission Portland

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Chinmaya Mission Pledge

*We stand as one family
Bound to each other with love and respect.*

*We serve as an army
Courageous and disciplined
Ever ready to fight against all low tendencies
And false values, within and without us.*

*We live honestly
The noble life of sacrifice and service
Producing more than what we consume
And giving more than what we take.*

*We seek the Lord's grace
To keep us on the path of virtue, courage and
wisdom.
May Thy grace and blessings flow through us
To the world around us.*

*We believe that the service of our country
Is the service of the Lord of lords
And devotion to the people
Is devotion to the Supreme Self.*

*We know our responsibilities
Give us the ability and courage to fulfill them.*

Om Tat Sat

*"The secret of action is to get established in equanimity,
renouncing all egocentric attachments, and forgetting to
worry over our successes and failures."*

Swami Chinmayananda

A Note From Our Guru

Hari OM,

I am very pleased to note the 2nd Annual celebration at Chinmaya Haridwar in Portland, Oregon. As we celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda, I am honored to acknowledge the Government of India's issuance of commemorative and circulating coins with Gurudev's image. Chinmaya Mission was started in 1951 and has been serving individuals from all walks of life with our motto of "bringing the maximum amount of happiness to the maximum amount of people for the maximum amount of time". Our Balavihar program offers the next generation of children an opportunity to learn about Indian heritage, values and culture in a systematic fashion, with the goal of imparting the values needed to be able to live by our motto of "producing more than we consume and giving more than we take". Chinmaya Mission worldwide serves all walks of society through more than 90 schools, colleges, hospitals and institutes of higher learning. CORD and CORDUSA, our service wing, seeks to apply Vedanta in practical means by giving a hand up rather than a hand out. We seek to empower the weakest sections of society to sustainably and permanently lift their standard of life and living. None of this could happen without an army of volunteers who serve diligently across the globe. I want to express my appreciation for them as they serve quietly while continuing their personal spiritual growth, living a noble life of sacrifice and service. My best wishes for the continuing success of Chinmaya Haridwar. May God's grace and Gurudev's blessings continue to shower upon all of you

Swami Tejomayananda



Contributors

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	Keshav G	Mohan G	Shreyas A	Aditi B	Udaya B	Abishek V	Govind N
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Chandra N	Aditya M	Anyam	Rainah R	Kavish S	Deepak V	Anika D	Devak S
Mini B	Aneesh A	Ishaan B	Srikrishna P	Praveer S	Karthik V	Yashika D	Naviya V
Ganesh K	Avaneesh S	Deep S	Gowri G	Shudhant G	Rishi P	Skanda I	
Samudyatha K	Saranya S	Sachin W	Ishaan A	Rithika P	Anish N	Dhruv J	
Krishna S	Akshara A		Akash B	Parthav E	Akshat K	Rikhi K	

Reflecting & Looking Forward

Dear Chinmaya Haridwar Community -

We are extremely happy to welcome you all to our anniversary celebrations which starts with Kalotsavam (cultural program) in June and culminates with Prabhavali Pratishta Mahotsav in July where Pujya Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda, will bless us with his visit and inaugurate our Madhur Krishna's Garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum).

Looking back, we have witnessed amazing growth in the Chinmaya Portland family over the past three years. This has been made possible with contributions from many energetic and dedicated volunteers both in terms of their time and fiscal support. The words from our pledge "Bound to each other with love and respect" has been the foundation of this family.

The Balavihar program is one of the strongest pillars for growth of our children and is a key source "To help children learn values with fun, To delight like the moon and shine like the sun – Swami Tejomayananda". The activities in the center continue to expand with the help of Sevak and Sevikas.

This year has been very special for Chinmaya Mission. Gurudev's year long Birth Centenary celebrations culminated on May 8,th 2016. The past year witnessed travel of Jyoti Yatra around the world as part of the celebrations spreading the light of wisdom and knowledge. In May 2015, the Government of India released a commemorative as well as circulating coin in honor of Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda. Swami Tejomayananda, the head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide, was conferred the Padma Bhushan (one of the highest civilian honors) by Government of India. There could not have been better recognition of the work that Gurudev planted the seeds for and Guruji has nurtured in last over 2 decades.

Let us stay focused in building a better future for the generations to come, while we pledge to move on our own individual spiritual journeys.

We want to thank each one of you for your continued support without which, what we have collectively achieved, would not have been possible.

Hari Om,

Kishore, Surekha and Rajeev on behalf of the Chinmaya Mission Board



Students Of Chinmaya Mission



A Peek Into Pre-K

TEACHERS

Surekha Reddy
Nisha Nair
Babita Mahesh
Usha Praveen

STUDENTS

Anya, Vaishnavi P, Jiya K,
Anika D, Vivek C, Dhruv J,
Anusri, Manish V, Pranav
K, Nikhil B, Raghav P,
Aanya A, Sathvi S, Govind
N, Sana A, Nandan C,
Skanda I

OUR CLASS

One Lord, so many forms,
action songs, moral
stories, coloring book
Even though most people
think of Hinduism as a
religion with several
gods, Hindus actually
believe in one supreme
god called Brahman and
all the other gods are just
manifestations of his
characteristics.



Art by Nikhil B & Vaishnavi P

Why do you come to Balavihar?

"Because it's Sunday"

What is your favorite about Balavihar?

"I like to color pictures of Garuda and Hanuman and Krishna"

"I like learning slokas and bhajans"

What have you guys been learning this year?

"Coloring"

"I like to sing songs and bhajans"

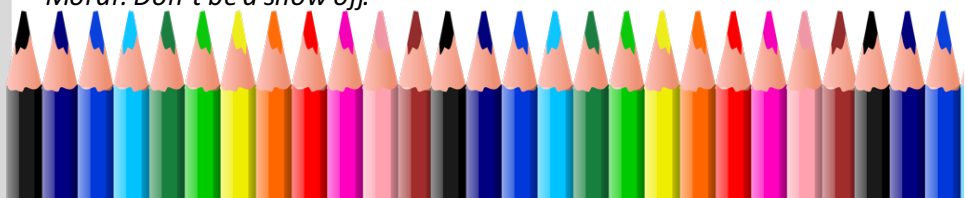
"Playing games"

Three Little Fishes

By Annika

Once upon a time, there were three fish. The smallest fish was very pretty, the middle sized fish was smart, and the largest fish was brave. One day, a fishing boat came by. All the first tried to get away, but they were captured. The three fish were scared, except for the brave fish. The smart fish said to the pretty and brave fish, "Hide inside this rock!" The pretty fish and the smart fish hid inside the rock, but the brave fish said, "I will save everybody else!" But it was too late. The net caught the brave fish and he was pulled out of the water and died.

Moral: Don't be a show off.



Colorful Concoctions of Kindergarten

TEACHERS

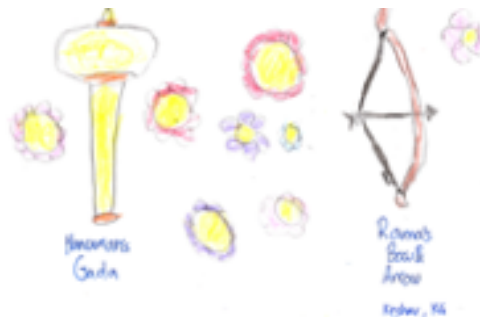
Meera Nair
Mallika Warier

STUDENTS

Surabi S, Shruti S,
Keshav G, Aditi V, Mia
B, Saanvi M,
Mukundhan G, Naman
B, Ayushi K, Ayana M,
Ishaan S, Mitaya A,
Misha A, Vivaan R,
Garvet M, Armaan T,
Kavi W, Misha S, Abhay
Varun C, Guha H

OUR CLASS

We all know that 'A is for Apple' and 'B is for Boy,' but in Balavihar, the children learn that "A is for Aspiration, B is for Brotherhood, C is for Cleanliness," and other simple but fundamental values. Through stories and coloring, students are introduced to the wonder of Vedanta in an age-appropriate manner through hands-on activities and demonstrations.



The Fun Findings of First Grade

TEACHERS

Seema Menon,
Lakshmi Gopinath,
and Shailaja
Prasannan

STUDENTS

Maliha R, Avani P,
Divya A, Aditya M,
Aneesh A, Avaneesh
S, Saranya S, Akshara
A, Annie C, Niyati B,
Arth S, Nethra B,
Mohan G, Kavin P,
Shail B, Jia B,
Niranjana W, Vanshika
S, Riya D, Sahil D, Riya
K, Maanya Amirav S,
Rishi I, Milind K

OUR CLASS

First grade students track the path of Lord Rama from childhood to marriage continuing to his exile to the forest and the war with Ravana. The path of Lord Rama culminates with his crowning as King. Embedded in the story is so much symbolism.

By Divya A, 1st Grade

My name is Divya Agrawal. This is my first year attending at Chinmaya. I am 7 yrs old. I am in 1st grade. My favorite part is the story because it's interesting. I made lots of friends. I also like to learn Hindi because it's fun. I like playing games and coloring. I also liked the fireworks for the Diwali festival.

By Saranya, 1st Grade

I love Bala Vihar because of "four corners", because we get to learn stories and because of coloring. When we play "for corners" in class, the corners each have different names like Sita, Rama, Lakshmana, Kumbhakarna etc. Sometimes the teachers try to trick us but we are clever!

The story that we are learning this year is the Ramayana, and in our Bala Vihar class the teachers tell us the story. My favorite part is when Hanuman crosses the ocean. When we color in class, we get pages of the part we are learning.

In Hindi class, we learn different letters of the alphabet every Sunday. It is a lot of fun.



The Fun Findings of First Grade



What are you learning in class this year?

We start class by learning parts of Guru Stotram and then learn a part of the Ramayana

What are your favorite parts of Rama's story?

When Ravana captured Sita, When Lord Rama fights 14,000 Rakshasas

Who are some of the sages mentioned in Ramayana?

Vishvamisra, Vasistha and finally Agastya, who stays down on earth because the earth needs to be balanced.

What are some of the forests Rama went through?

Dandaka and Chitrakoot

Why is what you are learning important?

"Because we get to color"

Learning (about Rama)

What are some of the fun activities during the class?

Coloring character in Ramayana. Every Time we learn a new story, kids color something to represent what they learned. Play four corners to learn about Ramayana and characters/traits. Pick four names from the story, and put one name in each corner. Teacher says the name and the kids have to run to the the corner with the correct name. If they run into the wrong corner they have to sit in the middle. If teachers says, the name of the corner they are in, they should recognize this and show this by jumping in their spots.



Art by Naina W

Second Grade

Sri Hanuman, he is Superman

TEACHERS

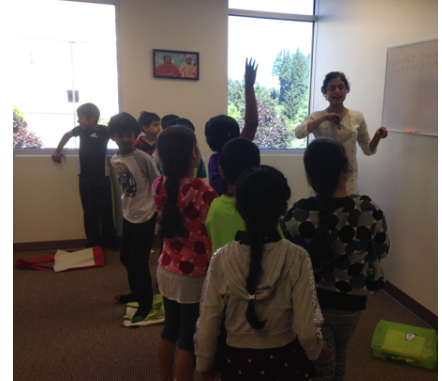
Aru Mahapatra,
Reshma Purohit

STUDENTS

Nikaansh S, Vaani A,
Yaamini A, Aryan B,
Arjun P, Arvind P,
Nathan S, Dhruv B,
Agamya G, Nihal S,
Anyam M, Ishaan B, Deep
S, Sachin W, Shay D,
Amrutha M, Karan H,
Sanjana K

OUR CLASS

Students in the 2nd grade learn the values of courage, strength, fearlessness, alertness, eloquence, and more by studying Hanumanji. As they learn the Hanuman Chalisa, students construct a “backbone of values,” stressing the importance of a structured set of values that guide our choices.



Why do you like coming to Balavihar?

Agamya: When teachers tell us stories and we play games

Sachin: The food at the end of class

Arvind: After class we get to play

Nathan: Chanting the Hanuman Chalisa

Karan: Hear stories

Ishan: Stories and games

What are you excited to learn in the future?

Agamya: more stories about Hanuman

Arvind: Memorize the whole Hanuman Chalisa

Karan: Learn how to stop betrayal

Vani: More songs

Yamini/Anyam: stories and songs

What makes good classroom/environment?

Teacher- Reshma: Good environment and interested kids make everything fun with stories and also involve the parents so that everyone can be apart of the experience in class

Second Grade

Sri Hanuman, he is Superman

My sunday mornings By Agamyia Guttal

My Sunday mornings are spent in Chinmaya Mission. I am so happy to be part of Chinmaya Mission and going to my class. First, we do our beginning prayers, after that we have a few stories read by our teachers. Some time we have activities and sometime we don't. Sundays are the best because of Chinmaya. Then sometimes I go to get my sister from her class and we go to have lunch.

We always have lunch because of the volunteers who help to make it. Once my mom helped with her other friend volunteers. She made pasta, salad, garlic bread and brownie. If you have not had lunch there once, then you should! The money you gave goes to a good cause. Guess what! They do Popcorn and Movie night where you get to watch movies while you eat snacks.

Every year Chinmaya has spring camp where Acharya Vivek and Sheela help and make a very good camp experience where you get have a class and games and making clay things. At the end of camp we have a fun Holi party. If you don't go to Chinmaya then you should!

C - Chanting
H - Happy
I - Inspiring
N - Nothing in return
M - Mesmerizing
A - Academic
Y - Yoga
A - Affection

M - Maha Prasad Lunch
I - Improving
S - Spiritual
S - Sanatan Dharma
I - Intellectual
O - Om
N - Nurturing



Vaani A
2nd grade

OFFerings for
god



Second Grade

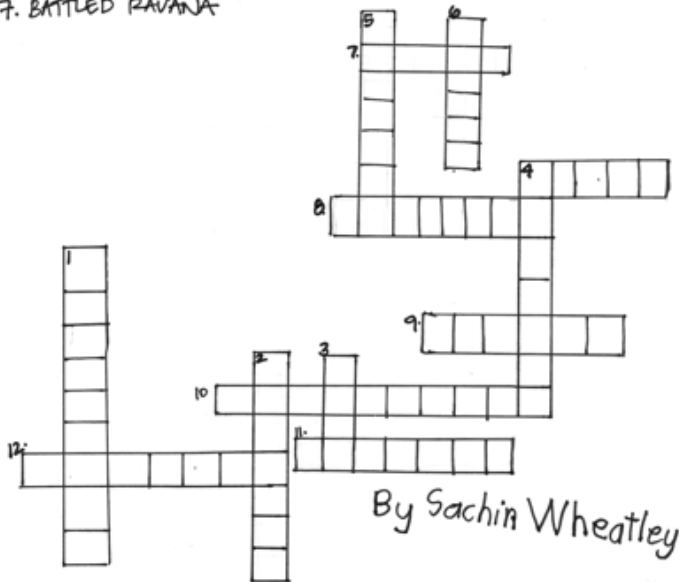
Sri Hanuman, he is Superman

DOWN

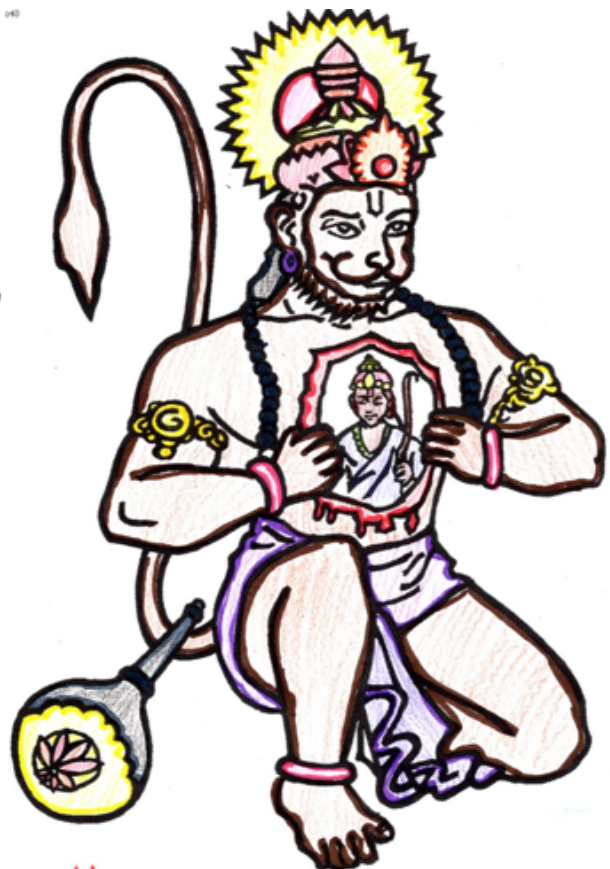
1. KIDS PROGRAM
2. GODDESS OF WEALTH
3. A TEACHER
4. GODDESS OF KNOWLEDGE
5. WEARS A PEACOCK FEATHER IN HIS HAIR
6. HOW WE GREET EACH OTHER
7. BATTLED RAVANA

ACROSS

4. THE OPPOSITE OF WAR
8. BEADED STRING USED FOR MEDITATION
9. FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS
10. RAMA'S GREATEST DEVOTEE
11. SANSKRIT FOR INTELLIGENCE
12. WHERE WE EAT LUNCH



By Sachin Wheatley



Hanuman The monkey God

Art by Agamy G

Trying New Things in Third Grade

TEACHERS

Uma Aunty
Geetha Aunty

STUDENTS

Shreyas A, Sriniketh N
, Shankari K, Aasha P,
Sanjana I, Kapil K,
Deeksha E, Sambit D,
Ananth N, Ashok M,
Gowri N, Vishnu N,
Khyati R, Navya R,
Dillon G, Sanika B,
Srimayi G, Suhani G,
Nikhil M, Ria G,
Mahika B.

OUR CLASS

In the third grade, students learn about Krishna's childhood thru the Bala Bhagavatam. Krishna, who is full of pranks, mischief, meaningful adventures, and purposeful jokes, was probably quite a handful as a third grader!

What do you like about Chinmaya mission?

You turn around and you know everybody. It's a lot of fun
-Diksha

I like Holi
-Vishnu

Every time I come here I know more about God
-Sambit

I learn something new each time
-Gauri

I love all the events that happen over here
-Suhani

I love popcorn and movie nights
-Kapil

Diwali celebration here with the fireworks
-Mahi

We can make a bunch of friends
-Ashok

Everybody here at balavihar is happy
-Sambit



Trying New Things in Third Grade

What we enjoy

Reading stories, everyone sitting and listening, tell jokes now and then, and it's a lot of fun!

-Diksha

Activities. Last week activity: blindfolded partner, other person had to lead the blindfolded person to a chair

Learnt about helping each other, guiding each other

-Vishnu, Kapil

What does Aunty do?

Aunty reads books to us and I love the stories she reads

-Navya

Tell us something useful in life we can use

-Gauri

Silliest thing Aunty asked: Did you eat worms for breakfast? Is that why you so hyperactive?

-Mahi

Big things we learnt from class

Don't be greedy. In the stories we hear something bad happens and it's not good to have ego

-Sambit

It's gods wish that everything that happens happens for the best

-Srimayi

Not to be one of the six sharks: greed, lust, anger, jealousy, pride, delusion

-Vishnu

Unity and diversity

-Mahi

Don't be so attached to something or someone

-Sambit

Gratitude is the best attitude

-Srimayi

When you think positive, positive things happen; when you think negative, negative things happen

-Sambit



Trying New Things in Third Grade



Churning the Ocean
Art by Sanjana,
3rd grade

Trying New Things in Third Grade

Vamana Avataram

By Srimayi, 3rd grade

In 3rd grade Bala Bhagavatam class, we are learning about the different avatars. I like all of the avatars but my most favorite is Vamana avataram. I like him because he saved the Earth and Heavens from destruction, in a smart way without war and here is his story:

There was a king named Bali, he was the king of the Asuras. He was doing a yagna to win against the Devas. Indra the king of all Devas found out about this went to lord Vishnu and asked for help. So, Vishnu took the form of Vamana, a little dwarf with tiny feet.

One day when Bali was giving alms, Vamana appeared in front of him and asked, "I would like to have three feet measures of land."

" But that's so little! Ask for more, " said king Bali.

" All I want is three feet measures of land no more or no less," replied Vamana.

King Bali agreed and promised to give the three feet measures of land, thinking how much can such small feet measure anything too big for him to give.

Vamana grew very big.

With one foot he measured the sky,

With the second foot he measured the heavens.

For Vamana's third feet measure he asked Bali where he could measure it

Bali realized his ignorance and said," For your third feet measure of land please place it on my head " to keep his promise.

As lord Vishnu recognized Bali's nobleness, He made him the king of Pathala Loga instead of killing him.

So Bali went to rule the underworld and now there is no threats to the devas, Heavens, or Earth. And peace was restored . Hari OM!

Trying New Things in Third Grade

VĀIMANA

Art by Srimayi



BALI



Number 1 virtues Deeksha Easwar

Victorious but not a sore winner

Integrity of honest abe

Righteous and fair but firm

tidy but abit wild

undeniably kind

encased with humility

Stead fast habits of virtue
virtues

Fourth Grade Findings

TEACHERS

Sreedevi Sunkara,
Subhash Singh

STUDENTS

Roshen N, Aanya M,
Rainah R, Srikrishna P,
Gowri G, Ishaan A,
Akash B, Zaika M,
Kavya A, Tanush S,
Jhanvi V, Siddhanth A,
Maansi S

OUR CLASS

Grade 4 covers canto ten and eleven of the Bala Bhagavatam. Through these stories children learn about sharing, self-discipline, and focus on observing their own behavior on a daily basis. My Twenty-four Teachers identifies teachers in life who impart valuable lessons. For example, from Mother Earth, students learn the value of being patient; from mountains, to be steadfast.

What are you guys learning this year?

Krishna, and our 24 teachers and what they teach us, including:

Cows
Austerity
Faith
Vedas
Discipline
Forbearance
Brahmins
Kindness
Truth

About Krishna's special qualities - loving, forgiving Earth, air

We learned about the 8 limbs of Vishnu and what they represent.

What have you learned from 24 teachers/Krishna, Krishna everywhere?

To help others
To show respect to all gurus
To be kind to others

What is the best part of Balavihar?

Great teachers
Always learning stories
Hindi class
Playing games after class
Two teams, balancing

balls and staying calm and controlled

Learning what the earth gives you

Food

Camps

Seeing friends

What is important in balavihar?

Important to learn about religion

Hindi for communication

Teaches about life

Stories that show history, religion, and culture

How to be a better person

What camps and activities do you like?

Vivekji's camps

Vedic math, can help you in school

Holi festival

Popcorn and movie night

What are you looking forward to in Balavihar

Want to learn more about

Hymns

Mahabharata

Stories about Krishna

Vishnu's forms

Stories

Fourth Grade Findings



Art by Gowri



Fourth Grade Findings

My First Year at Chinmaya Haridwar By Maansi, 4th Grade

My first year at Chinmaya Haridwar was fun! I made lots of new friends at Haridwar. I love the Hindi and Bala Vihar classes here. Bala Vihar classes have taught me a lot about Indian traditions and values. In fourth grade, I learn a lot about Krishna and his life. In Hindi class, I improved my Hindi vocabulary and am learning to read and write in Hindi. During lunch, I get to try Indian cuisines from many different states at Shadras Kitchen. During my first year at Chinmaya Haridwar, I also got an opportunity to learn group dance and perform during India's Independence Day at Pioneer Courthouse Square and during Varshikotsav. The last but not least spring break camp with Acharya Vivek was so much fun. We were introduced to a lot of new and fun projects during the camp. I am so happy to be part of Chinmaya Haridwar. It is like a second home to me. Hari Om!

Super Devas To The Rescue: A creative interpretation with a super hero mash-up! By Gowri G, 4th Grade

Dwarak City and Ayodhyapolis were peaceful cities. That is, until a duo of villains called the Rakshasa Villains came there. Luckily, heroes were in town. The Super Devas group consisted of 4 heroes named Super Krishna, Regal Rama, Hanuman Hero, and Balaram the Brave. These heroes are brave, strong, courageous, and confident. All mortals living on Earth knew that these heroes could defeat anything their way. So if anyone could

stop the Rakshasa Villains, it was the Super Devas.

Even though the Rakshasa Villains only had 2 villains, they were powerful. Ravaging Ravana and Kamsa the Killer are the 2 most powerful villains on the planet. But the Super Devas are stronger. The villains didn't know of the heroes yet, as it was their first time away from the rakshasa world. But the Super Devas knew about the rakshasas, and were carefully tracking them from their underground lair. Regal Rama has now located the villains. Hanuman Hero says they are at Central Square in Ayodhyapolis. The Super Devas quickly gear up and go to defeat the villains.

Super Krishna leads the way. In no time, the heroes are at Central Square, only to find that the Rakshasa Villains have already left! Regal Rama and Balaram the Brave stay back to help the wounded townsfolk. Meanwhile, Super Krishna and Hanuman Hero fly around trying to locate the villains. Regal Rama and Balaram the Brave soon join them in the search. Finally, Balaram the Brave locates them at the Dwarak City capitol building. The fight begins.

The Super Devas fight valiantly. The Rakshasa Villains fight ferociously. Super Krishna and Balaram the Brave fight Kamsa the Killer, while Regal Rama and Hanuman Hero fight Ravaging Ravana. Kamsa the Killer fights with a sword, Super Krishna plays enchanted tunes on his magic flute, and Balaram the Brave fights with his bare hands.

Fourth Grade Findings

Meanwhile, Ravaging Ravana fights with his wicked blade, Regal Rama shoots arrows, and Hanuman Hero attacks with his gadha. Soon, the Super Devas start to tire the rakshasas. Each hero strikes one last time. The Rakshasa Villains are dead. The Super Devas have saved the cities of Ayodhyapolis and Dwarak City, and once again defeated a group of villains. All is safe.

Now the citizens of Ayodhyapolis and Dwarak City know for sure, if they need help, the Super Devas will be there for them. They just need to always have the Super Devas in their minds, and the heroes will always protect them.

The Devas can do the same for us too. So always think about God, and you'll always be safe.

Greed

By Kavya, 4th grade

One day, four girls - Anushka, Anya, Meera, and Sonia were playing near a creek when they saw a sage passing by.

He said, "You girls look like an adventurous group. Do you want to listen to a secret?" The girls glanced at each other and nodded. The sage continued to say, "There is treasure up the road at the end of the creek - jewels and riches! Wherever there are X's marked on the road, there is a treasure, but do not get too carried away."

The girls had always wanted to get rich and could not wait to get started. They ran

towards the road to be the first ones to get to the treasure. They walked till they reached the first "X". They dug and dug until they found a chest full of jewels. Anushka took it and went home delightedly. But others were not satisfied. They wanted more.

After walking some more they reached the second "X" and started digging. This time they found huge ruby and emerald crystals. Anya gathered them and went home happily while Meera and Sonia decided to walk further up the road looking for more.

Soon they saw the third "X" sign and started digging. Now they found gold and diamonds! Meera was very amazed and could not believe how the riches had gotten better as they kept walking up the road. She became greedy and wondered what more could be there. So as Sonia decided to head back home with the riches Meera decided to go up further.

She kept walking until and was startled and scared after when she reached 50 feet tall boulders and saw snakes surrounding it! That is when she realized that there were no more treasures and decided to go back home. She had learned her lesson never to be greedy again.

The End



Fourth Grade Findings

Nilum and Calum's Holi

By Rainah, 4th Grade

"Nilum, Cal, time to leave for Chinmaya Holi," Nilum and Calum's mother called. The twins (Nilum and Calum) and their family were going to the Chinmaya Holi celebration that came after the annual Chinmaya camp.

"Coming mama", they chorused together. "I have to finish putting my Holi clothes on", Nilum added.

Once everyone had their Holi clothes on and were ready to go, the family got into the car. They drove to the park where the Holi celebration was being held. At the park, Nilum and Cal immediately found their friends. Nilum had some friends that were from her Chinmaya class and her school class so she met up with them. Cal had made some best friends from Chinmaya, so he hung out with them. They were all having fun at the Holi party, throwing colors at each other, laughing. That was until.....

Nilum and her friends secretly decided to sneak up on Calum and his friends and throw a sneak attack of Holi colors on them. It was an awesome plan. But, like all awesome plans, something went wrong. It turns out that Cal and his friends were planning the same thing. And, the siblings had the same strategy! They were both going to act like they were just passing by, and then they were going to throw the Holi colors at each other when the other group

was not expecting it.

But, what happened was different than what you might expect. Nilum and her friends got to the plan first. They passed by Calum nonchalantly, and noticed that Calum's friends were all talking. At the height of the boys' conversation, Nilum and her friends started throwing colors at Calum.

Cal noticed immediately.

"Hey, that was going to be our plan!" he shouted. "Everyone, throw colors back at them!" Calum then said, addressing his friends.

The Holi play went on until everyone was tired. Everyone agreed it was fun. It turned out that the awesome plan with a flaw in it really did turn out to be an awesome plan.



Art by Maansi S

Fabulous Flavors of Fifth Grade

TEACHERS

.....
Chinmaya Srivastava,
Radheka Godse, Kowsy
Vijay

STUDENTS

.....
Nividh S, Kumkum N,
Sudarshan G, Rohan V,
Aditi B, Aarya S, Dhvani
R, Nandita K, Suhas M,
Khavya B, Idika K,
Sagarika M, Namrata V,
Anika K, Divya S, Tara V,
Aditi G, Sitara K, Rahul
I, Jayant S, Annika P

OUR CLASS

.....
What is a symbol and
why do we have them?
Why does Lord
Ganesha have big ears
and why does he travel
on a mouse? Why does
Lord Shiva have Mother
Ganga flowing in His
hair? In 5th Grade,
students explore the
deeper meaning
behind all that they see
in Hinduism. Students
learn that all symbols
point to one Lord who
pervades all and
teaches us to live a life
of harmony, fulfillment,
and happiness.

What you we enjoy

Learning things about religion
Meet new people
Learning new things

Big Things we Learned

We learn about symbolism in
Hinduism. We learn about
symbolism in the forms of
Lakshmi Maata, Durga Maata,
Ganesha, Vishnu and Shiva. For
example Ganesh uses his trunk
to pick things up, this
symbolizes that he is a peaceful
and quiet. His large forehead
symbolizes his vast knowledge.
He has big ears and small
mouth, this means he listens
more than he talks.

What we do

Made Shiva Lingas
Created symbols that represent
God out of play doh
Played Holi
Learning our own religion
Mahabharata, Ramayana

What teachers like

Children that are quiet and
listen
Favorite part about teaching
class: learning the symbolism



Fabulous Flavors of Fifth Grade

My CMH Experience

By Kumkum

I have been a member of Chinmaya Mission ever since I was in the Infant class. Everytime I go somewhere, I usually visit the local Chinmaya Mission centers. Most are very astounding, here are a few:

When I was around 7 or 8, I went to an ashram called CIF. This is in Kerala, India, Staying there for 13 days, my brother and I explored the HUGE grounds of this ashram. An Ayappa temple was adorned with lamps, making it look beautiful at night. The food was delicious, varying from simple dal roti to grand meals on banana leaves! The entire ashram in general amazed me. CIF was one of the coolest ashrams I've been to.

My other favorite is Chinmaya Vibhooti. The place is so big, we had to stay there for 2 weeks in order to get a full look at it. In one building, there's an exhibit with interactive headphones talking about the story of Gurudev's life. Dogs that were once stray became a part of the ashram, knowing not to enter the shrines or food building.

One named Buster used to play with my brother and I, and we even saw small puppies with a mother! Up on a hill a few miles away, a Ganesha temple stood gracefully on the top. We visited it quite a lot, and up close, the place was fantastic. Of course, there are many more centers that truly are beautiful, but these two were my 2 favorites.



Art by Annika P,
Grade 5

By: Annika Patil

Sassy Sixth Grade Sightings

TEACHERS

Sushil Nema and
Gayatri Rao

STUDENTS

Medha N.
Arjun M.
Nishaant S.
Deepak D.
Sharika P.
Kavish S.
Praveer S.
Shudhant G.

OUR CLASS

In the 6th Grade, students learn about why India is sacred. The curriculum focuses on India's rich heritage, and learning about our saints and sages.



What's your favorite thing about Balavihar?

"I love the lunches after class"

Praveer: I like asking and answering questions.

"I like the camps"

"I like Hindi Class"

"I like making new friends"

Have you ever used Balavihar outside of school?

"I don't want to say no because it'll sound like I'm not listening." – Students' name has been redacted to protect their privacy. ☺

Kavish: In school we're learning about Hinduism and Hindu gods and coming to Balavihar has given me a head start. And we organized the can food drive to help the homeless people because Balavihar taught us that everyone should help take care of each other.

Praveer: In school we're studying ancient India and it helped me do better on the test without studying as much.

"Balavihar taught me not to bother other people and to treat everyone with respect"

Sassy Sixth Grade Sightings

BALVIHAR

By Nishaant, 6th Grade

Balance between dharma and adharma.
All can learn and teach each other.
Lessons convey spiritual and cultural knowledge.

Veneration to all deities daily.
Insights into life illuminated by Chinmaya.
Helpful by giving more than we take.
Apply our better natures.
Rising to a quest for enlightenment.

Arangetram

By Sharika, 6th Grade

Hari Om. October 1st, 2016 is a very special date to me this year. It is the date of my Bharatanatyam Arangetram (dance graduation). In this performance I will be dancing to various items. One of the main items in this performance is called a varnam. In this varnam, I will be conveying the stories of Shiva and Parvathi. Another dance item that I am going to be performing is a Ganesha Stotram, which will be my opening item. For all dances, Chinmaya and all my teachers have helped me understand and learn the stories in my items.



Seventh's Songs

TEACHERS

.....
Aparna Easwar and
Shyam Vekatesh

STUDENTS

.....
Meghna A, Rishi A,
Shruthi A, Deyvik B,
Kritika B, Darsh N,
Gaurang K, Simran K,
Sahil M, Anagha N, Tarun
N, Sriram N, Shriya P,
Ramya R, Devak S, Naviya
V

OUR CLASS

.....
The 7th Grade curricula
uses two texts: Key to
Success and PO Box Mr
God. Key To Success
focuses on how to
achieve success in the
world by living a life that
is rich in values. Emphasis
is on the mind and how a
disciplined mind achieves
happiness and peace. PO
Box Mr. God, based on Sri
Tulasidasa's
Ramacaritamanasa,
teaches the children the
various addresses of the
Lord. Through activities
and discussions, children
are able to answer that
fundamental question
that we all ask – Where is
God? In answering this
question, the children
also learn to begin to
answer another common
question – Who am I?

What are you learning this year?

Finding success in life. - Sriram

Finding out where God is - which is
everywhere. - Darsh

We learned a story about the
chataka bird. It won't drink dirty
water. So it won't drink from a
puddle or the ground. It drinks from
the sky. It teaches us to filter out the
bad and only take the good. -
Sharaya

We learned about the qualities that
make people good: kindness,
happiness, generosity, and
forgiveness. We also listed money,
but the teachers didn't like that very
much! - Megha

One idea I'm taking away from class this year:

Everyday materials and how it
connects to your life. Water
represents the pure soul. - Shruthi

Not doing things in the heat of the
moment and letting yourself calm

down - Megha

Happiness comes from within. - Anu

Hard work, knowledge and capacity
to laugh = success - Sharaya

Happiness is not from objects and
comes from within - Devak

Money is an important thing to have
- Rishi

We did an activity where you put
notes to God into envelopes. - Darsh

People are like lightbulbs, they get
dirty and then you have to clean
them and they get bright again -
Sriram

We live in a materialistic world but to
achieve long term happiness
knowledge about God and self-
realization are the keys - Naviya



Seventh's Songs

Why do you come to Balavihar?

Parents forced me
To learn about Indian heritage
Nothing to do on Sunday mornings
To learn how to be a better person and more about Indian culture
Love learning about it, has a big impact in life
Everyone has questions in life which leads you to the path where it can get answered
Want to bring children and expose to balavihar
 Stand out by color
 Be proud to be unique
 Learn values which teachers grew up with
India has lots of values
 Parents want kids to learn the same aspects
Dad learns a lot from students and culture
 Students teach them more

Won't get into trouble as much
Surrounded by right people
Making right choice, relaxation, inner peace
Makes you calm down
Getting past paths in life
 Use what you can to achieve goals
"Mind is like hanuman"
 Leaping from place to place
 Mind wandering
 Thought from thought
 Lots of thoughts
 How you should be, shouldn't be
Can be relaxed, happy
Learn how to see what end goal for life is
 Guiding tool
 How to calm mind
 Filter thoughts

Favorite activity in Balavihar?

Hands on demonstration
Did pooja in class, Abhishekam
Holy celebration
Camps
 "How to gain positivity from negativity"
Lots of projects
Om Apple
Diwali celebration
Games in camp, meet my friends, projects, vivekji
Oregon Food Bank Drive
Movie night
Varshikotsav
CORD walk

How can Balavihar affect your lives in the future?

Relieves stress
Meditation
Everything we learn today will apply to later in life
Learn something new every week
 Selfishness/greed
 Apply later on in life
Become a better person



Art by Devak S

Seventh's Songs

HOW TO FIND SUCCESS IN LIFE

By Sriram, 7th Grade

Currently in Chinmaya Mission, I am learning about how to find success in life. To do so, one must get rid of many bad qualities, and also acquire good qualities. One of these good qualities is forgiveness. There are three levels of forgiveness: 1) Those who forgive after being asked for forgiveness, 2) Those who forgive but remember the action, and 3) Those who forgive automatically without thinking, and forget the action. To completely find success in life, we must use the third level of forgiveness in our everyday lives.

Another thing we learnt in Chinmaya Mission is about the qualities we all have. To symbolize this, we took a bowl, and put in water, rose water, pepper, glitter, and glue. Then we covered the bowl. The water represented the actual us; pure and clean. The rose water represented the false pleasures, the pepper represented the anger, the glitter represented the greed, the glue represented our attachments, and the bowl was covered, representing our form that disguised these things. We need to get rid of these qualities and become as clear as the water inside.

So, in conclusion, we must get rid of our bad qualities, and develop good ones to find success in life. We need good virtues like forgiveness to help us develop those qualities.

My Favorite Krishna Story

By Anagha, 7th Grade

Many stories come to mind when you think of Krishna. He is, after all, a very important character in the Mahabharata. One that has

always particularly interested me is the one where Krishna is caught eating dirt. He decides one day that he wants to eat dirt. Krishna was always an adorable little troublemaker. His friends and his brother went and told his mother Yashoda what he had done. Krishna of course denied it. Yashoda asked him to open up his mouth so she could see if he was telling the truth. When Krishna opens his mouth, Yashoda could see the entire universe inside of it. She could see the earth and the moon and the sun. She could see our solar system and all of the other solar systems in our galaxy. She could see the Milky Way and all the other galaxies in the universe. Yashoda was very shocked. She realized how truly divine he is. I like how this story captures Krishna's innocent naughtiness while also portraying his divineness.

The Importance of Kindness

By Ramya, 7th Grade

One thing I learned in my 7th grade Balavihar class, was the importance of kindness. Though I've always known that kindness was important, this year we discussed why kindness was one of the most important qualities. Though some might disagree, I think kindness is the most important quality of all in a person. Whether you are poor or rich, one attribute that sticks out is how kind you are to others. For example, if someone with no money is extremely kind versus a rich person who is rude, of course the poor person will stand out, but sometimes our thoughts will focus on the rude person because we focus on their money not their personality. This is why some people think money is what will make people like you, but in the end it is not what makes a good person.

The Grateful Eighth

TEACHERS

.....
Haritha Kajjam,
Suraj Varma

STUDENTS

.....
Rithika P, Parthav E,
Rahul M, Anya A,
Sachin P, Anshul A,
Udaya B, Siddarth M,
Aseem A, Vivek K,
Bhargav S, Deepak K

OUR CLASS

.....
In the 8th grade, students revisit the Mahabaratha, diving deeper into learning about Dharma and how to live by Dharma. By analyzing the main characters in the Mahabaratha, students understand their virtues, frailties and challenges. Through two unique activities--charting their speech and setting a Dharma Thermostat of different values--students increase their introspection and observation skills.



What do you think Bala Vihar is important?

- “Teaches us values of life we wouldn’t really learn otherwise”
- “We don’t live in India, so a lot of our culture can get lost here. Because outside we don’t learn all the stuff that we learn here, so it’s a really good way just learn more about our culture and where we are from”

8th Graders Reflection on the skit

Any

The *Yato Dharma Tato Jayaha* skit that we, the 8th grade class, put on during the assembly was something that I really enjoyed doing with my class. It was a great bonding experience for us and it brought us closer together. Also, I really understood and learned all the values that we taught to the audience. It showed us how all these values are really important in everyday life. In addition to all the values we taught, we learned even more like hard work, friendship, cooperation, courage, teamwork, and so much more. Learning all these values was a very incredible experience and something that not only would I do again, but also encourage all the other classes to try it out, for whatever topic their class learned. Something’s that came as a challenge were finding common times for all of us to meet, figuring out how to do the costume changes, scene changes, and narrator changes. It was also difficult to get a skit that flows and fits our personalities. But once we got it all to get together and form together, I believe that it was very successful. Everyone put in a lot of time and effort to get things together and it definitely paid off. Our teachers were very helpful and supportive and so were our parents. I would definitely do this skit again because I really enjoyed it and had a lot of fun.

The Grateful Eighth

Siddarth

During the skit, there were a couple issues that we had. Narration, and blocking could have used some work, but it was enough to captivate, and engage the audience. I enjoyed the reaction of the audience. Even during the blemishes in our performance, the audience laughed. Personally, I would have added some stuff, including removing the music, and adding some of the larger props. But that is all. The only other big change, would be reforming the skit to a movie. This would allow us to transition more smoothly, and really show what we learned. We also would have had more time, allowing us to show the Yaksha Prashna, and more values. I enjoyed the practices, laughing with my friends and work hard to demonstrate learning. It was really fun, and behind the veil of hard work, there was a lot of fun involved, which I am proud of.

Rithika

I think this skit was a good idea because it gave us a chance to express what we've learned over the year. It also got us to work together to create a humorous skit that the audience will enjoy. The things I liked in the skit were all the laughs that came in the process of making it. We also knew that even if we made mistakes, we wouldn't be judged or made fun of, so we were able to relax while presenting. Some things that I didn't like in the skit were how we had very loud music in the background, which distracted us, and also switched off our microphones... So we should've spent more time with the background sounds. Another thing was our set. Whenever we walked off the stage; we got changed right there where everyone could see, so the audience could expect what was coming next. Overall, the skit was a good idea, but we should have more preparation and spend more time on the set and sounds next time.

Rahul

I truly enjoyed this skit because it was fun and it made me proud of the hard work. The skit brought us together as a family. It is something that I will remember for the rest of my life. Balavihar is my home away from home.

Parthav

In the practices I learned values that we later used in our class's skit. It helped the class bond, and we learned how to work together. We never had everyone at a practice, but even out of class, we put in effort, so that the final skit would be good. I had a lot of fun and I'd love to do this skit again. I didn't like how we never could set everyone together, and three people couldn't even make it for the play, so I'd want to change that, but it would still be fun either way.

Sachin

Personally, I feel that deciding to create a skit to display the knowledge we learned this year was a very good idea. The skit engaged the audience and, hopefully, taught them the moral values that we learned this year at Chinmaya Mission. Also, the experience of producing a skit from scratch required a decent amount of work, although the outcome was beyond comparable. During the practice sessions, I saw all the hidden talents that everyone possessed. I am certainly hoping to have an opportunity like this next year too. Thank you for the continuous support from our teachers, Haritha aunty and Suraj uncle, and great job to all of us students for completing this skit.

Bhargav

This year, our Chinmaya Class of 8th graders performed a skit portraying what we have learned throughout the year. I have learned the various basics, but the important values that everyone should and use on a daily basis. While many people already know that getting angry and lying are all bad. Very few of those people actually use those values to become a better person overall. I learned that what has happened is in the past and anyone can change. Even a thief who has been to jail many times can still tell the truth, not get angry, learn to forgive and completely change their life. So, don't worry about what you have done in the past, and be the best you can right now.

The Grateful Eighth

Udaya

Hari Om,

The skit of our 8th grade class from Chinmaya Balavihar was definitely worth our time and effort. Training for a month with an idea originated in January 2016, required lots of time from our daily lives of rehearsals and designing the skit itself. Our finished piece truly enlightened us and other who watched our skit.

I think preparing this was a great idea of bringing the 8th grade class together from weekly lessons to a good masterpiece implementing most of the virtues we've learned. Collecting all of what we've learned and choosing the best few was hard enough, and bringing them all to an intriguing story required additional work. Thanks to our teachers, this play would never have gone live to an audience of several.

Working as a team, each one of us put in their effort of learning, memorizing, practicing. And what we received was knowledge about the virtues we presented, pride, and a better work ethic. Without this skit, I don't think our class would ever completely understand how important it is to follow, Yato Dharma Tato Jayah from the Bhagavad Gita.

Aseem

I thought this year and the skit was great. It let me express my feelings and thoughts to the whole Balavihar. The skit was good which had a lot of interest and humor. We started our skit in January, but actually prepared in March. Over the course of the preparation the skit brought our class closer and let us communicate with each other. We had some tough times, but through the whole time I thought it turned out good.

I thought the skit had a lot of meaning to me and made me a lot to the class and Balavihar. One way

we could improve was to show more commitment to our practices and be more prepared for the actual play. My experience was awesome and I truly enjoyed every moment here. I would lastly like to thank my teachers and parent for helping us through the whole process. I hope that every class take our examples and applies them to their life and Balavihar



The Grateful Eighth

My Upanayanam By Siddharth

March 13th, 2016. I had been dreading this day for almost two weeks. I had to attend a full 3 hour, and possibly longer ceremony, in nothing but a thin, traditional Indian outfit. At the same time, I was excited, but for all the wrong reasons. I was excited because of the prize at the end of the Upanayanam, which was also the only reason I had agreed to do the Upanayanam itself, was money. But only after the ceremony, and understanding a bit of the history behind the ancient tradition, did I realize what actually happened that day.

Upanayanam, or “sacred thread,” is a ceremony that was used in medieval India to serve as a rite of passage, for a student going into formal studies of the scriptures, reading, writing, and other important educational aspects involved in Hindu culture. Afterwards, the student would wear a thread around his chest for the rest of his life, and begin to live with his/her guru. It also symbolizes “going into the real world”. This is demonstrated, by the participant being given a stick with a cloth on it, being a substitute for a sack, which will be used while the participant (in ancient India) goes into the forest, and begins to live with his guru.

But, with ancient Hindu traditions being lost with the flow of society, what does Upanayanam signify today? Upanayanam is the return to old Hindu cultures, and ideas, such as daily chanting to

connect with God, and praying before eating as a sign of respect. During my Upanayanam ceremony, we started with a rather long puja, some aspects singling out certain members of the family, and requiring them to do certain things, as a prayer for the success of their child in the future. Then, we had breakfast, but before and after, we learned to sprinkle water around the plate as a sign of respect to God for the food he provided us. After, the official ceremony began. Our parents cut our hair, as a sign of moving forward. Then, Swami Paratmananda gave us his blessings, and taught us the Gayatri Mantra, which if chanted every day would bring us closer to God. These traditions would normally be lost in the forward nature of society, but Chinmaya Mission made it possible for us to receive the same blessings, and rituals that a family in ancient India would get.

Would I recommend an Upanayanam? Yes, I would. It is a very spiritual experience, and no matter what age you are, you come out of it feeling, and sometimes even acting more mature. The things that you learn during the Upanayanam really make for a better future, and while the process is long, tedious, and sometimes boring, learning wise, I learned about traditions that my ancestors participated in, and also spiritually, it was very cool and is one of the most important milestones in my life. Looking back, I do not regret that I did it.



This comic was inspired by acharya Virek who taught us about Rama's chariot vs. Ravana's chariot in this years Balaram's Camp.

~ Assem Grade 8.

Ninth Grade Reflections

TEACHERS

.....
Raji Chandra
Chandra Nair

STUDENTS

.....
Santosh R, Bharath N,
Maya B, Abhishek A,
Susheel R, Keshav S,
Divya K, Rahul K

OUR CLASS

.....
What are the Hindu
Samskaras, how are they
based on the Vedas and
Upanishads, what do they
mean to us today?
Students learn about the
16 major samskaras, in
addition to more
advanced principles that
can help them
accomplish goals of life
with confidence – be they
academic, social, or
spiritual.

What are you learning this year?

Santosh: We're learning about Hindu culture and how it applies to our life. We learned about the step by step process of applying Brahman to our life. We're learning that Brahman is in everything, that we are Brahman as well. It's in us and everything around us.

Rahul: We're learning about thru stories about value. At the end of each class, we go through Grooming Inside Out and we analyze if we're doing these values and how to incorporate these values.

Keshav and Maya: We debated charity - to explore if we should participate or not participate charity. We talked about how charity makes us better people.

Maya: Our teachers were fun. Chandra Uncle and Raji Aunty are really sweet, you can talk to them about anything. They are really good with technology, they use Snapchat, and have cables in their back pocket to make all the technology work. They are very relatable and make an effort to communicate with us.



How Balavihar bridges the Culture Chasm By Keshav, 9th Grade

Seattle Seahawks football, Chick-fil-A fast-food restaurants and Rap music: three basic components of American culture. Cricket, Palak paneer and Bharatanatyam dance: three basic components of Indian culture. What on earth could the correlation between these two cultures be? How can an American teenager who has lived his whole life in Portland, Oregon be expected to learn about a culture, a religion that has seemingly no connection to the vast American lifestyle that revolves around sports, music and entertainment? Why should this American teenager wake up at 7:30 every Sunday morning to pray to Gods with four hands or with an elephant head when he could be studying for the math test that he has the next day, watching sports or even sleeping in, preparing for the long, strenuous week ahead that is sure to cause some sleepless nights?

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A native of Ireland, Delia has been living in the Portland Metro Area and selling real estate for over 20 years, having switched careers from a math teacher in East Harlem, NY to a real estate professional in Portland, OR.

Delia's husband works in high tech. Both her children are competitive swimmers; one is in college at NYU, the other an eighth grader. And don't forget, the 12 year old dog, Mandy!

Delia volunteers at the Blanchet House, a homeless men's shelter. She also runs the hospitality suite for the Tualatin Hills Swim Team.

Throughout her career, Delia has experienced both the incredible upswing in pricing and the overnight collapse of the market in 2007. This has allowed her to become well attuned to both the excitement and adversity of buying and selling property. She has helped clients with financial hardships and those pursuing the American Dream achieve their goals. A member of JLS President's Circle, she has the acknowledgment of her peers.

An expert in locating and evaluating investment grade property, Delia has enjoyed much success from helping her clients' build their real estate portfolios.

Delia understands that real estate decisions shape your future and lifestyle. Her work ethic is simple; work hard, give sound advice and recognize her clients' needs to prosper. Call her at 503-805-5209 with your real estate questions.

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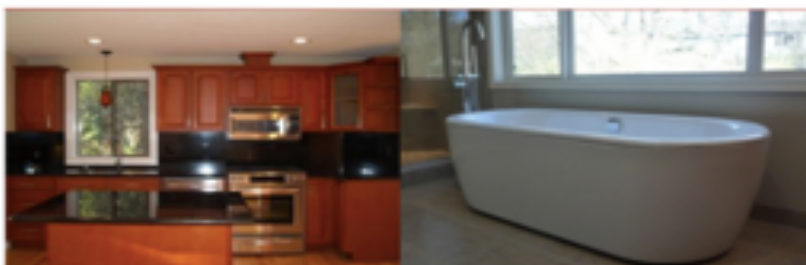
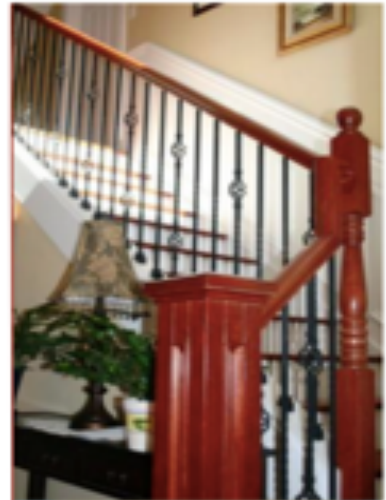
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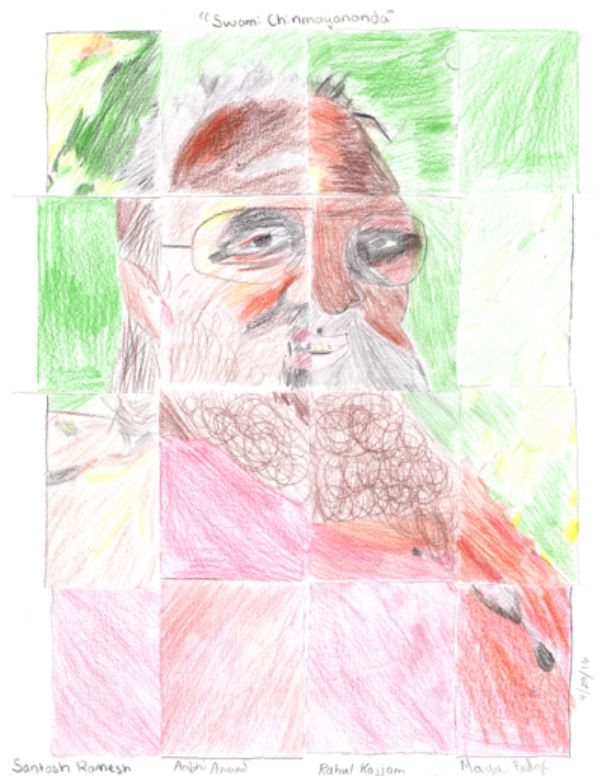
Ninth Grade Reflections

That is a question I have had to ask myself many times as I have groggily trudged out of my bed at the first ring of my alarm, hundreds of times before and each time I have reached the same conclusion.

The reason that Hinduism and Indian culture are so important to learn, understand and apply to everyday life is that Indian culture allows you to aspire to be your best self while focusing on the bigger picture: God and Family. Throughout the 12 years that I have been an active participant at Balavihar, I have learnt about dozens of subjects such as Krishna, Vishnu, Indian culture and Brahman. However, no message has resonated more with me than the Great Mahabaratha War involving the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The Pandava brothers fought this bloody war together as a family, united, to fight the necessary evil.

One lesson that I will always carry with me as I grow up and explore the world will be that family is the one and only thing that matters most. Lamborghinis, Rolex watches and iPhones will never be able to give you the love, respect and compassion that your family will give each and every day, all your life. Another lesson that I have learnt from Balavihar is to value and respect your elders. According to the Census Bureau, over 41.4 million Americans are senior citizens older than 65 years old. Sadly, more than 50% of senior citizens older than 80 live in old age homes with the average life expectancy upon entering these old-age homes just 6 months. However, in popular Indian culture, once parents have reached a certain age in which they can no longer be counted on to live independently, these seniors often move in with their sons and daughters creating a happy and joyous end to their illustrious lives.

There have been days when frankly I have felt exhausted, tired, bored or even disappointed that I need to go learn about a culture that doesn't seem very applicable in American life. However, the lessons that I have learnt in Balavihar are irreplaceable and ideals that I will forever follow to the best of my ability.



Tenth Talks

TEACHERS

.....
Ramesh
Krishnamurthy,
Ganesh Krishnan,
Praveen
Gopalakrishnan

STUDENTS

.....
Yesh G
Gokul K
Ankitha K
Aleena K
Pratheek M
Prashant
Rahul R
Kapil V
Deepak V
Karthik V

OUR CLASS

.....
In the 10th grade class,
students study the
Bhagavad Gita, focusing
on Chapters 1-7 to 9ish.

What are you learning this year?

Ankitha: These chapters of the Gita are about dealing with life, how to focus and study.

Kapil: We need to have equipoise when dealing with life.

Pratheek: Yes, equipoise means, don't get too happy in success or too disappointed in failure.

So, how do you have equipoise?

Pratheek: You need a calm environment without distractions. You go to a room where you can be alone, have a glass of water, no phone. Use a chair, don't sit on the bed. It's hard to be focused when you're relying on a bed.

Kapil: We need to approach all our actions the same way so that we don't let our emotions or biases affect our actions.

Rahul: We learned about limiting distractions at a spiritual level. Having a statue of God on your desk (best if sitting a top kush grass and tiger skin), helps keep you focused at your task at hand and gives you the ability to complete your task in accurately.

Yesh: We watched a TED talk on a swimmer who did an open swim in the ocean. She got stung by hundreds of jellyfish, and failed many times. But despite her failures, she kept trying again and again and ultimately reached her goal.



Tenth Talks

Faith and Devotion

By Ankitha, 10th Grade

Chapter 4, Shlokam 39 of the Bhagavad Gita explains three qualities a person needs in order to gain spiritual wisdom of the higher self in themselves. The first is shraddha, or faith. Rather than a blind, unquestioning faith, Gurudev defines shraddha as "a belief in what I do not know now, so that I may soon enough come to know what I believe in." To thoroughly understand any subject, you shouldn't enter the learning process doubting the accuracy of what you are about to learn. For example, having shraddha in a classroom means that you trust the teacher and the material before it has been taught, so you will be prepared and eager to fully understand what you have chosen to believe.

The second quality mentioned in this shlokam is devotion. Since is not enough to believe without fully learning about what you believe in, the next step is to devote yourself to understanding the subject. If you have faith in your subject and are committed to learning more, you will be motivated to study and learn until you have reached a complete understanding. The last quality that this shlokam talks about is the ability to focus, or control the senses. Once you have a faithful and devoted mindset, the final step is to overcome any outside distractions that disturb you. By achieving intellectual faith, mental devotion, and physical control over the sense organs, you can focus your body, mind, and intellect towards realizing the supreme self in yourself.

By Kapil, 10th Grade

During the 2015 winter break, I along with seven other boys, went on a trip to a very rural part of India. We accomplished many things on this trip, but our largest project was by far building a toilet for a family to use. We started off our this project by digging a base for the stall, and a large hole for the waste. This part of the project was rapidly completed, and we begin the next section the following day. On this day, we slowly built up from the ground with some plain gray bricks to give some structure to the toilet.



Every so often, we would stop and mix some cement to hold the bricks together. It was hard work, and the recipients of the toilet often stepped in to help us put it together when we needed to take a break. The next day, we all walked to the location, and begun the process of sealing the stall. We did not have access to any fancy paints, so we just mixed more cement to cover the stall. The people from the US weren't very good at covering the stall, so a mason came in and helped us. In the end, a completed eastern-style toilet stood before us, a product of our own hard work combined with the work of many others. The joy on the faces of the family was evident, and that alone made it worth it.

Though it may seem like something that we in America take for granted, a toilet is something that a great percentage of the world doesn't have. In these parts of the world, open defecation is rampant, leading to serious consequences in the long run. Open defecation pollutes the water supply, leading to water-borne diseases being the top killer of children in the developing world. The work that CORD is doing in these areas really has an impact on the residents' lives, and this service visit opened my eyes to the entitlement of Americans.

Tenth Talks

An Unforgettable Two Weeks

By Gokul, Grade 10

We hear about it every day. The millions of poor people in developing countries have taken a place in our day to day lives as guilt-tripping information meant to make us feel lucky for what we have. But it isn't until one sees this poverty with their own eyes that true gratefulness is incited. This past winter break, Akshat, Kapil, and I had the opportunity to observe and help rural communities in Deuladiha, Odisha as part of a C.O.R.D. service trip. We went with the thought "this will be a good experience", and left with knowledge that has reshaped the way our mind perceives the problem of poverty.

The following is an excerpt from the daily journal I kept during my trip. It summarizes the happenings of our first day in the ashram and area. Hopefully, it gives you a brief look through our eyes so you can appreciate the uniqueness of this experience:

"I barely got sleep. Mosquito bites kept me up and scratching away the entire night. Of course, I asked everyone else and no one got bit. Just my luck. Probably should have used some mosquito spray.

We packed our luggage into the cars, ate breakfast, and left for Deuladiha. On the way, as we started getting into the more rural village areas, everyone stopped and gave us accusatory but curious stares, which caught us all off guard. We finally got to the ashram. It was quite beautiful. There was even a small temple built into it. Akshat and I ended up sharing a room.

The following morning, we got ready and went down to eat breakfast, then left for our villages in 2 groups. Once we got to the village, the residents set up chairs for us, Kishore uncle and Aalok uncle. The villagers gathered in front of us in the small shelter we sat in, and sat criss cross on the cold ground. We met a cute Odi kid named Aditya, who was fascinated by Rohit's smart phone. Then Aalok uncle showed us and them how to make an organic, rural-made pesticide called panchagavya. Essentially, it had five ingredients that stem from a cow – two of them being urine and dung – that were mixed together. We proceeded to the village's main garden to make an Azolah pit, a pit of cow dung, water, and Azolah seeds that grows to a sustainable source of food for cows within 2 weeks. It's amazing to see how much ingenuity and innovation these villagers and farmers have, along with strength and willpower. But, regardless of their hard work and toil, smiles never left their faces.

We then stopped by a school to look at the classrooms, and by Rohit's request we went inside a class of about 7-year old kids. The teacher said something to the class, and suddenly they started rushing like a school of fish to us and quickly bent over one by one to touch our feet out of respect. We ended up doing a spontaneous presentation on water safety and mosquito-borne diseases. After that, we gave them pencils and went back to the ashram. We hung out, watched Family Guy, and ate dinner. During aarthi that night, I held the lamp in front of the statue of Gurudev. It was almost mesmerizing seeing the shadow of the statue rotate with the movement of my hands as we sang in unison. An unforgettable start to an unforgettable two weeks.

Then, our jet lag hit."

Tenth Talks

Focus By Rahul, 10th Grade

In class, we have been learning about focus, and how we can attain focus. My class (Grade 10) has been working towards ways to gain full focus for tasks that we do during our daily lives such as homework, sports, or even playing instruments. We have learned that being completely focused will give us a very likely chance at succeeding in our task at hand.



We have discussed ways on how to limit distractions in order to gain this level of focus required. Some ways the class and I have discussed are putting electronic devices away in a separate room from which you are in, to do homework or to study in a chair rather than a bed. To complete the task entirely rather than to take breaks every hour to limit distractions. We have also found that in order to complete your task accurately, you yourself must want to do the task voluntarily. We have discussed that you can't study, or do homework for the grade, but you have to do it for the sake of learning. This has been a major key that we have talked about and our teachers have even proven this through examples from their own lives.

Our class in itself has been very focused towards learning about this. We are not finished, but are nearing our goal of completely learning to use the talent of becoming focused. Our goal after we finish learning about it, is to apply it to our daily lives, and to succeed further during our lives.

Learning From Our Eleventh Graders

TEACHERS

.....
TK Ramachandar
Ashok Kajjam

STUDENTS & BALAVIHAR YEARS

.....
Rishi P (3 yrs)
Anish N (11 yrs)
Akshat K (13 yrs)
Kamya C (12 yrs)
Akshat N (6 yrs)
Abhinav S(10 yrs)

OUR CLASS

.....
In 11th grade, we are studying the 2nd half of the Bhagwat gita. We try to focus on how the concepts from the Gita can be applied to our day to day situations.

How did you guys learn about Balavihar?

Booth at India Day Function, learnt from friends

What are you guys learning?

Bhagavad Gita Chapter 11

Reincarnation

Krishna's divine form, terrified, amazed, wants to come back

What do you guys like about Balavihar/Why do you come?

Vivekji Camps

Seeing friends, discussing important stuff about culture and heritage

Teaching younger children

Hanuman chalisa chanting with 2nd graders

Meeting Swamijis

Holy Celebrations

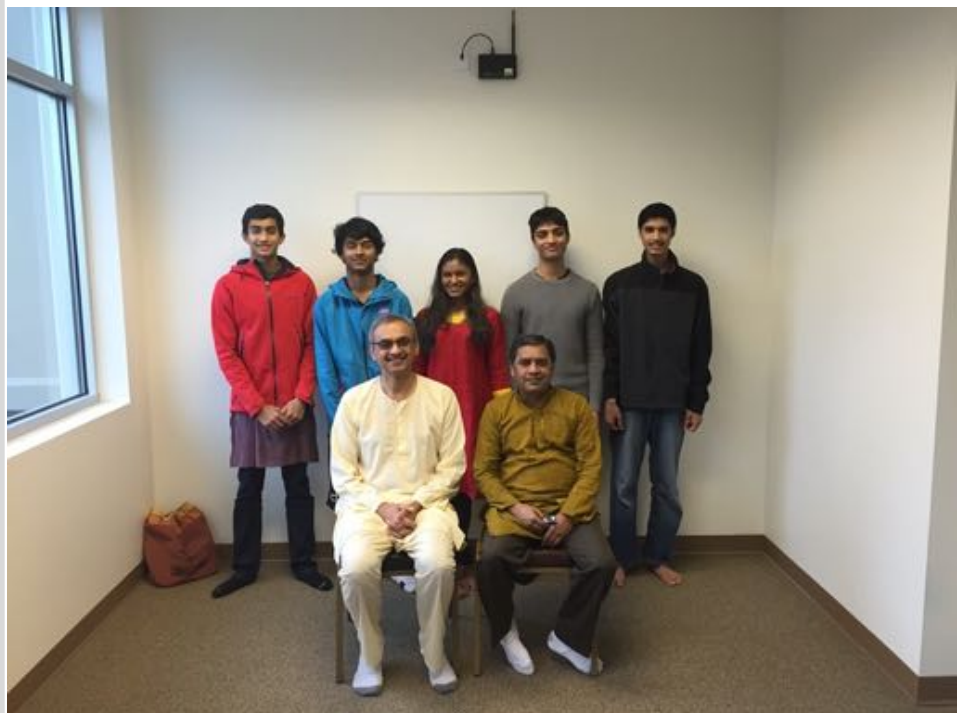
Being assistant teachers

In America, we lose touch with our culture: we learn philosophies and and truths that we can use in the future

Learning about self unfoldment

It's religious sunday school, concepts are similar to Christianity, basics of god, values

Going to chyk camps in the future



Learning From Our Eleventh Graders

How have you guys applied Balavihar to your daily lives?

Akshay went to camp out in 7th grade

Only one not eating beef, had courage to tell his friends

Be nice to your parents

Try to get along with people you don't get along with

Developing good habits each week

Learn about tolerance and anger management

Coming to balavihar but also applying the teachings to daily life

Solve challenges you see

Best way to learn is to apply

A Trip to India

By Akshat, 11th Grade

"Service to others is the service of the Lord of lords". It is explicitly stated in our own Pledge that helping others is analogous to serving God. This last winter break, I, along with two of my friends: Kapil and Gokul, travelled to Deuladiha, a rural district in Odisha, India. We travelled through CORD, which is the Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development, and were given the opportunity to witness, firsthand, what the life of a rural villager was like. Moreover, we were given the opportunity to help.

The first couple days in Chinmaya Dham, the center where we slept, ate, and spent our free time, were tough. I'll admit that it was annoying that the electricity kept going out for long periods of time and that we were always on a lookout for the fist-sized spiders that crawled around the settlement. Soon enough, however, we didn't care. By the fourth day, we had adapted to the lifestyle there, albeit we still protected ourselves from street food, and we could open our eyes to the real problems in these villages. Each day, we travelled to a different village in the district of Deuladiha and worked on specific activities. One day, we were tasked with making panchagabya. This concoction was made from five ("pancha") products of a cow ("gabya"): ghee, curd, dung, urine, and milk. It served as a natural fertilizer for the villagers' crops, as opposed to the chemical fertilizers that they would use instead, those which harmed the soil. Though the chemicals were cheaper, they were more costly in the long run. Panchagabya, though more time-consuming to make, would render their fields sustainable for years to come. Over the course of the next couple days, we spent our time on such projects, with the goal to increase the villagers' sustainability. Our biggest projects, however, were different. As a three-day project, we travelled to a nearby village and built a two-part toilet. The first part consisted of the toilet, and the second, a waste pit. Another day, we spent our time hiking up to a village in the hills to provide them with the solar lanterns we had raised money for (we had raised money for about 600 lanterns, and about 50 were given that day).

More important than our achievements is what we learned from the trip. Going from village to village, I noticed one thing - these villagers were never upset. I always saw a smile on their faces. At one point, we spent a couple hours playing with the village kids. And what did we play? No, not video games or basketball. We hit a styrofoam puck around with sticks, and saw if we could make goals. The smallest things are the most memorable, and I will always remember this trip. Cicero once said: "Non nobis solum nati sumus" - "Not for ourselves alone are we born." If we are given a chance to help others, we must seize it, and help while holding no expectations for ourselves.

Final Words of Wisdom From Our Seniors, Twelfth Grade

TEACHERS

.....
Kalpana
Krishnamurthy
Krishna Sistla

STUDENTS

.....
Pranav S
Abishek V
Hersh G
Nidhi P
Meera N
Rama S
Varun G

OUR CLASS

.....
During the final year of Bala Vihar, 12th grade students read and discuss Self Enfoldment.

The teachers did a good job of trying to incorporate these concepts into our lives. I got confused reading the concepts in the book, but having the space to apply it to our lives made it easier to understand.

One of the biggest things I take away from Bala Vihar is the community. While the classes are helpful, I take away a lot of things from observing how people act at CMP. I know at a big puja that the aunties are going to go straight into the kitchen and ask how they can help. You never see anyone doing anything by themselves here, they are always doing things in groups because people are volunteering or being asked to help. I know that when I come here, I should also be looking for ways to help. - Meera

I liked how a lot of the things we learned help us to put things into perspective. Our class discussions connected to the things we're doing in our life and how we should see ourselves going forward. One of the concepts we learned about that will stay with me is the idea of vasanas - our tendencies that influence our daily lives - and how we can control those to control the way we act. I feel like I'm more aware. - Nidhi

I've been here since 3rd or 4th grade, and I know so many of the uncles and aunties here. It's like a second and larger family. Having all of these people I can go to and talk to, it does make an impact. For many years it was a weekly activity - you refresh and remind yourself how you should be living your life. It helps to introduce certain values to your life. And to remind you. By doing it over so much of my childhood has definitely shaped my life. Beside the weekly classes and having the whole family, having all the visits and lectures from acharyas is key. Those guys have some intense and well structured lectures. When I started going to the lectures in 7th grade, I was being dragged to them. But that has changed, I like going to them and they are pretty useful. There are so many different ways to contribute to something greater than yourself. For a long time, my family was responsible for the Bala vihar library. We would take inventory every week, we would serve the community. We would clean up after Bala Vihar was over. There are so many different ways to serve, we have done cooking at homeless shelters, food drives, the Oregon Food Bank, there are so many ways to serve. - Hersh

Final Words of Wisdom From Our Seniors, Twelfth Grade

I can still remember being dragged out of bed by my Mom and Dad and being forced to go to Balavihar. Up until recently, I absolutely hated this program. I felt like it was just an extra school day my parents were forcing me to go to. I didn't really have any friends in Bala Vihar and didn't see why learning about India's states would help me in life. It wasn't until sophomore year that I realized the aim of the Chinmaya Mission program wasn't to make me a better Hindu, but the goal was to make me a more successful person. I started to realize that life wasn't about being the richest, the coolest, or even the smartest, it was about being the happiest. And this is something they don't teach you in schools. No matter how many years you spend studying US presidents or math, you're not going to learn to be happy in life like you'll learn at Balavihar. For me Balavihar has been like a tutorial on happiness and I'm definitely going to bring the skills I've learned not only to college but with me for the rest of my life. - Pranav



Next Steps – Reflections From Alumni

Lessons from Bala Vihar By: Sonya Bedge

When I was in high school and I asked people about their college experiences, there were two answers that everyone seemed to give. First, that there is a lot of free time in college, and second, that college will be one of the best times of my life, full of self-discovery.

After completing my first year of college at Oregon State University, I can wholeheartedly agree with both of these statements. When people said that you have a lot of free time in college, I did not understand how much time you actually gained. Not being in class for 8 hours straight really clears up your schedule. As a result of that though, you have to make a lot of conscious decisions about how you are going to spend your day. Between classes, are you going to finish that homework assignment you have to do or are you going to go back to your dorm and take a nap? Are you going to go to the gym and exercise, or are you going to hang out with friends and eat a family sized bag of Doritos? Sometimes you really do need that nap or that bonding time over the Doritos, but every day? How do you know whether you actually need the break, or if you are just feeling lazy?

The key to answering this question comes from one of the most important lessons that I learned from Bala Vihar: everything lies in a balance. Without taking those breaks, school becomes a chore and seems like a never-ending black hole of work. But add too many breaks and suddenly school is put on the back burner and you are not learning anything. Happiness comes after you find this balance and can then successfully maintain your academic life while still finding time to do fun things like go to basketball games or take a day trip to the beach.

While finding this balance is by no means easy, I have found that maintaining this balance is the key to enjoying the college experience. Part of finding this balance comes from the self-discovery that happens during college. Because there are so many things that happen on college campuses, you want to invest your time into the things that you really value. The activities that you participate in, and the choices that you make all start adding up to either bring you closer to your goals, or take you farther away.

Reading *Self-Unfoldment* in Bala Vihar, gave me an avenue to reflect on my life, and the things that I want for my life.

Knowing the base qualities that we discussed in class, I am able to look at a situation and ask myself: Is this decision going to help me achieve my long-term goals? There is never going to be a situation that you encounter where you will be able to say: "We talked about this exact situation in class, and I know exactly how to handle it." Rather, Bala Vihar taught me how to approach tough decisions when I encounter them.





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Reflecting & Looking Forward

The Year Gone By...

By Meera Nair

Chinmaya Haridwar is bustling with activities all year round. Here is a recap of our busy calendar in the past year.

Regular Events

Imparting Vedantic knowledge is the key element of every Chinmaya Mission center. We do that through our regular Sunday morning Balvihar classes for infants through 12th graders, and study groups for adults. Sunday mornings also see active Hindi, Vedic chanting and Yoga classes and guided meditation.

There are also the following regular monthly events at Haridwar:

- 1st Saturdays - Bhajan Sandhya (at a host's residence)
- 2nd Saturdays - Vedic chanting
- 3rd Saturdays - Movie night
- 3rd Saturdays - Talks by Acharyas over Skype
- 4th Saturdays - Sunderkand Parayan (Ramcharith manas)

Visiting Acharyas

Acharyas from various Chinmaya Mission centers regularly grace Portland with their visit and wisdom. Below are the teachers who visited us between June 2015 and May 2016, and the topics of their discourses:

•

Swami Sarveshananda (CM Dallas/Fort Worth) - June 12 - 14

- Swamiji presided over Haridwar's first anniversary celebrations. He talked about the significance of each of the pujas and homams we performed, and also about Sanathana Dharma.

• Swami Ishwarananda (CM Los Angeles, CA) - August 27 - 31

- Guru Stotram: The endless wisdom in the Guru-Gita has been distilled into fourteen verses in the Guru Stotram, where the essence of the purpose and need for a Guru unfolds.
- Mukundamala: Kulaśekhara Ālvār was a regal devotee who lorded over the Lord of His heart, Mukunda! This beautiful composition of this saint says that love by itself is healing, but divine love is several notches higher. A Divine Lover is an alchemist who transforms an ordinary life into an inner pilgrimage, leading to an ecstatic union with the Lord.

• Acharya Sharada Kumar (CM Ann Arbor, MI) - November 13 - 15

- Sunderkand: The most beautiful kaanda (chapter) in Ramayana, where Hanuman goes to Lanka in search of Mother Sita, sees her, and comes back to inform Lord Rama about the happy meeting.
- Sharadaji also conducted a teacher training for all the current and aspiring Balvihar teachers.

• Swami Paratmananda (CM Beaumont, TX) - March 11

- Vemana Vedanta: Vemana composed numerous poems, in the popular vernacular of Telugu. His poems discuss the subjects of Yoga, wisdom and morality, and are known for their use of simple language and native idioms.

• Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara Falls, Canada) - March 11 - 17

- F.E.A.R. (Face Everything And Rise): A four-day workshop engaging in the philosophy and practice of overcoming your fears and developing fearlessness.

• Swami Chidatmananda (CM Hyderabad, India) - May 16 - 20

- Essential Values of Mahatma Gandhi: Recognized as the Father of the Nation for leading Indian independence movement, Gandhiji led a life guided by the values of the Bhagavad Gita.

Reflecting & Looking Forward

Skype talks

To accommodate the spiritual needs of the Portland community, Chinmaya Haridwar have started organizing hour-long talks by Acharyas over Skype. Below are the talks that we have had:

Swami Ishwarananda (CM Los Angeles) - Family with Values

Acharya Rahul and Acharya Priya (CM Washington, D.C.) - Stress Management: Practicing Sakshi Bhava in everyday life.

Swami Sarveshananda (CM Dallas/Forth Worth) - Abundance without Attachment

Acharya Arun Gossai (CM New York) - Staying Cool Within and Without

Special events

Varshikotsav - June 2015: Two days of celebrations to mark the first year in our new home, Chinmaya Haridwar. Celebrations included Sudarshan homam, Deepa puja, and a cultural show.

India day - Aug 2015: Balvihar students chanted chapter 15 of Bhagavad Gita. There was also a dance, choreographed and performed by Balvihar students, as a fund-raiser for Chinmaya Vijaya (an orphanage in India).

Chinmaya Jyoti - Aug - Sep 2015: To celebrate Gurudev Swami Chinmayanda's birth centenary year, four Deepams (lamps) traveled the four regions of the USA and Canada, stopping at each Chinmaya Mission center in that region. We housed Chinmaya Jyoti for a month, with regular paduka pujas.

CORD Service Visit - Dec 2015: Three of our high-school Balvihar students, along with Kishore Pathial, visited Deuladiha in Odisha India. They helped build toilets, educate the villagers about sanitation, and provided solar-powered lanterns to more than 500 families.

Vedic Mathematics classes - Feb 2016: Mrs. Sumathi Thiyyagasundaram, who had been teaching math at Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Hyderabad and Abu Dhabi, taught elementary and middle school children, and their parents, the basics of Vedic Mathematics.

Samashti Upanayanam - Mar 2016: 15 children (11 boys and 4 girls) performed Upanayanam, under the guidance of Swami Paratmananda. This initiation rite marks his/her second, spiritual birth after his/her first physical one.

8th Annual Balvihar Camp - Mar 2016: Acharya Vivek Gupta and Sheila Gupta led the 2-day annual Balvihar camp, titled Finding Positivity in Negativity, based on the Vibheeshana Gitam.

Akhand Ramayan - Apr 2016: 24-hours long recital of Ramayan (Ramcharith manas by Tulsidas), to celebrate Ram Navami.

Festivals and Celebrations

Raksha Bandhan - Aug 29

Janmashtami - Sep 5

Ganesh Chaturti - Sep 20

Navaratri/Dussehra with golu & dandiya - Oct 18

Diwali fireworks - Nov 11

Thanksgiving dinner - Nov 26

Gita and Tapovan Jayanthi - Dec 20

New Year Ganesh Pooja - Jan 1

Mahashivaratri - Mar 6

Holi - Mar 13

Gurudev Jayanthi, Mothers' Day, and Senior Graduation - May 8

Adult Submissions

Giving makes a big difference By Surekha Reddy

Giving (Dana) includes selfless service or seva to those in need. The teachings of Hindu gurus emphasize the need to devote time to seva or serving humanity in a selfless manner.

Recently, my mom had to go through an open heart by-pass surgery unexpectedly. The amount of love and affection Chinmaya family showed on us was incredible. So many inquiries, people visiting, making arrangements for food for my family, offering comfort in coming and talking to us frequently and helping with children pick-ups and drop-offs. It was amazing to see in how many forms of giving came through during this time. It is not something one can easily express the gratitude for, but from the bottom of our heart "A BIG THANK YOU" to all Chinmaya families who have helped us get through this difficult situation. My mom is fully recovered now and the first thing she wanted to do is give back to Chinmaya family in whatever capacity she can. She has decided to help with kitchen where all possible by committing of giving her time.

Giving is beautiful, you don't know how you make an impact on others with very few simple steps. Chinmaya Mission Portland families embody giving in many forms like teaching, cooking, planning, cleaning, funding and helping others. It is a great place where you see parents role model to their children through actions of giving.

Through last ten years of journey with Chinmaya Mission Portland, there were many opportunities given to our family to serve and offer our services, a big thank you to Chinmaya. Our family truly enjoys in being associated with likeminded people in the mission where everyone cares about each other and joyfully participate in true giving. It is so much fun and bliss meeting this family on every Sunday and on every possible occasion of festivities and celebrations.

Meeting Swami Chinmayananda in a train By Sudhir Menon

The train rolled into Ichalkaranji, a dusty train station on the way from Bombay to Calcutta. This was pre liberalization India, and the news cycle that month was filled with coverage about India's "balance of payments situation," a kind euphemism for running out of money and defaulting on our national loans. For a country still reeling from the gruesome murder of Rajiv Gandhi, and nearly out of money, general apathy and a gloomy indifference characterized all walks of life.

A railway minister must have represented Ichalkaranji at some time in time because the train stopped for all of 2 minutes; the station seemed deserted, except for a Wheeler bookstore, which was a familiar sight for train travelers back in those days. Faced with a 36 hour journey, no company and no books, I desperately dashed out of the train, randomly picked up a book which said something about "The art of...". I paid my ten rupees and barely made it back into the train as it heaved its way out of the station.

The book was titled, "The Art of Man Making", with a subtitle that said, "114 short talks on the Bhagawad Gita" by Swami Chinmayananda. Growing up in Pune, summer vacations were a time of desolation. The town practically emptied out as the women folk packed up their children as soon as schools closed and sought refuge from the grimy suburban existence of summertime Pune, for at least a couple of months.

Adult Submissions

And once everyone left, I was faced with a summer of nothing to do. One year the problem solved itself in a miraculous way when I discovered a flea market where used books were sold by the kilogram. You never knew what you might get. One year I got the United Nations project report on the International Geophysical Year held in 1954, and learned about sunspots. Another time I picked up a computer chip manual before I knew what a computer was. So yes, I could read anything. And I mean anything. The Art of Man Making would fill my time, regardless of what it said. With that thought in mind, I opened the book.

The train continued to make good progress but the world outside started to fade away. Day turned to night and the rail compartment fell silent. As the sun came up at 4.30 am, the train rolled into Bilaspur. Nearly 12 hours had gone by and I had not put the book down. In these talks Swami Chinmayananda had originally addressed Indian youth right after independence. But forty years later, it was like having an extended 1-1 with a master, who somehow understood my exact situation even without me saying a word. The difference between escapism and renunciation, the need for character building as a prerequisite to nation building, the simplified explanations of that epic conversation between Arjuna and Krishna, left an indelible impression on me.

As I alighted from the Gitanjali in Calcutta, I knew that my journey had just begun and I couldn't be more excited for what lay ahead.

From an Anonymous Source

Submitted by Ramesh Krishnamurthy

I asked God "How to handle Life"?

God replied "Check Your Room"

My room gave me all the answers:

Roof said : Aim high.

Fan said : Be cool.

Clock said : Value time.

Calendar said: Be up to date.

Wallet said : Save now for the future.

Mirror said : Always observe yourself.

Lamps said : Light up other's life.

Wall said : Share others' load.

Window said : Expand the vision.

Floor said : Always be down to earth.

Stairs said : Watch each step you take.

And I Said

"Thank You God!"



Art by Geetha N

Adult Submissions

My Experience with Chinmaya Mission By Sushil Nema

My wife, Seema, had an association with Chinmaya Mission since her childhood. When she was a teenager, she was even blessed to receive darshan from Swami Chinmayananda while he was visiting her native town Satna. I got associated with Chinmaya Mission "physically" in 2007 while we were looking for something for our kids. Until then, I had only heard the name "Chinmaya Mission" and perceived it as a place where they taught the Geeta. Does that mean I had no association with any other religious or spiritual organization? No, I had. But, it was more on an ad-hoc basis and as opportunity persisted.

Knowing that something is better than nothing, we enrolled our kids in Balavihar. For me, the deal was pretty good. Two hours of life without kids for a couple of hundred dollars for the whole year. I could not have gotten a babysitter at that price. I used to remind myself how good of a deal this was while passing my time at Mittleman Jewish Community Center cafe, where classes used to be held until Chinmaya Mission got its building.

Slowly, I started attending study group. It was on "Man: Shodhanam." That connected me mentally with Chinmaya Mission. After that, I participated in a family camp in Orlando, where I got an opportunity to see Poojya Guruji and listen to his discourses. Seeing his humility and simplicity, I got genuinely interested in Chinmaya Mission.

After that, I decided to volunteer my time at Chinmaya Mission, doing what I could do to the best of my abilities. I attended many family and Mahasamadhi camps. The most memorable of them was the 13-day Diwali Camp with Poojya Guruji at Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF), located in the Ernakulam District, Kerala, India. It is also the sacred birthplace of Adi Sankaracharya. It was a blissful moment to celebrate Diwali with Poojya Guruji and many other visiting Swamijis from all other places.

We have also hosted visiting Swamijis and Acharyas in our home. The experience of being in their presence is beyond explanation. I feel great peace and tranquility when they stay with us. It was great learning about their candid, simplistic and ordinary lifestyle. Every single one has taught us something one way or the other, especially to live with contentment.

Being with Chinmaya Mission for more than eight years, I am convinced that I am in the right place. What I have received from Chinmaya Mission is priceless. Chinmaya Mission is a global family. No matter what center or ashram I visit, I have never felt that I am away from home.

Poojya Gurudev's vision has brought the Gurukulum not only next door to us, but also to the home through online courses. It's up to us how we get the best out of it.

"We Can, We Must" as Swami Chinmayananda had said.

Adult Submissions

"हिंदी और चिन्मय हरिद्वार "

ईश्वर की कृपा व हमारा सौभाग्य है, कि हम चिन्मय हरिद्वार (पोर्टलैंड) के सदस्य हैं। अपनी प्रिय भाषा हिंदी की शिक्षिका होने के नाते, मुझे गर्व है कि चिन्मय हरिद्वार में मुझे अपने अल्प हिंदी- ज्ञान को नन्हे मुन्हे बच्चों से बांटने का अवसर प्राप्त हुआ। चिन्मय हरिद्वार का, हिंदी के साथ सम्बन्ध बहुत गहरा हो चला है। कक्षाओं की संख्या पहले की अपेक्षा बढ़ गयी है और हिंदी के विद्यार्थियों की संख्या भी दिनोदिन बढ़ चली है। आश्चर्य की बात तो ये है कि विभिन्न भाषी चिन्मय परिवार के सदस्यों के बच्चे भी, हिंदी सीखने-जानने-बोलने के लिए तत्पर और प्रोत्साहित हो रहे हैं। गीत-कविताओं, कहानियों के माध्यम से सभी हिंदी शिक्षक- शिक्षिकाएं हिंदी की मधुरता का रस बच्चों के मन में घोल रहे हैं। प्रत्येक रविवार, विभिन्न मातृ भाषी बच्चे, घरों में अन्य भाषा बोलने के बाद भी उत्साह पूर्वक हिंदी कक्षाओं में आते हैं। चिन्मय हरिद्वार का यह प्रयास अत्यन्त सफल रहा।

पूज्य गुरुदेव स्वामी चिन्मयानन्दजी के १००वीं वर्षगांठ के उपलक्ष्य में, हिंदी की सेवा करने वाले, उन सभी निःस्वार्थ सेवक सेविकाओं व हिंदी के विद्यार्थियों के लिए, मेरी ये हिंदी कविता उपहार-स्वरूप समर्पित है

व्यस्त जीवन की आपाधापी में से,
बहुमूल्य समय आपने प्रदान किया।
अर्धखिले, पनप रहे कच्चे मन को,
हिंदी का मधुर सा, ज्ञान दिया।

जब निःस्वार्थ भाव से, एक तरफा हो,
तो, वो भी एक सेवा बन जाती है॥
नन्हे भविष्य की, उज्ज्वल कोशिश भी,
ध्यान-साधना ही कहलाती है॥

नन्हे मुख से, टूटी-फूटी हिंदी,
जब अटक-अटक कर बाहर आती।
टेढ़ी-मेढ़ी और उलटी-पुलटी,
मात्राएँ, कागज़ पर सज जाती॥

राहुल, सुहानी, असीम, श्रीनिकेत
अक्षरा, अशोक, रैना और निहाल।
खुशबू, दीक्षा, आयुषी, तारा
मेरी कक्षा तुम सब हो कमाल॥

तुमसे मिला मुझे, बचपन मेरा,
सीखा मैंने, वर्तमान में जीना।
हिंदी सिखाने चली थी मैं,
तुम सब ने मेरा हृदय ही छीना॥

हर्षित मन हो उठता ये,
उन छोटे उत्सुक सुमनों से।
४५ मिनटों का प्रत्येक क्षण,
मेरा, महका उनकी मुस्कानों से॥

हिंदी और चिन्मय हरिद्वार,
बच्चों को है, अनुपम उपहार।
गुरुदेव की है, ये दूरदर्शिता,
अमूल्य खोज है, बाल-विहार॥



By Seema N

Adult Submissions

Adult Study Groups (ASG)

By Easwar Srinivasan, Chandra Nair

You have had your favorite meal, worked out, and your body is happy. You have solved a crossword puzzle or cracked the code that you have been working on, intellect is excited. But what about your Mind, ever heard the saying 'You are what you Think', how do you jog your Mind? Never thought of it, have you tried Adult Study Group! That's where it all began....

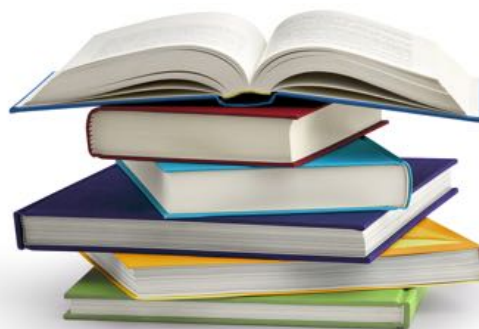
Several of us participate in the adult study group discussions every Sunday morning. Initially, when we joined Chinmaya Mission as our son was entering kindergarten, out of curiosity, I sat down with the group starting Self Unfoldment about 9 years back. As early as in the second chapter and the Happiness Equation (Happiness = Number of desires fulfilled/Number of desires entertained), Vedanta started appealing to my analytical mind. Pujya Gurudev's simplification of Vedanta in Self Unfoldment led us to Bhaja Govindam. As a student and as a facilitator later for Bhaja Govindam, I have observed several times that in Gurudev's commentary, the powerful language used to steer one from the ignorant and meaningless pursuit of material wealth that is impermanent to the permanent happiness that can be realized by a true seeker. We have subsequently embarked on the study of Guruji's commentary of Tattva Bodha which is literally translated as "Knowledge or Essence of Truth" where we continue on our quest.

However, while the early texts could be explained by the scientific and rational background that several of us brought to the study groups, Tattva Bodha has been challenging. In this text, we have gotten stuck on occasions where we ponder on questions such as "Why creation"? We have been frustrated with answers such as Creation is Bhagwan's Leela. At the same time, when one of our study group members compared the world as God's Creation to the individual dreams that we create, it left us with something to contemplate on.

The practical benefits of these adult study groups have been many:

- An hour of satsang with like-minded fellow seekers.
- Discussions on lessons learnt as parents, on vasanas and how they are ingrained where even twins in the same family are so different and even on careers.
- Conversations on the brutality in war torn regions and how that is explained by these texts.
- ASG is a natural extension to expand and delve into the 'Satsang' after the blast of words of wisdom that we get during Acharya visits, during Skype sessions or the videos that we watch during assembly. It helps us to keep us from falling off the spiritual wagon once the spiritual energy boost is over.

There have been several satsangs where we have felt good for that hour where we are able to reflect on situations rather than in running from one place to another. The peaceful hour in several ways recharges us for the day-to-day activities of the week.



Adult Submissions

Inception of Hindi language class at Chinmaya Mission Portland.

By Mini Bhat Aga

The first question that comes to mind is-WHY is it so important to know Hindi or for that matter more than one language? Hindi is the fourth-most spoken language in the world after Mandarin, Spanish and English. Hindi is an official language of the Union of India, and the lingua franca of the Hindi belt languages.

Languages are the cornerstones of any thriving culture. An estimated 500 million speakers of Hindi exist across the globe. This magnificent language stems from Hindustani, which was a type of language that was widely used in and around Delhi in the 9th and 10th centuries. It was later named Hindvi, meaning the language of Hind, which is the land of the Indus River. Hindi is not just a language for Indians but also a window to look and observe the Indian culture.

Globalization makes it important to become multilingual to increase cultural awareness, thrive better in our careers as it allows you to communicate with different people, understanding and empathizing with various cultures and to sustain the language itself. This awareness allows people to get along with each other better as it offsets a lack of integration and segregation.

With such goals in mind, Hindi classes were initiated by Rajeev Singh at Chinmaya mission Portland. We had humble beginnings with about eight teacher volunteers and approximately 30 kids enrolled in the program. We started with some very basic material and trudged along gathering materials and slowly gaining a sense of how to shape the program. Most of the teacher volunteers were professionals who had no teaching experience so we too were learning along with the children. Much of the first year was about succeeding to make the material interesting for the children and for them to be willing participants. Growing far away from India with minimal cultural immersion has its own sets of challenges for children who want to identify with the country and culture of their birth place.

Most children spent a couple of years in the same class and with the same set of teachers since learning a language requires way more than 40 minute session a week. We watched children slowly assimilating and identifying the Hindi alphabet, pointing to objects they recollected the Hindi names for, their enthusiastic greeting when the class began and even more enthusiastic Namaste when the class ended!

We realized that kids of different age groups learned the language differently even though they started at a similar knowledge level of the language. Not only kids of Hindi speaking parents but a lot of non-Hindi speaking kids were interested in the program too. We, the teachers had to find a balance between different age groups and learning capacities of these children.

It has been more than 4 years since we started the class and now we have a better curriculum, methodology tools and props and above all 'Haridwar' a place of our own to set up the materials. The participation and interest in the program has exploded. 2015-2016 academic session has 7 classes with 70 students and 15 volunteer teachers. It is a joy to see the eager faces of these wonderful children who are on their quest to learn more about the language, culture and history of their parent's motherland.

All in all it has been an enriching experience for me as a volunteer teacher and I highly recommend this to other parents who bring their children to Balvihar to take a dip and become a teacher volunteer. It is extremely gratifying. I am happy to have been a part of the initial group of wonderful co-volunteers who have spearheaded the program very successfully.

Adult Submissions

Call to Action: Make your actions divine and life peaceful By Ganesh Krishnan

One of the many famous slokas in Bhagavad is verse 47 from Chapter 2 (Karmayoga). The verse goes like this:

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥
Karmanyevadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana,
Ma Karmaphalaheturbhurma Te Sangostvakarmani

Short commentary from Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda's The Holy Geeta: "Thy right is to work only, but never to its fruits; let the fruit-of-action be not thy motive, nor let thy attachment be to inaction." Even though I've been chanting Bhagavad Gita from my childhood days without really understanding the meaning, this sloka stuck to me, thanks to the Mahabharatha TV serial that was telecasted in India from 1988-1990. Most of us who were in India during that time would remember how much we looked forward to the Sunday 10 AM show which had this sloka in its very famous title song. As Gurudev beautifully interpreted, the future is always carved out in the present. Tomorrow's harvest depends upon today's ploughing and sowing. But in the fear of facing possible dangers to the crops if a farmer wastes his present chances of ploughing, he's sure not to harvest at all. He continues by saying that the fruits of action is not anything different from the action itself. An Action done in the present, when conditioned by a future time, appears as the fruit-of-action. In fact, the action ends or fulfils itself only in its reaction, and the reaction is not anything different from the action. Therefore, to worry over and get ourselves preoccupied with the anxieties for the rewards of action is to escape from the **dynamic present** moment and live in a future moment that's not yet born! This year, I got a great opportunity to learn Bhagavad Gita with our 10th grade class. I deliberately used the word "learn" instead of "teach" for two reasons: a) we learn more when we teach, and b) we facilitate and moderate discussions rather than "teach". While we have a very smart set of students in our 10th grade class, explaining and having them internalize these teachings from Bhagavad Gita is never easy. So, we try to explain the concepts using contemporary people and/or events that exemplifies these teachings. We resorted to two TED videos to explain this sloka and the concepts associated.

1. "5 ways to kill your dream" by Bel Pesce: Bel Pesce is a Brazilian who went to MIT; she also had a very successful stint in the silicon valley before she went back to Brazil to inspire others and make their dream a reality. She talks about how someone's seemingly overnight success is everything he or she has done until then in their life. She also beautifully explains how life is never the goal themselves, but the journey.

2. "Success is a continuous journey" by Richard St. John: Richard talks about how his company fell off of a cliff the moment he started focusing on money instead of his customers. This video was also a great way to transition from this sloka to the last part of chapter 2 where Krishna explains the famous ladder of fall. Richard's ladder of fall almost had a 1:1 mapping with Krishna's ladder of fall.

Take a few minutes to watch these videos on TED's website or app.

Practicing it in our lives:

Believe it or not, all of us are already practicing the teaching of this sloka every time we are at Chinmaya Mission. We don't expect anything out of the various selfless activities we do at Chinmaya Mission and other places. For example, when cooking in shadras, people think only about how they can offer the best of the best food to everyone who eats there. Their actions are not influenced by the thought about how many people would eat that day, or whether they will have less people than from last week. These kind of selfless activities are done without any expectation, and that makes the activity divine while making the individual less egoistic. I believe, to a great extent, it is possible to disconnect ourselves from these "expectations" while doing our daily activities. Whether it is studying for the sake of learning and not just to get an A, or considering one's job as an opportunity to make a difference in someone's life rather than just to earn money, it is possible to make that mental shift. And when we do that, our actions will look divine and we'll all be a lot more peaceful than we are!

Adult Submissions

"Hosting an Acharya - Novel experience for novices" by Samudyatha Kumar & family

Sheer serendipity or cosmic coincidence must have been to have had the privilege of hosting Acharya Vivekji this spring of 2016 in a household with admirers, fanatic supporters' including another young Vivek :) Being impressed by our very first meet with Vivekji during his visit to Portland in 2015 at spring camp & Holi celebration, we were all looking forward for re-living that wonderful experience in 2016. Not only were we blessed to meet him again at the camp, but also to host him at our home & cherish most of his visit up close like never imagined. While we felt nervous being amateurs as newbies in this act, we were soon awarded with "well done Rookies" by Vivekji not just in words but truly felt by his humble demeanor despite a super human being - Guru, Saint, Swami, yet blended so easily like our own family as he entered our home with his adorable wife, Sheelaji. In essence, they both personify Lord Shiva & Goddess Parvathi! Spiritual leader in every way, Vivekji enlightened us all from his discourses at the mission and also as he answered our personal questions on the art of daily living. We witnessed his simple life style at home & were inspired to follow it in ours as well. His discipline of waking up early, vegan diet to conserve earth, humor to uplift was indeed motivating. Voyagers with guiding light as the couple exemplified vision of sages, honor was ours to tour them on their very first voyage of pristine picturesque, Portland. Kids were more than happy to miss school to accompany the couple on scenic drive by Columbia Gorge & a hike up Multnomah falls. We savored traditional Chinese tea at The Tao of Tea place as we cruised the Lan su garden. Vivekji nurtured quiet moments in the serene ambience as we traversed hidden treasure in the heart of Portland, modeled after Ming dynasty gardens of China.

Sharing our kids' experience of hosting at home -

Junior Vivek: "During Vivekji's stay with our family, we were exposed to whole new aspect of popular Hollywood movies. While most of us watch movies for their stories or plot, Vivekji shed light on spiritual aspect of the movie. He showed us that even basic Disney-animated movies like, inside out has hidden profound meaning. Overall, Vivekji inspired me to look into spiritual aspect of life"

Anika: "My favorite part at the camp with Vivekji was making chariot out of people. It really brought us together, pushed us towards teamwork & cooperation. Camp was cheerful, relaxing & spiritual. I loved imagining all the peaceful things. He brought home his fun spirits, being playful with us during commute. He inspired us with his noble virtues."

Sitara: "Vivekji was always so relaxed. He taught me that you can be happy & relaxed anywhere you are. We got a day off from school to spend with him & went hiking at Multnomah falls. It was so nice & relaxing being in nature along with his good company"

Sincere appreciation to Chinmaya Haridwar family especially Subha Pathial for this wonderful opportunity of hosting, an experience that was truly inspiring, nurturing our hearts & soul with compassion echoed along the mission motto to live fully enriched in our local Portland community.

"Those who educate children well are more to be honored than parents, for these only gave life, those the art of living well." ~ **Aristotle**

Adult Submissions

Song and Dance of Shiva Keshava

By Krishna Sistla



Another long day of work and another tired drive home. The announcer on NPR is running through the day's top stories. UNFAO just announced that around 800 million people in the world are suffering from chronic malnourishment. Average world temperatures are on the rise and another senator denounced global warming as a conspiracy of the liberals. Religious and racial intolerance is on the rise with another insensitive attack on a minority place of worship by an extremist group. I think to myself, where is the world headed? Why can't we rise above our petty differences? Why can't we see the big picture and take care of each other and our children's future? How can we possibly give maximum happiness to maximum people in this world? It all too depressing.

I reach home and just as I get out of the car, Avaneesh comes running. He gives a tight hug and with great excitement starts talking about how he likes his new lego set. I am mesmerized by his voice and his smiling face. I begin to feel better. Then it's Tanu's turn. He hugs me with the self-assurance of an elder son. He tells me that he is working on a new project about Native Americans of the North West. As I walk in, Vani is busy making dinner. She brings tea and biscuits and sits next to me. We start talking about the day's events. The troubles of the world seem far away. There is no place like home.

That evening, I retire to bed early. In my half-awake and half-asleep state, I am reminded of the millions of hungry people in the world. I think of the collective pain and suffering, I feel a growing lump in my throat. Suddenly, I realize I am no longer on my bed, but floating inside a vast ocean. This ocean is stormy with strong forces tossing me in all directions. I feel a sense of terror and total loss of control. There is no sense of place or direction. If only, I can hold on to something and escape the violent tossing and turning. After a few moments of fear and terror, the thermostat in my mind turns on. My mind responds with the habitual automatic response. Om Nama Shivaaya, On Nama Shivaaya, On Nama Shivaaya..... Eventually the waters calm down. Now I am floating on the surface and there is a fine mist in the air. I can see a bright light far ahead of me. Instinctively, I start swimming towards the light. With each stroke, my mind repeats, On Nama Shivaaya, Om Nama Shivaaya,.....

As I get close, I realize that there are actually two bright lights, circling each other. There is a pattern to their movement, there is a rhythm, and there is a purpose. Is it my imagination or does one of the lights look like peacock feather! Do I see a faint hint of a beautiful smiling face? As the feather moves gracefully, a melodious song comes from it. There is an indescribable beauty and precision to the song. The waters seem to be moving in harmony with the song. I think to myself, I can spend an eternity hearing this song. I turn my attention to the other light. I notice a hint of the matted locks, swinging rhythmically. Every swing, every jump is precisely timed to the song. I think to myself, I can spend an eternity just looking at this dance. Waves of energy spread out from the light in beautiful patterns. As the waves rise and fall, bubbles form and breakup. Inside the bubbles, I see an endless array of stars and planets. It looks like there are whole universes in each bubble. Universes come forth and disappear, all in a precise pattern. There is a simultaneous creation and destruction of the bubbles. The song is everywhere and the dance is everywhere. I start singing and dancing. Hare Krishna....Hara Hara Mahadeva...Hare Krishna..Hara Hara Mahadeva...

Adult Submissions

Someone is shaking me. I open my eyes. Vani is looking at me with concern. Why are you swinging your hands and legs? Go to sleep! You need to get up early for the usual early morning work meeting. I start smiling. I can still hear the song and feel the dance.

Do something about the troubles in the world, but do not let the troubles effect the state of your mind. Follow your dharma irrespective of the circumstances. When there is too much noise, close to your eyes and tune your mind to the divine song of keshava and your actions will become the dance of shiva. They will be in tune with the universe.

*Parathmanamadhyam, Jagat Bheejamekam,
Nireeham Nirakaramonkara Vedhyam,
Yatho Jayathe Palyathe Yena Viswam,
Thameesam Bhaje Leeyahe Yatra Viswam.*

I worship that God,
Who is the Paramathma,
Who is the seed of the world,
Who does not have any desires,
Who does not have any shape,
Who can be known through 'Om',
Who creates and looks after the world,
And merges it within him.

Everything is as it should be.

Hari Om Tat sat



Adult Submissions

Shadras - feeding the heart and stomach

When you've finished Bala Vihar classes and Adult study group - it's close to 11am, and it's time for lunch! Here's a bit more about the magic of Shadras Kitchen. Swati is the coordinator of the Shadras kitchen, helping to feed between 125-200 people each week, in a totally volunteer kitchen. Each week a person volunteers to coordinate, recruits their friends and then decides on a menu. The cooks decide amongst themselves how to coordinate shopping for ingredients. The amount of preparation depends on the menu - curds may need to be set or vegetables cut in advance. The cooks arrive close to 9am and then the real work begins to put together a meal for up to 200 in less than two hours.

From the Cooks:

We are cooking for everyone, but everyone should like it! We want everyone to be satisfied. Sometimes people complain afterwards, so we're learning about what people like and don't like and then trying to get better! - Swati

At home, we cook small amounts. And you already know what your family likes! Here you have to estimate for a big group and you want to make sure that everyone likes it! - Nisha

Why do you like cooking at Shadras?

It connects people. It creates the space families to talk to one another - this is the time that they sit together and talk to friends and family. It's also a place where adults can hear more about what the kids are learning, because Bala Vihar just ended and the kids are more likely to share what happened in class! - Nisha

I wanted to do something for Bala Vihar. I am doing seva in the kitchen. I am using my time cooking as seva, staying focused only on cooking. - Swati

From the diners perspective:

It's nice to have a variety of food and a place to sit down and catch up with friends. - Subha

My kids are starving by the time we're done with Bala Vihar! It's nice to be able to give them healthy, tasty food that also helps expand their palate. We mostly cook the food from our region at my house and it's nice for the kids to try specialities from other states. - Kalpana

Thanks to all the cooks and volunteers who helped to feed us this year: Alka, Anita, Aparna, Asha Jagan, Karthik, Kavitha, Kishore, Meena, Meenu, Meera, Radheka, Raji, Rami, Ruchita, Samu, Seema, Subha, Sudha, Surekha, Swathi, Uma, Usha, and Vishal



Interview With Vivek Ji

Interview with Acharya Vivek Gupta Every year, Vivekji's visit to the Chinmaya Mission Portland Center is a highlight of the year. His approachable style of communication, popular culture references (he goes from the Simpsons to Kung Fu Panda), and stories about his experiences growing up in Canada closely mirror the experiences of many Haridwar kids. This year, during Spring Break Camp 2016, the graduating senior class sat down with Vivekji for an interview.



What makes a successful Chinmaya mission community? Value for the whole experience that is offered. In our discussion about the movie, we talked about how living with one's grandparents is precious. Today, we live in communities that tend to be isolated. Chinmaya Mission focuses on how valuable those relationships are, extending our family to the greater community, and creating a space for us to celebrate our culture and our religion. A great center is one that values the whole experience. From studying together, cooking together, serving together, even getting married! Sheela and I both have a Chinmaya Mission background and because of that we have a lot more in common.

It's been getting harder to go along with what my parents say without wanting to question. What are the most important qualities? The most important aspect for any relationship is adaptability. Both you and your parents need to focus on adaptability. As youth, you should try to adapt to your parents. If they give you advice, when you don't want it—just adapt to it. As you adapt, you do your part in the relationship. For your parents the message is the same. There's a common wisdom that says: "From 0-5 give children love, from 5-15 give them discipline, and after 15, give only friendship." As you grow older, if your parents stop being your friend and are just a disciplinarian, then you will grow apart. The same virtue applies for any relationship. My mother told me before I got married, "Don't marry someone who you love, but someone who loves you." My father said, "You will never find the perfect person." So essentially, they were saying the same thing!

If they tell you something you don't want to do, what should you do? It's not okay to argue, but it is okay to disagree. An argument is about ego, and everyone is trying to get the dominant position. In a discussion, the focus is on agreement and adaptability. If you can be clear about why you don't want to do something, then I think your parents should be open enough to adapt to that. But at the same time, you must observe yourself. If your reason to not go is because you're stressed out about studying—then ask: are you managing your time well? If you are not managing your time well, then you are making an excuse and your parents have right to ask you for certain things. Over communication is always a better strategy than under communication, but in a discussion way. And sometimes you have to adapt, and go to something even if you don't want to. And then you need to be adaptable.

What makes Portland different from other Chinmaya communities?

There are 50 independent and 50 satellite centers, I have been to 75 of them. What makes Portland unique is the high level of engagement of professionals in running the center. All of the Portland leaders bring a level of professional organization to the center that is really high! The other thing that makes Portland unique is the biksha! Portland has the biggest Biksha's out of any Center. There's so much food, I have to mentally and physically prepare myself. An area for growth is in self-reflection. Sometimes the Portland Center has a lack of contentment on how far you have come. Instead of celebrating what you have accomplished, you are focused on what you can't or haven't done yet.

Interview With Vivekji



Why did you come an Acharya?

I've really felt the hand of God has been taking me where I go. I never planned or asked to be an acharya. I went to study in India for my own development. And 8 months after I started serving as a civilian, Pujaswami Guruji gave me the honor of Acharya. But here is what's important: I was doing the same thing before and after the title. Acharya is a word or a reminder. I am not a teacher, I am a reminder to think about what is most important. Why do I continue now? Because I don't think there's a more important subject or field than independent happiness. To me, this is most important. And by doing so, I am even happier.

What makes a good Chinmaya Mission teacher?

One who is faithful and one who is prepared. A faithful person loves the subject. Purpose pulls dedication which pulls sacrifice. A teacher who is prepared can be creative, in their examples and activities. A teacher who is not prepared will just use the book, it will be a transference.

What advice do you have for all the members of Chinmaya Mission?

Undertake regular development. Reading everyday, attending a study group every week, being part of a retreat every quarter. Just like you go the gym every day, exercise your mind and spirit in engaged discourse. When people are involved in regular development, they become the best seekers, the best sevaks. Guruji says when you do a few good things, you count them and then you talk about them. When you do good things all the time, there is no point in counting it and then there's no point in talking about it.

What advice do you have for the graduating seniors?


Wake up by 6am for the rest of your life. The fundamental way to keep your life in line is to wake up at 6am. You will be far ahead of your peers, family, and others. The more you sleep early, the less time you spend in tamas. The more you wake up early, the more time you spend in sattva. Sadhana can mean discipline. It can be hard in the beginning, but it gets easier in the end.

There are 4Ps. Pleasure, possession, position, peace.

Kumbhakarna focused on pleasure

Ravana focuses on possession and position. Not ready to listen

Vibhisana, ready to listen and learn, so his focus is peace. If you chose peace, then position, possession, and pleasure will come. But if you chose lower, you will never have peace.



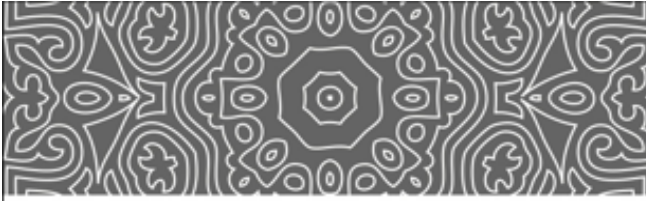
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Chinmaya Haridwar

Chinmaya Mission Portland



Prabhavali Pratishtha Mahotsav Program Details



Friday 8th July 2016	6:30PM	Ganesha & Guru Paduka Pooja	\$101
	7:30PM	Bhajans & Aarati	\$51
	8:30PM	Mahaprasad	
Saturday 9th July 2016	8:00AM	Suprabhatam	
	9:00AM	Ganapati Pooja	\$101
		Punya Vachanam	
		Anugya sankalpam	
		Kalasha pooja	\$201
		Mandaparadhana	
		Purna Kumbha Welcome for Puja Guruji	
	12:00PM	Aarati	\$51
	12:10PM	Mahaprasad	
	5:00PM	Krishna Abhishekam	\$101
	6:00PM	Bhajans	
	6:30PM	Pravachan by Puja Guruji on BodhaSara	
	8:00PM	Aarati	\$51
	8:10PM	Mahaprasad	
Sunday 10th July 2016	8:00AM	Suprabhatam	
	9:00AM	Ganapati Pooja	
		Shri Krishna Mahamantra Homam	\$201
		Prabhavali Pratishtha by Puja Guruji	
		Prathama Krishna Pooja	\$301
	12:00PM	Mahamangala Aarati	\$51
	12:10PM	Mahaprasad	
	6:00PM	Bhajans	
	6:30PM	Pravachan by Puja Guruji on BodhaSara	
	8:00PM	Aarati	\$51
	8:10PM	Mahaprasad	



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