

Bala Vihar  
GRADUATION SOUVENIR  
May 2021



*...WE CAN...WE MUST...*

**Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center**



ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

## EDITORIAL

Hari Om!

What you have in your hand is a combination of many things. It has articles by the graduating students, parents and teachers. We are very fortunate to have received a message by Swami Swaroopanandaji. Swami Dheeranandaji, and Acharya Vilasiniji have provided inspirational articles. The most significant feature in this volume is the set of bio-sketches of all our graduates. We have an impressive group of young men and women whose accomplishments are multi faceted. We are proud of them.

In the mission, we strive to provide the children with moral values and inculcate pride in their heritage. As our graduates prepare to tackle the world on their own, the sense of self-worth they have gained in Bala Vihar will be their strength.

The graduation ceremony and the souvenir is an expression of our congratulations to the graduates as they move on. We wish them the very best of endeavors and remind them the reassuring words of the greatest Guru:

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।  
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिः मामेवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ॥

Remember Me at all times, and face the challenges of life, with mind, intellect absorbed in Me; you shall doubtless come to Me.

Hari Om!

Nagaraj and Chetana Neerchal



## MESSAGE

Dear Bala Vihar students,

Hari Om!

Many congratulations and acclaims on your graduation day!

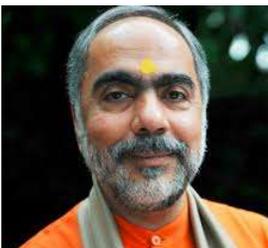
The knowledge you have gained here will enrich your lives and ever keep you on the righteous path. Our vision must always remain clear and we must strive to achieve our goal.

May the grace of the Lord and blessings of Pujya Gurudev ever be with you.

At His Feet

*Swami Swaroopananda*

Swami Swaroopananda  
Global Head, Chinmaya Mission

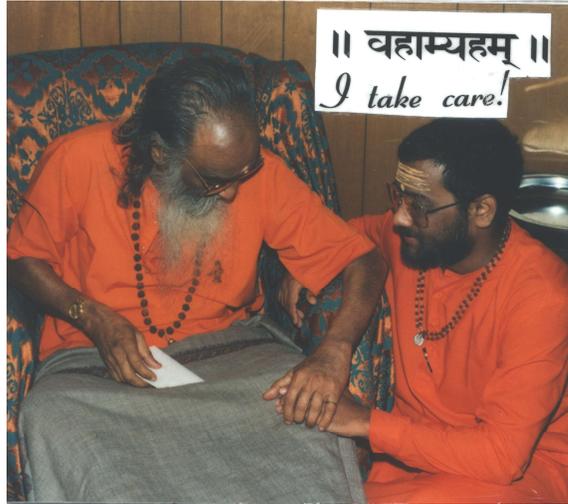


## The Divine Hand

Swami Dheerananda

Sri Gurudev impressed upon me that the Divine Lord has mysterious ways of taking care of His pet instruments.

Chinmaya Mission Hyderabad grandly celebrated Sri Gurudev's birthday on May 8, 1993. Sri Gurudev asked me to sit next to Him at the Bhiksha. When the devotees announced they had a cake for Sri Gurudev, He exclaimed, "Cake for me? Come, bring it here!" Pointing to me, He said: "You cut it!"



When Sri Gurudev says something, there can be no hesitation or second thought. I rushed to the washbasin to wash my hands and received the knife when I returned. Then alone did I notice that, in my haste, the top of my hand had been left unclean. I was already holding the knife and could not easily return to the washbasin for a second washing. I felt so embarrassed holding the knife on the cake.

At that moment, Sri Gurudev placed His gentle but firm hand over mine and covered the unclean portion of my hand with His hand. The moment I felt His Touch, I forgot my embarrassment and even my unclean hand. I felt His Power using my hand to cut the cake. He worked through me. His hand was cutting the cake through my hand. I totally surrendered unto Him.

I know I am His pet instrument. He knows how to use His pet instrument.

We are His pet instruments. May we surrender unto Him totally. May His Power, Grace and Blessings flow through us to the world around us.

Gange Hara Hara! Hari Om! Hari Om! Unto Sri Gurudev!

Hari Om! Hari Om!  
Unto Sri Gurudev!  
Swami Dheerananda

## The Gita Cure

Vilasiniji

Dear Chinmayam Students: You are very fortunate to read the Bhagavad Gita in your teens. The Gita is an amazingly powerful story when we relate to Arjuna and feel his predicament. We have discovered how much we can relate to him and his confusions. We have seen how many dilemmas we face ourselves—challenges we are called to rise up to—much smaller of course, yet strikingly similar.

Sri Krishna's responses to Arjuna are so deep that understanding them keeps growing. Even today, thirty years after first reading the Gita, I find more wisdom each time I read it. When I first read Chapter One, I thought what a sensible and nonmaterialistic prince Arjuna was, and I was impressed with all his arguments against fighting. Chapter Two was a complete surprise---I couldn't believe Krishna was telling Arjuna to fight. I must admit I didn't follow most of Krishna's points, but I could see Arjuna's gradual clarity and peace of mind growing. Later, when I read Gurudev's commentary, the Holy Geeta, it all made so much sense. With Gurudev's commentary, it is easier to understand Sri Krishna's wisdom. We just have to be open to the Gita, be curious about it, read Gurudev's commentary, and it unfolds in front of us!

Reading it again through teens' eyes has brought about another deepening of appreciation of the Gita for me and all your teachers. Through your questions you have opened up more applications of its wisdom. The Bhagavad Gita has offered food for thought, inspiring as well as perplexing, but always stimulating our thinking. Our work has been to extract the main ideas that speak to us and that we can apply in life. All the discussions you have had show that you have truly taken wisdom from this sacred book and its commentaries by Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda and Guruji Swami Tejomayananda. In this article, major points will be summarized which we have discussed and

applied.

### How the Gita Helps Us Build Positive Attitudes

If one were to ask in a nutshell what the Gita teaches, a wonderful response is that the Gita teaches us how to be positive no matter what happens around us. A positive attitude includes being fearless, enthusiastic, motivated, and most of all, cheerful. In fact, we can simply say a positive attitude is being cheerful and making others cheerful. Almost all of us can easily identify with the Gita's hero, Arjuna. In one of our class performances, we enacted the example of a college student who was depressed about taking an exam he was afraid of failing. His friends came to his aid to boost his confidence by reminding him of the teachings in the Gita, starting with "do your best and leave the rest." This helped the student discover cheer and hope.

How do we get a positive attitude in life? Swami Tejomayananda has outlined seven steps during his talks on the Gita<sup>1</sup>. These are the points we found.

**Step One: Broaden Your Vision of Life.** There is much more to life than meets the eye. We can learn to understand the bigger picture of life with all its nuances and learn how to play the game of life. Study of the scriptures (jnana yoga) is the path to completely transform our vision of life. Sri Krishna says in the Gita, "*He who sees Me everywhere and sees all things in Me does not lose sight of Me, nor do I of him.*" (6:30)

What does seeing God in everyone mean? It means realizing that we are more than just our BMI, body-mind-intellect, and that the divine Self, OM, or Atman is our very essence, the truth of existence, and the only entity which never changes or dies. This Om is God, or Brahman, the Self in everyone. Sri Krishna says, "*Fixing your mind on this truth of*

<sup>1</sup> During Piercy Camp in 2000, as edited by D.C. Rao

*My being, you will overcome all difficulties!” (18:58)* Life is full of change and impermanence, but when we see the big picture of life, we are able to accept whatever happens. Broaden your vision so you know how to live in harmony. How can we discover this pure spirit within? This leads us to Step Two.

**Step Two: Do Your Duty, Your Dharma.** This step is about the importance of choosing positive actions, or living by our dharma. It is really easy to pick up wrong habits, or vasanas, but when we ignore our dharma, we don't feel right inside. What does Krishna mean by the word “dharma”? Dharma means all virtues, values, thoughts, and actions that contribute to the long-term spiritual improvement of oneself, one's family, and society. How do we know what our dharma is? In class we came up with: As a student, your dharma is to work hard at school and strive to do your best academically. As a child, you have to respect your parents and do as you are told. As a sibling, you must serve as a model to your younger brothers and sisters. Basically, just do what feels like the *right* thing of which you can be proud!

Sri Krishna said in Chapter 3 about karma yoga: *“God created all beings and said, with the spirit of sacrifice and service, doing your duty, may you multiply and achieve happiness.” (3:10-11)*

The important thing we need to know about dharma is to always do what will bring peace to us and others in the long run. When we follow this path, we are doing our duty. Look at Sri Rama as the epitome of dharma. Rama always did his duty and followed the path of truth, honor, and integrity. Sri Rama was the perfect role model for what the Gita teaches: Do your duty and be cheerful and centered no matter what may happen. It is a wonderful example for us to try to follow!

Swami Tejomayananda says that there are two types of dharma, individual dharma and collective dharma. Individual dharma supports the health of the body and mind. It also means thinking in a loving way. Spiritual Knowledge is our dharma because it helps us attain the understanding that frees us from dependence on the world. On the collective level,

dharma is any action that integrates and brings prosperity to all. This is also known as absolute good. The proper application of dharma by all will lead to greater prosperity in society.

**Step Three: Be a Team Player.** Living in the yajna spirit of cooperative endeavor is one of the most important teachings of Gurudev. In fact, the Mission Pledge begins with this very point: “We stand as one family, bound to each other with love and respect.” Gurudev pointed out that one of the greatest social problems of modern society, why people have so much difficulty working together, is because each person wants to get his way. Sinking individual differences in the spirit of a common goal is the message of the yajna *spirit*. Sri Krishna puts it this way: *“This world is bound by action other than that done for sacrifice. Do all actions in the spirit of sacrifice, free from attachment.” (3:9)* and *“By working selflessly with each other, you will both attain supreme good.” (3:11)*

This point becomes very clear when we think of team sports. Members of a sports team, like football players, must rely on each other to win the game. There is even a sports saying: There is no “I” in TEAM! But how do we get people to work together for a common goal? This brings us to:

**Step Four: Work for a Higher Cause in the Spirit of Seva.** Seva means loving service. Seva bhav is the feeling we get when we think of others with love and try to serve them. Sri Krishna often spoke of serving the Lord through all His creatures with love: *“The wise should perform action detached, desiring the welfare of the world.” (3:25)* *“He who is devoid of attachment, free, whose mind is established in knowledge, and who does work as a sacrifice for the Lord—he attains peace.” (4:23)*

What is a Higher Cause? A Higher Cause means a cause that is higher than my individual self, even higher than my family's welfare, in fact, it means for the good of all. The Chinmaya Mission motto is “Do the maximum good for the maximum number of people for the maximum time.” This is working for the higher cause. It means thinking of others and not only of yourself. Learning this is the main reason

behind the community hours that high schools require. Any selfless kindness you show others, like being helpful at home or nice to your brother or sister, or friendly to a new kid at school, can count as seva bhav.

Dedicate actions to helping others. Try to identify with others and discover the same Self in all. This seva bhav is the highest type of living. This is realizing that we are all connected, and that others' happiness is my happiness too. This is why Krishna told Arjuna he had to fight the war—for a higher cause, to get rid of the selfish Kauravas and restore justice to the kingdom.

**Step Five: Surrender Your Actions to God (Iswara Arpana).** Sri Krishna says: *“Actions are done in all cases by the gunas of Prakriti, or Nature. He whose mind is deluded through egoism thinks ‘I am the doer’.”* (3:27)

What is wrong with thinking that I am the doer? The arrogant ego in us, the ahamkara, thinks it has great powers. But all power to act comes from God. We all act according to our nature (prakriti or vasanas). When we surrender our actions to God, we learn to think of God when we act, and we try to invoke His blessings and guidance, to “let go and let God.” We need to remember God and invoke His grace so that He works through us instead of our ego acting with selfish interests. Gurudev used to say may we be empty flutes and allow Sri Krishna's divine melody to play through us.

Gurudev also said: “What you get in life is God's gift to you. What you do with what you have is your gift to God.” This is living with gratitude for whatever blessings we have, and offering our actions back as an expression of our gratitude to God. When something sad happens, we tend to forget all the blessings that are still here. But if we try, we can always find much to be grateful for, and then give back to the world whatever we can. It is really hard to realize that we are not the doer, so first we should surrender the fruits of action, which is the next step:

**Step Six: Accept Graciously the Results of Action (Prasada Buddhi)** *“The harmonised one, giving up*

*the fruit of action, attains the highest peace; the nonharmonised one, working under the sway of desire, is attached to the fruit and gets bound.”* (5:12)

But if we really want something, like good grades, how do we give up the desire for it? We're supposed to want to do well, after all, and it is the dharma of teenagers to do well in school! The problem is that when we're so caught up with getting something, like a good grade, that desire could make us do something that our conscience knows is wrong, like cheating. So what can we do about it? We can try to be less concerned with getting things, not so caught up with what we want. We can try to accept graciously whatever we get.

Life and school can be viewed as a kind of game; you want to try to win, but if you lose, don't lose your peace of mind! Like in sports, it's not whether you win or lose but how you play the game. This is the meaning of prasada buddhi. Accept everything that comes to us in life as Lord's prasad, His gift, and then trying harder next time. For instance, when taking exams in school, study hard and then accept whatever you receive as God's prasad. Leave the result to God. Do your best and leave the rest! This brings a lot of peace of mind if you really follow it—and it motivates us to keep trying!

It seems that life could be very grim if we try to follow all these steps. Wouldn't life be cheerless? Not at all! Read on:

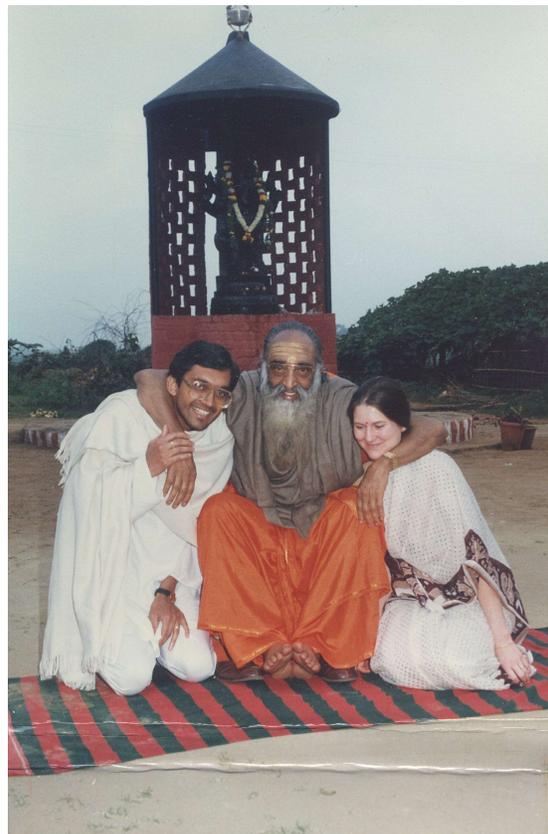
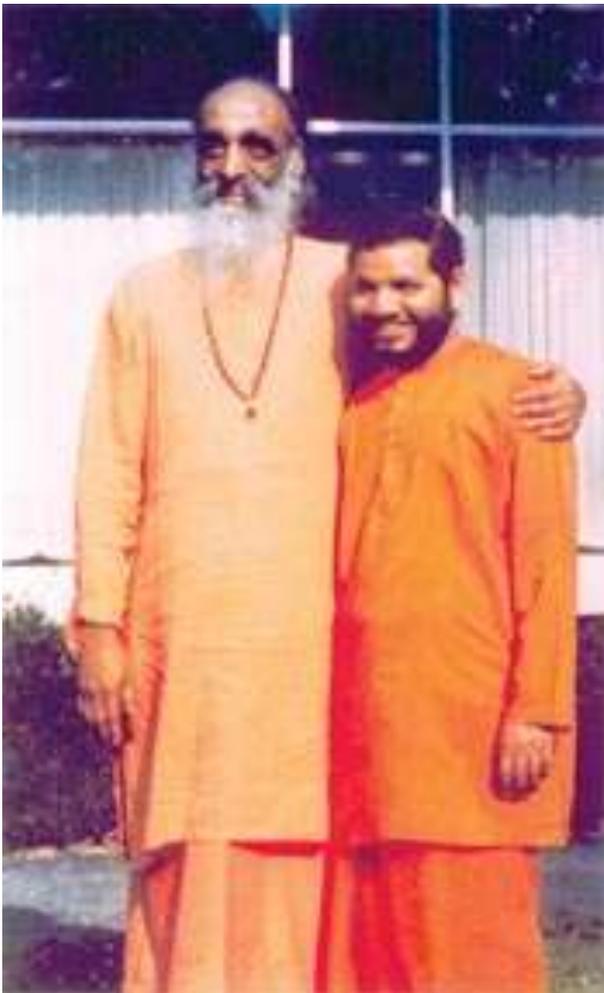
**Step Seven: Enjoy Life!!** Sri Krishna says, *“With mind and senses directed to Me, the wise are always pleased and happy.”* (10:8-9) Sri Krishna explains further that *“Virtues born of Sattva lead one to happiness and knowledge, making one luminous and free of fear and evil.”* (14:6) When we have sattwic qualities, everything becomes more enjoyable. Chapters 14, 16, and 17 speak at length on how to increase sattwa, or clarity, cheer, peace of mind, creative energy, wisdom, selflessness, and a loving nature. If we can increase this feeling in us through introspection and meditation, all of life will be more enjoyable!

To sum all this up, Swami Chinmayananda taught

the Gita to show us how to do our best and then find peace of mind no matter what happens. It becomes easier when we understand that “what I get in life is God’s gift to me. What I do with what I have is my gift to God.” Instead of getting discouraged and giving up when things go wrong, you can decide that you’re going to try harder next time. Think of your studying as a humble offering to God. God doesn’t care *what* you offer, as long as He knows you’re giving it with love. In Chapter 12, Sri Krishna says that whatever we offer, even if a humble leaf or flower, if offered with sincerity, makes the Lord happy. He just wants to see us trying our best and enjoying the game of life.

So basically what Sri Krishna is teaching is to broaden your vision, try to see the bigger picture of things and see the presence of God around and within you. Always do your duty; what you know is right and good. Try not to worry so much about the results of your actions, but accept them cheerfully as God’s prasad. Do your best and leave the rest, and try to keep going with a positive attitude, even when unfortunate things happen. And finally, always remember others and try to be loving and helpful to others around you. With this spirit, The Bhagavad Gita promises that your life can become truly joyous, fulfilled, and enlightened!

## The Teacher and pupils



# Chinmayam Graduation

## Future – A Rainbow of Beautiful Tomorrows – Class of 2021

Anil Kishore  
President - CMWRC



This year has been really hard, Covid-19 changed our lives!!!

While we looked forward to graduations and our own Tilak Ceremony, we were faced with limitations of social distancing and confined to our homes. While this been a challenge, it is all for good. We need to remain safe and healthy, for this will pass soon.

As any Chinmaya family would do, we learnt to adapt ourselves with these limitations. We are in full swing with online classes, satsanghs and even initiated the Outreach program to check on each other!! We stand as ONE family caring and supporting each other and these new ventures show our determination to be inseparable from what we know as “our Mission”. “our Chinmaya family” and our eagerness to learn and “grow”.

As Swamiji said Sri Gurudev’s teachings bestow the power of adaptability along with humility and tenacity. With His blessings, we continue to thrive despite the limitations imposed on us. Our special thanks to Swamiji for guiding us through this challenge and our lead sevaks – teachers, especially IT sevaks in making our on line efforts succeed.

As we embark on this journey of seeing another set of brilliant graduates take off into the vast skies of career building, I reminisce the years knowing our graduates at the Mission. How fast time flies – only yesterday they were kids. They caught our attention in various Mission activities – Bala Vihar programs, singing, dancing, chanting, helping out and being their own self.

Today, all of a sudden they are graduating seniors. They are ready to take this gigantic step towards their career goals!! We gather here today with these memories and wish them everlasting success in all

their endeavors.

As our students graduate year after year, we know that this is just the beginning! A beginning that lays the foundation for a bright future and a rainbow of beautiful tomorrows. The Mission has instilled values in our children. We hope to learn from them and provide them the tools to face the challenges of this world. We hope that they will cherish their memories here for years to come and hopefully come back to serve as leaders of our community. This is what makes our Tilak Ceremony so special. So while we couldn’t gather together to bless the graduates, we do express a lasting and a final expression of our love for them and an endorsement that we care. We are not alone in our endeavors; we have some of the best strengths to help us carry this torch.

What exactly are our strengths?? In no particular order we must not forget that:

Our biggest strength has actually been our wonderful students who come to us to learn. They are our inspiration to teach. How could you NOT teach such wonderful kids?? They are our leaders of tomorrow and as we have seen many of them come back to us to provide selfless dedicated service. I actually envy our young children and our CHYKs, how privileged they are to be exposed to this beautiful nectar of knowledge coming from our Gurus . Like many, I did not have that opportunity and can relate to the essentials that must be taught to our children from our rich scriptures.

Our CHYK participation has never been this strong. Under the leadership of Swami Mitrananda, Swami Sarveshananda, Vivekji and other spiritual masters of the Mission, our CHYKs have proven to us time and time again that they are our future, our tomorrow. Their selfless dedicated service can be seen in all our activities – from teaching, to leading

campus to musical productions or simply in the sidelines helping out other sevaks.

Our strength is also the members/parents who support us in this endeavor. They entrust us with their children so that we can instill the richness of our culture in them. After all the foundation of our values comes from our homes. Our parents and the thriving growth of all our Centers are a testimony of our spiritual teachings.

Our strength is also in the teachers who inspired by the Chinmaya Movement willingly teach and spend many hours of class preparation. They diligently teach the children to their fullest capacity. Each and every one of them has created an environment that is conducive to learning. They never give up!

Last but not the least; our strength also comes from inspiration from our spiritual leaders and Gurudev's grace!! Swami Dheerananda has been our inspiration and our spiritual guide. Swamiji's support for us and guidance to us has no end!! Vilasiniji has laid a strong foundation for our Bala Vihar!!! We are fortunate to have such a treasure of strengths.

. We have taken big strides in meeting the needs of our children. This growth is shown by our enrollment. What started off as a few families several years ago has now grown to families with over 1000 children in our programs at Chinmayam, Chinmaya Somnath, Frederick and Richmond. The number is growing and we are looking for expanding our spiritual homes to meet the needs of our community. Chinmaya Blossoms is also a blooming place for the youngsters to lay their first steps in a Chinmaya home of learning.

Chinmaya Somnath, our newest home is beaming with new young members and a facility that bustles with the cheers of our children. Let us not forget that every weekend and several other times during the year, our two homes (Chinmayam and Chinmaya Somnath) echo with the squeals, laughter and chanting of our Bala Vihar children. It vibrates with the discourses our acharyas offer and our activities here stand as a testament to the wonderful

gift from our master. He leads us and we follow his footsteps to make a better tomorrow for us and our children. We were fortunate to acquire land next to Chinmayam, the very land Gurudev had pointed out for "his children" during his visit. We will make our new home Chinmayanandam come to life in the coming years. After all, our children are our future and our tomorrow. Our Bala Vihar coordinators, directors guide us to make it happen.

During common time Swami Dheerananda's discourses are always motivating, and his style of teaching has increased our membership!! His wonderful ways of telling stories to our children keeps them attached to our Mission. Many of them choose Swamiji as their number ONE reason why they come to the Mission!!! In him, we find our true spiritual leader who is always there for us and never hesitates to listen to us. His confidence and trust in our sevaks gives them the energy to keep on working in serving Pujya Gurudev. He is not only our spiritual leader, but our trusting friend, our guide and a member of each of our families. A majority of our graduates return to the Mission to meet Swamiji.



Even though our main theme is to teach Vedanta, we also want them to appreciate our culture and heritage. If we have the means, why not provide our children with extracurricular activities at the Mission? We offer Language and Performing Arts at the Mission. Our Bala Vihar classes are enriched with the literature available to us from Chinmaya Publications, our collaboration with other Centers keeps us enriched with our collective strength. We keep our children involved with performances on

various occasions and Annual Performances. This activity provides mentoring of our youth.

In our public school programs, there is a need for our children to earn volunteer hours. We have provided opportunities for our youth to learn from these experiences. Several food for the homeless drives, especially for Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King's birthdays have been successful. We also participate in DC Serve to celebrate National & Global Youth Conference Day by providing seva to our community. Our VA center provides similar activities at a homeless shelter. We serve as army courageous and disciplined...producing more than what we consume and giving more than what we take.

An experience at the Mission is to be remembered by our graduates for years to come. They will cherish their time here and definitely look back and remember the attention they got. From the youngest Ati-Madhuram class to the senior Chinmayam class all our children participate in a variety of activities. The smiles on their faces testify their learning victories and their sense of belonging to the Mission. This energy can be used as our strength in helping them for a better tomorrow. Our children are the colorful rainbows of tomorrow.

Our Language Classes have also grown!! At Chinmayam, we started with 10-12 students in Hindi but in the last three years the number has been between 30-40 children. Our dedicated teachers have added to the standardization of our Hindi curriculum, we have 10 teachers for seven levels of classes. Our Hindi Paathshala is recognized by Montgomery County Public Schools as a provider of Outside Language Credit for Hindi. To date, we have provided over 40 credits to our High School students. We added Telugu and the program continues to grow. Our linguistic heritage adds to our children's understanding and appreciation of our scriptures. We recognize this as one of the best ways to have our future generation read about our culture and society.

The Language Day has been a grand success with a variety of presentations from children of all ages.

Our language classes also continue on line with distant learning during the Covid-19 closure.

Our Arts program has also attracted children. The Bharata Natyam, Mrudungam, Folk Dances, Shloka, Flute, Keyboard, Bhajan and Carnatic Music have been offered for the last two years. The Tabla classes have been most popular!! The enrollment has shown that the children have learnt the beauty of our cultural heritage. They learn and use their energy to enjoy the art. The Arts Annual Day and the Tabla Annual days were a presentation of our children's skills, the program was a big success, it also left the parents happy and proud.

There cannot be another institution that can blend all these religious, cultural, spiritual values to our children!! It has to be Chinmaya Mission. This is a small world, and it is great because of the Chinmaya Movement!! It is great because of the greatest values that Gurudev has left us. It is great because of our spiritual teachers, Swami Dheernanandaji; and most of all our children who are our torch bearers for tomorrow – a colorful rainbow of tomorrows.

Graduates - May Gurudev's grace and blessings always be with you for years to come. There is a beautiful future – a rainbow of beautiful tomorrows coming your way!!

I would like to end with a quote by Buddha from the scriptures:

Meditate. Live purely. Be quiet. Do your work with mastery. Like the moon, come out from behind the clouds!! Shine

Hari Om



Sri Gurubhyo Namah  
Hari Om

## **Our Keynote Speaker Lakshmi K. Ravipati**



Lakshmi has grown up in CMWRC from the age of 3 and is a member of one of the earliest batches of Bala Vihar students from Virginia. As a Bala Vihar student she participated in various events including the first Gita Chanting Competition held by CMWRC. As a young adult, she spent her summers volunteering with the Virginia Bala Vihar Summer Camp. For roughly the past 14 years, she has taught dance at the same Virginia Summer Camp, where she is fondly known as "Lucky Didi." Today she is one of CMWRC's Setukari coordinators and has recently joined CMWRC's Executive Committee



***Chinmaya Mission Bala Vihar  
Graduation Ceremony  
May 22, 2021***

*Welcome by Sudiksha Nimishe*

*Procession*

*Invocation by Srikanth Kowtha*

*Blessings by Vilasiniji*

*Blessings by Arvind Bhagwatji*

*Taittiriya Upanishad Meaning by Vikas Bector  
Taittiriya Upanishad Chanting by Dr Sankaran Nayar*

*Introduction of Alumnus Speaker by Anil Kishore*

*Speech by Alumnus Lakshmi K. Ravipati*

*Tilak Ceremony  
Invoking blessings of Guru Parampara  
Abhinandanam by Neha Mehta*

*Om Namah Shivaya Japa*

*Introduction to CHYK by Rahul Dharmavaratha*

*Vote of thanks*

*Blessings by Swami Dheerananda*

*Closing Prayers*

## AVYAY POTARLANKA



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Frederick, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Centerville Elementary Urbana Middle Urbana High
<b>Parents</b>	Ramaswamy and Leela Potarlanka
<b>Siblings</b>	Bhaswanth Potarlanka
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Eleven
<b>Teachers</b>	Manisha Aunty, Sukanya Ji Aunty, Prathima Aunty, Devi Aunty, Partha Uncle, Venkat Uncle, Anand Uncle, Ram Uncle, Sauraub Uncle, Hari Uncle, Ganapathy Uncle, Rajesh Uncle
<b>Hobbies</b>	Kuchipudi, Basketball, Tennis, Video games
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in Computer Science.

## DEVARAJAN PALANIAPPAN



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Frederick Chapter
<b>Schools</b>	Alagu Palaniappan and Ramanathan Palaniappan
<b>Parents</b>	Middletown Primary School Middletown Elementary School Middletown Middle School Urbana High School
<b>Siblings</b>	None
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Thirteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Manisha Tewari, Anu Ravichandra, Bindu Hariprakasha, Partha Parandapali, Venkat Thoppae, Ram Randad and Surab Tandon, Hari Hariprakasha Ganapathy Sankaralingam and Rajesh Arora
<b>Hobbies</b>	Tennis, Coding, and Biking
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in Computer Science and Business

## HARSHINI PARANDAPALLI



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Frederick, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Glade Elementary Walkersville Middle Walkersville High
<b>Parents</b>	Aparna Venkatakrishnan and Saravanan Parandapalli
<b>Siblings</b>	Sidharth Parandapalli
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fifteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Manisha Tewari, Anu Ravichandran, Bindu Haripraksha, Partha Parandapalli, Venkat Thoppae and Ram Palaniappan, Ram Randad and Surab Tandon, and Hari Hamcha, Ganapathy Sankaralingam and Rajesh Arora
<b>Hobbies</b>	Vocal Music (Hindustani), Piano, and Karate
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in Neurobiology and Physiology on a Pre-Med track

## KARTHICK SANKAR



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Frederick, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Tuscarora Elementary School Ballenger Creek Middle School Tuscarora High School
<b>Parents</b>	Dhanalakshmi Murugiah and Ganapathy Sankaralingam
<b>Siblings</b>	Sruti Sankar
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Thirteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Anu Aunty, Manisha Tewari, Kalyana Aunty, Sukhanya ji aunty, Prathima Aunty, Devi Mami Aunty, Partha Uncle, Venkat Thoppe, Anand Uncle, Manoj uncle, Ram Randad, Saurabh Tandon, Haripraksha Humcha, Rajesh Aoara, Ganapathy Sankaralingam
<b>Hobbies</b>	Tennis, Cooking, Basketball
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on studying Computer Science at University of Maryland, College Park

## NITHIN TANGIRALA



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Frederick, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Jones Lane Elementary Ridgeview Middle School Quince Orchard High School
<b>Parents</b>	Ram and Padma Tangirala
<b>Siblings</b>	Nikhil Tangirala
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Six
<b>Teachers</b>	Sukanya Aunty, Venkat Uncle, Anand Uncle, Ram Uncle, Surab Uncle, Hari Uncle, Ganapathy Uncle, Rajesh Uncle
<b>Hobbies</b>	Art, Video Games, Biking
<b>Future Plans</b>	My major is undecided, but I'm leaning towards evolutionary biology

## AKSHAY SUBRAMANIAM



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Waples Mill Elementary Hunters Woods Elementary Rachel Carson Middle School Oakton High School
<b>Parents</b>	Deepa and Suresh Subramaniam
<b>Siblings</b>	Ashwin Subramaniam
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Eleven
<b>Teachers</b>	Raji Chukka, Medhini Nagaraj, NeeA Gandhi, Mukthaji, Suresh Ji, Vineet Bhaiya, Rekha Ji, Subra Arya
<b>Hobbies</b>	Piano, Basketball, Listening to Music
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in computer science. I am planning to apply to business school after getting my bachelor's degree. I would like to pursue a career in computer science and business and a technology company.

## ANIKA RAO



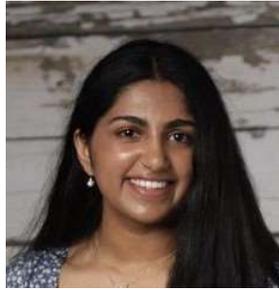
<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Nysmith James Madison High School
<b>Parents</b>	Mohan and Girija Rao
<b>Siblings</b>	None
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Eleven
<b>Teachers</b>	Swami Ji, Priya Ji, Vineet Ji, Suresh Uncle, Rekha Aunty, Anu Aunty, Mukta Aunty, Sri Ji, Vibha Aunty, Neelima Aunty, Sudha Aunty, Nirmala Aunty, Raji Aunty, Uma Aunty, and Devi Aunty
<b>Hobbies</b>	Crew, Photography, Music, and Painting
<b>Future Plans</b>	I plan on pursuing a career as a small animal veterinarian and will be attending Virginia Tech in the fall on a Pre-Veterinary Sciences track. I would like to continue volunteering and giving back to the community.

## ARNAV TIKHE



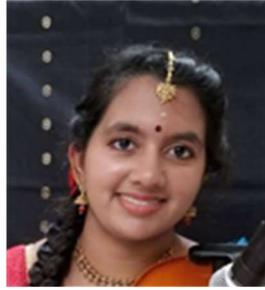
<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Oak Hill Elementary School Hunters Woods Elementary School Rachel Carson Middle School Oakton High School
<b>Parents</b>	Ashish Tikhe and Anjali Tikhe
<b>Siblings</b>	Aditya Tikhe
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Twelve
<b>Teachers</b>	Swami Ji, Vineet Baya, Rekha Aunty, Sumanth ji, Muktha Aunty, Venkat Uncle, Uma Aunty, Suresh Uncle, Sudha Aunty, Neelima Aunty, Meena Aunty, Vidha Aunty, Neelu Aunty, Indu Aunty, Anitha Radhakrishnan Aunty, Nirmala Aunty and Karuna Aunty
<b>Hobbies</b>	Running, Coding, Basketball, Music
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in Computer Science at Virginia Tech I am also committed to running Cross Country/Track at Virginia Tech I would like to give back to my community and volunteer

## DIVYA NARAYAN



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Liberty Elementary School J. Michael Lunsford Middle School Freedom High School
<b>Parents</b>	Karuna Narayanan and Narayanan Ramachandran
<b>Siblings</b>	Shanker Narayan
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Eleven
<b>Teachers</b>	Meena Aunty, Jaya Aunty, Nirmala Aunty, Neelima Aunty, Ravi Uncle, Bhavana Aunty, Shekar Uncle, Monica Aunty, Vijay Uncle, Priyaji, Vineetji, Rekha Aunty, Suresh Uncle
<b>Hobbies</b>	Playing guitar, singing, painting, dancing
<b>Future Plans</b>	I will be attending University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing. After graduating, I hope to be an ICU nurse and eventually get my doctoral nurse practitioner's degree.

## DIVYA SUNDARAM



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	W T Woodson High
<b>Parents</b>	Geetha and Kalyan Sundaram
<b>Siblings</b>	Harish Sundaram
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Twelve
<b>Teachers</b>	Murali Kadaveru, Uma Amruthur, Sripriya krishnakumar, Kanaka Sriram, Medhini Nagaraj, Saraswathi Ramaswamy, Lavanya Ramakrishnan, Subra Arya, Scinju Gadamsetty, Suresh Ramakrishnan, Sunil Simhal, Latha Kumar, Acharya Priyaji, Rekha Parameswaran
<b>Hobbies</b>	Music, dance, reading, volunteering
<b>Future Plans</b>	I plan on majoring in neuroscience and minoring in music and am hoping for a future career in medicine. I would also like to spend some time in India to further my musical studies

## KRIVI PANIDEPU



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Rosa Lee Carter Elementary School Stone Hill Middle School Rock Ridge High School/Academies of Loudoun
<b>Parents</b>	Srinivasa Panidepu & Kalyani Maguluri
<b>Siblings</b>	Tarini Panidepu
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Eleven
<b>Teachers</b>	Swami Ji, Vineet Bhaiya, Rekha Aunty, Priya Ji
<b>Hobbies</b>	Tennis, Football, Cars
<b>Future Plans</b>	I plan on majoring in aerospace engineering My future goal is to become the fourth ever Indian astronaut Continue to volunteer and serve my community

**NEEHARIKA YALLAYI**



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Greenbriar Elementary/Liberty Elementary Lunsford Middle School Freedom High School
<b>Parents</b>	Lalitha and Viswanadhan Yallayi
<b>Siblings</b>	Vedanth Yallyi
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fourteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Meena Radhakrishnan, Viswanadhan Yallayi, Medhini Nagaraj, Kanaka Sriram, Neelima Chenamaraja, Lata Kumar, Mihir Desai, Samatha Murre, Acharya Priyaji, Suresh Ramakrishnan, Vineeth Bhagavath, Rekha Parameswaran
<b>Hobbies</b>	Cooking, Photography, and Drawing
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am majoring in Biology with a minor in Business I hope to become a doctor. I would like to pursue a career as a OBGYN and also run a restaurant.

## NIMISHA PANABAKAM



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Oak Hill Elementary School Rachel Carson Middle School Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
<b>Parents</b>	Madhukiran Panabakam and Sona Krishnaswamy
<b>Siblings</b>	Nidhi Panabakam
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Seven
<b>Teachers</b>	Sudha Bhat, Suresh Ramakrishnan, Neelima C, Latha Kumar, Kanaka Sriram, Vijay Atmavilas, Priyaji, Vineet Bhagawat, Sumanth Ravipathi, Rekha Parameswaran
<b>Hobbies</b>	Carnatic Music, Bharatanatyam, Girl Scouts, cooking, baking, watching documentaries and netflix, listening to music, working out
<b>Future Plans</b>	I plan to major in neuroscience on the pre-med track with a career in health sciences

## PRANAV SINGH



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Liberty Elementary School Michael J. Lunsford Middle School Freedom High School Academy of Engineering and Technology
<b>Parents</b>	Rajesh and Poornima Singh
<b>Siblings</b>	Prisha Singh
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Three
<b>Teachers</b>	Swami Ji, Vivek Ji, Shankar Ji, Suman Ji, Priya Ji, Suresh Ji, and Rekha Ji
<b>Hobbies</b>	Video games, music, cooking, photography, and chess
<b>Future Plans</b>	I plan on majoring in aerospace engineering with a minor in computer science. My career goal is to help on a project that brings people to the surface of Mars, which will help solve many problems we have on Earth.

## RAKESH PILLAI



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Navy Elementary, Hunters Woods Elementary Rachel Carson Middle Thomas Jefferson High
<b>Parents</b>	Anitha and Shibu Pillai
<b>Siblings</b>	Revathy Pillai
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Eleven
<b>Teachers</b>	Swami Ji, Vineet Bhaiyya, Rekha Aunty, Sumanth ji, Muktha Aunty, Venkat Uncle, Uma Aunty, Suresh Uncle, Sudha Aunty, Neelima Aunty, Meena Aunty, Vidha Aunty, Neelu Aunty, Indu Aunty, Anitha Radhakrishnan Aunty, Nirmala Aunty and Karuna Aunty
<b>Hobbies</b>	BasketBall, Solving Rubik's Cubes, Video Games,
<b>Future Plans</b>	I'm planning on majoring in computer engineering.

## RUSHIL SURESH



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly, VA
<b>Schools</b>	Greenbriar West Elementary School Rocky Run Middle School Chantilly High School
<b>Parents</b>	Suresh Ramakrishnan & Lalitha Suresh
<b>Siblings</b>	N/A
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fourteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Swami Ji, Priya Ji, Rahul Ji, Vineet Bhaiya, Rekha Aunty, Uma Aunty, Suresh Uncle, Sudha Aunty, Neelima Aunty, Kanaka Aunty, Vidha Aunty, Karuna Aunty, Sriji, Srilekha Aunty, Pratima Aunty, Raji Mami, Vijay Uncle, Mohand Uncle,
<b>Hobbies</b>	Photography, Pool, Technology
<b>Future Plans</b>	I plan to major in psychology and become a child psychiatrist after schooling.

## SHIVANI NAIK



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Crossfield Elementary Rachel Carson Middle Oakton High
<b>Parents</b>	Ajit and Seema Naik
<b>Siblings</b>	Pavan
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Eight
<b>Teachers</b>	Viji Vishwanathan, Devi Ganapathi, Sudha Bhat, Suresh Ramakrishnan, Vinay Bhagwat, Rekha Parmeshwaran, Vijay Atamavilas, Sriji Gopalkrishna
<b>Hobbies</b>	Playing music on various instruments including, the french horn, ukulele, and piano. Along with singing, and dancing, Craft, horse riding, singing
<b>Future Plans</b>	Planning to major in Psychology and help kids from different ethnicity growing up in USA

## SHLOK VEN CHINMAYA



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Belmont Station Elementary School Trailside Middle School Stone Bridge High School
<b>Parents</b>	Ven Sharma & Devi Ganapathi
<b>Siblings</b>	Sahana K Ven
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Eight
<b>Teachers</b>	Kanakaji, Deviji, Anithaji, Sangeethaji, Priyaji, Neelimaji, Sureshji
<b>Hobbies</b>	Piano, Basketball, Walking, Listening to music
<b>Future Plans</b>	Planning to study Biomedical Engineering

## SHREEHARI SRINIVASAN



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Hutchinson Farm Elementary School J. Michael Lunsford Middle School Freedom High School
<b>Parents</b>	Suhashini Muthukrishnan and Srivatsa Srinivasan
<b>Siblings</b>	N/A
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Thirteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Swami ji, Vivek ji, Shankar ji, Suman ji, Rekha ji, Priya ji, Suresh ji
<b>Hobbies</b>	Basketball, Video Games, Sneakers, Golf, Watching Sports
<b>Future Plans</b>	I plan on majoring aerospace engineering. I plan to further our journey in living in space.

## SHREEJA KIKKISSETTI



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Oak Hill Elementary School Rachel Carson Middle School Chantilly High School
<b>Parents</b>	Murali Kikkiseti and Nagadurga Dasari
<b>Siblings</b>	Anjali Kikkiseti
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Nine
<b>Teachers</b>	Suresh Ji, Mukta Ji, Priya Ji, Rekha Ji, Vineet Ji, Uma Ji, Venkat Ji, Rekha Ji, Swami Ji, Neelima Aunty,
<b>Hobbies</b>	Reading, playing the piano, drawing, volleyball
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning to major in computer science, with an emphasis on Artificial Intelligence. I plan to develop cutting edge technologies in computation pathologies and potentially develop a startup company. I would like to help students globally attain an education by providing scholarships and resources to underprivileged areas

## SHRIYA VARADA



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Fox Mill Elementary Oak Hill Elementary Rachel Carson Middle Thomas Jefferson High
<b>Parents</b>	Jayaram and Ramalakshmi Varada
<b>Siblings</b>	Lalit Varada
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fifteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Swathi Aunty, Girish Uncle, Priya Krishnakumar Aunty, Neelima Aunty, Suresh Uncle, Vineet Bhaiya, Rekha Aunty, Muktha Aunty, Medhini Aunty, Sudha Aunty, Latha Kumar Aunty, Kanaka Aunty
<b>Hobbies</b>	Art, dance, reading
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning to major in neuroscience and computer science. I hope to attend medical school in the future and become a doctor.

## SHRUTHI KALATHUR



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Navy Elementary Hunters Woods Elementary Rachel Carson Middle Chantilly High
<b>Parents</b>	Hemamalini and Ramesh Kalathur
<b>Siblings</b>	Krishna Kalathur
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Thirteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Anita Ji, Viji Viswanathan, Sudha Bhat, Suresh Ramakrishnan, Priya Kumar, Rekha Parameswaran, Vineet Bhagwat
<b>Hobbies</b>	Drawing, Bharatanatyam, Piano
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in applied math

## SHRUTHI RAJESH



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Cedar Lane Elementary School Arsha Vidya Mandir Farmwell Station Middle School Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
<b>Parents</b>	Shanthini Chetlur Kannan and Rajesh Govindarajan
<b>Siblings</b>	Sahana Rajesh
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Five
<b>Teachers</b>	Beena Nair, Priya Kumar, Rekha Parameshwaran, Suresh Ramakrishnan, Vineet Bhagwat
<b>Hobbies</b>	Writing, Reading, Technical Theater, Listening to Music
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in computer science

## SRIYA CHAVALI



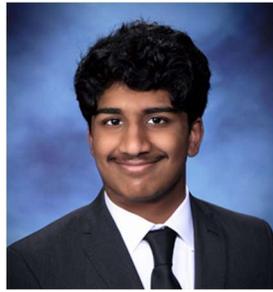
<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly, VA
<b>Schools</b>	Floris Elementary School Rachel Carson Middle School South Lakes High School
<b>Parents</b>	Sridhar Chavali and Aparna Dasika
<b>Siblings</b>	Abhiram Chavali
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Six
<b>Teachers</b>	Venkat Uncle, Uma Aunty, Vibha Aunty, Vineetji, Rekha Aunty
<b>Hobbies</b>	Dance (Bharatanatyam), filmmaking, baking
<b>Future Plans</b>	I will be attending George Mason University School of Business, and majoring in Management Information Systems. After graduating, I also hope to pursue an MBA. In addition, I will be continuing to learn and perform Bharatanatyam, after my Arangetram.

## SUDARSHAN ATMAVILAS



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Liberty Elementary J. Michael Lunsford Middle Freedom High
<b>Parents</b>	Vijay Atmavilas and Muktha Thyagarajan
<b>Siblings</b>	Mahima Atmavilas
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fifteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Priyaji, Rekha Parameswaran, Suresh Ramakrishnan, Sumanth Ravipati, Vineet Bhagwat
<b>Hobbies</b>	Basketball, Nature Walks, Reflecting, Poetry
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in industrial or systems engineering.

## SUDHISH CHIMALADINNE



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
<b>Schools</b>	Liberty Elementary J. Michael Lunsford Middle Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
<b>Parents</b>	Shridevi and Anjan Chimaladinne
<b>Siblings</b>	Mahima Atmavilas
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Twelve
<b>Teachers</b>	Priya Ji, Vijay Atmavilas, Kanaka Sriram, Suresh Ramakrishna,
<b>Hobbies</b>	Cello, Basketball, Reading, Games
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in Physics.

## ANJALI PALIYAM



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Paint Branch Montessori School Fulton Elementary School Lime Kiln Middle School Reservoir High School
<b>Parents</b>	Anitha Menon and Sureshkumar Muttath
<b>Siblings</b>	Madhava Paliyam
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Twelve
<b>Teachers</b>	Srilakshmi Baruda, Radhika Bommakanti, Sriram ji, Anitha Menon, Seema Shankar, K. Venkateshwaran, Sheilika Gandotra, J.R. Sujatha Kannan, Pragyna Gandhi, Sujatha Rao, Aniket ji.
<b>Hobbies</b>	Western flute, Carnatic music, classical dance, drawing, running
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in biomedical engineering.

## DEVI DUTTA-SULTAN



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Ashburton Elementary North Bethesda Middle Walter Johnson High
<b>Parents</b>	Radha Dutta and Nasim Sultan
<b>Siblings</b>	
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Five
<b>Teachers</b>	Swami Ji, Venkat Ji, Neeraja Ji, Vipin Ji, Neetu Ji, JR Ji, Sujatha Kannan Ji, Pragnya Ji, Sujatha Rao Ji, Aniket Ji
<b>Hobbies</b>	Music, Dance, Studying Philosophy, Writing
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on double majoring in philosophy and English I would like to have a career in human rights advocacy I would also like to help make good education available throughout the whole world

## MANASWEE MISHRA



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Gill Elementary School Manor Woods Elementary School Burleigh Manor Middle School Marriotts Ridge High School
<b>Parents</b>	Snigdha Hota and Manoj Mishra
<b>Siblings</b>	
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Twelve
<b>Teachers</b>	Jayashri Pari, Latha Ramesh, Radhika Bommakanti, Emani, Dr. Sriram Padmanabhan, Srilakshmi Buruda, Venkat Venkateshwaran, J.R. Rao, Sujatha Kannan, Aniket Sidhayee, Sujatha Rao, Pragyna Gandhi
<b>Hobbies</b>	Dancing (Ballet, Contemporary Modern, Odissi, Sambalpur Folk), Singing, Digital Design
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am majoring in biomedical engineering and would like to pursue a career in medicine.

**POOJA SREE NAGABHYRU**



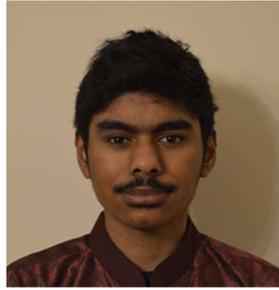
<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Bellows Springs Elementary School Mayfield Woods Middle School Patapsco Middle School Mount Hebron High School
<b>Parents</b>	Pothu Raju Nagabhyru and Rajyalakshmi Nimmagadda
<b>Siblings</b>	None
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fourteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Meana shankar, Bhagi Emani, Latha Ramesh, Sivasankar Emani, Sujatha Rao ,JR, Venlat Venkateswaran, Aniket Sidhaye ,Pragyna ,Sriram Padmanabhan, Srilakshmi , Sreenath Nampally, Gayathri Sastry
<b>Hobbies</b>	Swimming, Singing, Dancing,
<b>Future Plans</b>	Howard Community College

## RAMYA BOMMAKANTI



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Flower Valley Elementary Earle B. Wood Middle Rockville High
<b>Parents</b>	Radhika and Raj Bommakanti
<b>Siblings</b>	Rachita Bommakanti
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fourteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Bhaggi Reddy, Suddha Sivaram, Lata Ramesh, Jayasri Pari, Emani Reddy, Radhika Bommakanti, Anitha Menon, Seema Sankar, Venkateshwaran, Sujatha Emani, JR Rao, Sujatha Kannan, Sujata Rao, Pragnya Gandhi, Aniket Siddhaye
<b>Hobbies</b>	Singing, dancing, social entrepreneurship, playing guitar
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am not sure what I want to major in however, I am excited to continue my hobbies and do even more, in college.

## SAKETH KARRI



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Clarksville Elementary Clarksville Middle School Franklin Middle School Chantilly High School
<b>Parents</b>	Srilakshmi Burada and Naidu Karri
<b>Siblings</b>	Prashanth Karri
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fourteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Bhaggi aunty, Sudha aunty, Jayashree aunty, Latha aunty, Radhika aunty, Emani uncle, Sujatha aunty, Pragna aunty, Venkateswaran uncle, Snigdha aunty, Aniket uncle, JR uncle, Sujatha Kannan aunty, Srilakshmi, Sriram uncle.
<b>Hobbies</b>	Video Editing, Origami, Hiking, Robotics
<b>Future Plans</b>	Major in computer engineering

## SHIVANI SAWANT



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Bethesda Elementary School Westland Middle School Walt Whitman High School
<b>Parents</b>	Sanyogeeta and Sagar Sawant
<b>Siblings</b>	Sidhant Sawant
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Twelve
<b>Teachers</b>	Jayashri Aunty, Lata Aunty, Bhavana Didi, Sri Ram Uncle, Radhika Aunty, Venkateshwaranji, Sheilka Aunty, Sri Lakshmi Aunty, Anitha Aunty, Vikas Bector, JR Uncle, Sujata (K) Aunty, Aniket Uncle, Sujata (R) Aunty, and Pragyna Aunty
<b>Hobbies</b>	Writing, Piano, Long-distance running, Reading, Pottery
<b>Future Plans</b>	I plan to major in English Literature.

## VISHNU LAKSHMANAN



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Pennington Traditional School Osborn Park Senior High School The Governor's School at Innovation Park
<b>Parents</b>	Kodanate Lakshmanan and Jayashri Pari
<b>Siblings</b>	Maanini Lakshmanan
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fifteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Swamiji, Sudha Sivaraman, Bhaggi Emani, Jayashri Pari, Latha Ramesh, Radhika Bommakanti, Emani, Dr. Sriram Padmanabhan, Srilakshmi Buruda, Venkateshwaran, J.R. Rao, Sujatha Kannan, Aniket Sidhaye, Sujatha Rao, Pragyna Gandhi
<b>Hobbies</b>	Soccer, basketball, coding, reading, listening to music, hiking.
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on obtaining a dual degree or double major in both computer science and business. I am going to start a company that uses AI and technology to implement a carbon negative solution to climate change.

## ALISHA MAHAJAN



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Triadelphia Ridge Elementary Folly Quarter Middle River Hill High
<b>Parents</b>	Shalini Gupta and Rajiv Mahajan
<b>Siblings</b>	Mohnish and Leisha Mahajan
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fifteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Meera Kirkire, Aruna Subramaniam, Sona Bhatnagar, Sujata Balakumar, Vaishali Thakkar, Raghu Pantula, Amita Mehta, Seema Shankar, Anirudh Garud, Mahesh Joshi, Harshita Saxena, Subramanyam Jayaraman, Shuchi Marwaha, Meena Sankar, Suren Nathan, Anil Kishore, Nalini Kumar, Vikas Bector, Lavanya Rao, Devyani Kavathekar, Sangeeta Dewan, Rajeev Gopal
<b>Hobbies</b>	Exercising, Music, Upcycling, Reading
<b>Future Plans</b>	I will be attending UC Berkeley next year, and I plan on majoring in Environmental Economics and Policy and pursuing a BA degree through the Haas program.

## ANISHA SANKAR



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Burtonsville Elementary Holton-Arms School Pyle Middle Walt Whitman High
<b>Parents</b>	Meena Sankar and Sankar Parameshwara
<b>Siblings</b>	Vignesh and Girish Sankar
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fifteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Meena Sankar, John Carr, Alamelu Jonnagadla, Vaishali Amin, Tejashri Purohit, Anita Kulkarni, Mangala Rao, Chetana Neerchal, Subramanyam Jayaraman, Rasshmi Shankar, Harshita Saxena, Suren Nathan, Shalini Mahajan, Anil Kishore, Vikas Bector, Nalini Kumar
<b>Hobbies</b>	Singing, dancing, performing
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in neuroscience.

## ATHARV ANANTH



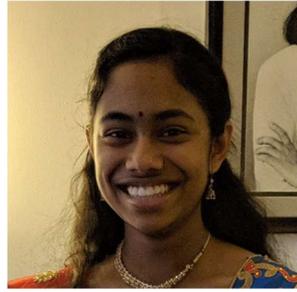
<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Spark Matsunaga Elementary School Centennial Lane Elementary School Burleigh Manor Middle School Centennial High School
<b>Parents</b>	Ananth Ramkrishnan & Jyoti Ananth
<b>Siblings</b>	Diya Ananth
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Nine
<b>Teachers</b>	Vikas Bector, Nalini Kumar. Anil Kishore, Seema Shankar
<b>Hobbies</b>	Hiking, Photography, Kayaking, Cars, Pole Vaulting
<b>Future Plans</b>	I plan to Study Marine Science at Eckerd College and one day be a Marine Biologist conducting my own research to make the world a better to place to live for future generations.

## DIVYA VYDHIANATHAN



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Brock Bridge Elementary School Chesapeake Science Point Public Charter School
<b>Parents</b>	Vardhini Sankaran and Vydhanathan Nilakantan
<b>Siblings</b>	Kavya Vydhanathan
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Ten
<b>Teachers</b>	Bala Vihar: Swamiji, Anil Kishore, Vikas Bector, Nalini Kumar, Lavanya Rao, Meena Sankar, Suren Nathan, Shalini Gupta, Subramanyam Jayaraman, Harshita Saxena, Shuchi Marwaha, K. Venkateshwaran, Sheilika Gandotra, Sriram Padmanabhan, Radhika Bommakanti Language and Arts: Anil Kishore, Anil Darbari, Savitha Nigam, Siri Neerchal Shloka Class: Sri Gopalakrishna
<b>Hobbies</b>	Carnatic Music, Drawing, Reading, Swimming, Crafts, Baking, going on walks
<b>Future Plans</b>	I plan to major in Political Science, go to law school, and pursue a career as an attorney.

## JAHNAVI KIRKIRE



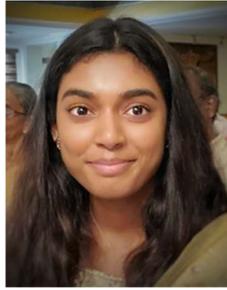
<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Greenwood Elementary Rosa Parks Middle School Sherwood High School
<b>Parents</b>	Meera and Raja Kirkire
<b>Siblings</b>	Lakshmi Kirkire
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fifteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Bala Vihar: Meera Kirkire, Aruna Subramaniam, Sona Bhatnagar, Sujata Balakumar, Vaishali Thakkar, Raghu Pantula, Amita Mehta, Seema Shankar, Anirudh Garud, Mahesh Joshi, Harshita Saxena, Subramanyam Jayaraman, Shuchi Marwaha, Meena Sankar, Suren Nathan, Vikas Bector, Nalini Kumar, Lavanya Rao, Anil Kishore, Swamiji  Language & Arts: Reena Gopal, Anil Darbari, Devyani Kavthekar, Sangeeta Dewan, Lata Kannan
<b>Hobbies</b>	Tabla, Dance, Karate, Saxophone, Soccer, Reading, Baking, Debate, It's Academic
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning to major in Government & Politics and Public Policy, with a possible minor in a language. I plan to attend law school and additionally serve as a JAG in the US Armed Forces.

## MAYA VIBHAKAR



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Indian Creek Dayton Oaks Elementary Lime Kiln Middle River Hill High
<b>Parents</b>	Sharada and Neel Vibhakar
<b>Siblings</b>	Dhilan Vibhakar
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Thirteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Vikas Bector, Nalini Kumar, Suren Nathan, Mangala Rao, Harshita Saxena
<b>Hobbies</b>	Piano, Writing and Reading, Rollerblading, Theatre
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning to attend college, majoring in Political Science and English.

## POOJA SIVARAJAN



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Goshen Elementary School Cedar Gove Elementary School Rocky Hill Middle School Poolesville High School
<b>Parents</b>	Desma Balachandran and Rajesh Sivarajan
<b>Siblings</b>	Arjun Sivarajan
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fifteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Bhaggi Mani, Lakshmi, Shobana, Alimelu Jonnagadla, Savithri Raja, Anita Kulkarni, Tejashri Purohit, Giri Namasivaya, Mangala Rao, Chetana Neerchal, Sudha, Ramah Muralidharan, Jayraman, Suren Nathan, Lavanya Rao, Vikas Bector, Nalini Kumar, Anil Kishore
<b>Hobbies</b>	Violin, Singing, Theatre, Dancing, Pottery, Baking
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in Psychology at the University of Maryland.

## RISHIKA JADHAV



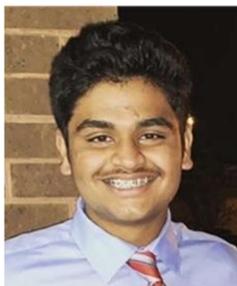
<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	DuFief Elementary Cold Spring Elementary Eastern Middle Thomas S. Wootton High
<b>Parents</b>	Pratima and Ramdas Jadhav
<b>Siblings</b>	Piyusha Jadhav
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Fifteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Meera Kirkire, Aruna Subramaniam, Sona Bhatnagar, Sujata Balakumar, Vaishali Thakkar, Raghu Pantula, Amita Mehta, Seema Shankar, Anirudh Garud, Mahesh Joshi, Harshita Saxena, Subramanyam Jayaraman, Shuchi Marwaha, Meena Sankar, Suren Nathan, Anil Kishore, Nalini Kumar, Vikas Bector, Lavanya Rao, Devyani Kavathekar, Sangeeta Dewan, Rajeev Gopal, Reena Gopal, Kamal Dewan, Geeta Luthria, Lata Kannan
<b>Hobbies</b>	Singing, Dancing, Baking, Reading, Music, Embroidery, Guitar, Playing with my dog
<b>Future Plans</b>	I plan on majoring in Biology. More specifically, I hope to pursue research in genetics and genetic and rare diseases. Outside of academics, I am excited to continue Kuchipudi dance and a cappella in college.

## RITHVIK BHOGAVILLI



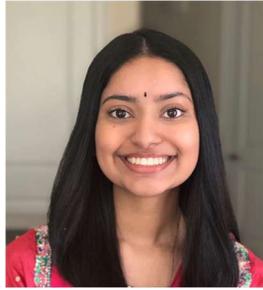
<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Clearspring Elementary Roberto Clemente Middle Poolesville High
<b>Parents</b>	Suresh Bhogavilli and Purnima Chandrasekaran
<b>Siblings</b>	Nivedha Bhogavilli
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Thirteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Vikas Bector, Nalini Kumar, Anil Kishore, Harshita Saxena, Jayraman Uncle, Meena Shankar, Suren Nathan, Anitha, Tejashri Purohit, Mangala Aunty, Sudha Aunty, Chetana Neerchal, Meera Kirkire, Aruna Subramaniam, Sona Bhatnagar, Sujata Balakumar
<b>Hobbies</b>	Robotics, Electronics, Martial Arts
<b>Future Plans</b>	I plan on majoring in computer engineering and hope to ideally get a job in robotics.

## SHREEDATTA INDUR



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Cedar Grove Elementary School Rocky Hill Middle School Poolesville High School
<b>Parents</b>	Niranjana Indur and Sharmila Indur
<b>Siblings</b>	Shreenitya Indur
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Thirteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Swamiji, Vikas Bhai, Nalini Aunty, Anil Uncle, Harshita Saxena, Jayraman Uncle, Meena Shankar, Suren Nathan, Alimelu aunty, Anitha Aunty, Rajeev Uncle, Poorvi Didi
<b>Hobbies</b>	Football, Running, Sleeping
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in Biochemistry to become a cardiologist.

## SHRUTHI VENKATACHARI



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Rockburn Elementary Elkridge Landing Middle Mount View Middle Marriotts Ridge High
<b>Parents</b>	Sudha and Koththavasal Venkatachari
<b>Siblings</b>	Divya Venkatachari
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Twelve
<b>Teachers</b>	Harshita Saxena, Subramanyam Jayaraman, Meena Sankar, Suren Nathan, Shalini Mahajan, Nalini Kumar, Anil Kishore, Vikas Bector
<b>Hobbies</b>	Dance (Bharatanatyam), Baking, Philosophy
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in business

## VINAMR PEMMARAJU



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	College Gardens Elementary School Lucy V. Barnsley Elementary School Julius West Middle School Richard Montgomery High School
<b>Parents</b>	Srinivas Pemmaraju and Radha Yadavilli
<b>Siblings</b>	Avneesh Pemmaraju
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Thirteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Swamiji Vikas Bector, Nalini Kumar, Lavanya Rao, Anil Kishore Meena Shankar, Suren Nathan Harshita Saxena, Jayaraman Anita Kulkarni, Tejashri Purohit-Sheth Alimelu Aunty
<b>Hobbies</b>	Running, Playing Sports, Piano
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in Computer Engineering at the University of Maryland

## ABHAY MALOO



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Cloverly Elementary Briggs Chaney Middle Springbrook High
<b>Parents</b>	Mahendra and Nea Maloo
<b>Siblings</b>	Ajay Maloo Anuva Maloo
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Twelve
<b>Teachers</b>	Kamal Dewan, Sona Bhatnagar, Seema Shankar, Aniruddha Garud, Raghu Pantula, Amita Mehta, Nea Maloo, Arvind Bhagavat, Mahesh Joshi, Ravi Ravichandran, Krishna Bhamidipati, Vinay Mallikarjun, Prasad Kunchakarra,
<b>Hobbies</b>	Running, Trumpet, Football, Gardening
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in math and economics.

## ANIRUDH C. NALLANI



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Forest Ridge Elementary School Patuxent Valley Middle School Hammond High School
<b>Parents</b>	Srikanth C. Nallani and Sandhya Nallani
<b>Siblings</b>	Madhulika C. Nallani
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Thirteen
<b>Teachers</b>	Sona Bhatnagar, Seema Shankar, Aniruddha Garud, Raghu Pantula, Amita Mehta, Arvind Bhagavat, Mahesh Joshi, Ravi Ravichandran, Krishna Bhamidipati, Vinay Mallikarjun, Prasad Kunchakarra, Kishore Dighe
<b>Hobbies</b>	Tennis, Biking, Tabla
<b>Future Plans</b>	I am planning on majoring in Mechanical Engineering

## ROHAN SAI KYASA



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Phelps Luck Elementary School Manor Woods Elementary School Burleigh Manor Middle School Marriotts Ridge High School
<b>Parents</b>	Murali Kyasa and Udaya Yerramalla
<b>Siblings</b>	Srijan Kyasa
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Ten
<b>Teachers</b>	Swamiji, Vivekji, Seema Shankar, Raghu Pantula, Amita Mehta, Arvind Bhagavat, Mahesh Joshi, Aniruddha Garud, Meera Ravichandran, Nea Maloo, Ravi Ravichandran, Krishna Bhamidipati, Vinay Mallikarjun, Prasad Kunchakarra
<b>Hobbies</b>	Reading, Tabla, Badminton, Table Tennis, Video Games, Chess, Serving the Community, It's Academic
<b>Future Plans</b>	I plan to attend college and major in Biological Sciences

## SAIPRANEETH MUKKU



<b>CMWRC Center</b>	Chinmayam, Silver Spring, MD
<b>Schools</b>	Forest Ridge Elementary School Patuxent Valley Middle School Hammond High School
<b>Parents</b>	Madhavi Pottimutyalagari and Krishna Mukku
<b>Siblings</b>	Sahith Mukku
<b>Years in Bala Vihar</b>	Four
<b>Teachers</b>	Ravi Ravichandran, Krishna Bhamidipati, Vinay Mallikaarjun, Prasad Kunchakarra
<b>Hobbies</b>	Sports, Exercising, Video Games, Walking, Listening to music, Gardening
<b>Future Plans</b>	Planning to attend university in fall of 2021.

## Devarajan Palaniappan

From the age of five, Chinmaya Mission has helped me to learn more about my faith and myself. All this knowledge that I have learned will help me as I walk along the path that I will take in the future. To me, Chinmaya Mission represented a community that strived to give to others and help others. I remember the time when one of our groups at Chinmaya decided to help pack lunches to give to a food drive in order to help children who were unable to get their proper meals. Seva like these helped me understand the true meaning of “giving more than we take” in our Chinmaya Mission pledge. These types of events have allowed me to learn the true values and the experience of joy of helping others in need. Another fond experience that I had was participating in the Chinmaya Mission Musical. I remember enjoying practicing our dance for our chapters section of the play. Although I was nervous at first, I truly enjoyed participating and practicing with everybody. Thanks to Chinmaya Mission, I managed to have a fulfilling experience that I will take with me to college. Hari Om!

## Harini Parandapalli

Although the knowledge that I learned from Chinmaya Mission will resonate with me forever, my favorite aspect of Chinmaya would be the lifelong friendships I have created through it. In fact, my best friends are my Chinmaya friends and they are even a second family. I remember the minute after we all participated in the Gita Chanting Competitions, we would all run to the common room and talk about who our judges were, how we think we did, and eat our ice cream together. On those days, most of the adults would still be in judging or chanting so the kids always had fun with the Acharya. These friendships also meant a lot to me because we did not go to the same school so I

only saw my friends once a week which excited me to go to Chinmaya. However, during the play our three centers put on about Swami Chinmayananda’s life, we got to see each other much more often. I remember our dance practices that we had for hours and hours so right after school I would put my backpack down and immediately change into a Kurti to go to practice. The long hours of dance practice finally paid off during our Vande Mataram dance and running and hugging my friends right after we got off stage was an unbeatable experience. Thanks to Chinmaya Mission, I have met and created experiences and friendships that will never go away. Hari Om!

## Karthick Sankar

When I contemplate the words, “Chinmaya Mission,” countless memories start to flood my mind. This community, which I was brought up in, has taught me so many life lessons and values that I will hold dear for the rest of my life and I’ve been so grateful to be part of it. From learning slokas in sloka class to learning languages like Tamil, all the way to learning the Bhagavad Gita, Chinmaya Mission has been able to strengthen my core beliefs and helped me create lifelong friends. At first, I viewed Chinmaya Mission simply as a place where I could meet my friends and socialize with them, however, as I started to mature and think about what I was learning, I realized how important these teachings were to my life. Through the teachings from my supportive Bala Vihar teachers and acharyas, I’ve been able to get answers to many philosophical questions and even learn more about myself. It truly has shaped me into a better person. I’m going to be graduating with some of my best memories of learning slokas when I was in 1st grade, volunteering at summer camp in middle school, having bhiksha with Swami Dheeraanandaji plus laughing at his jokes, and being part of the JCHYK Summer Camp with Acharya Vivek Ji. As I head into college and society and commence a new chapter in my life, I feel confident knowing that the values and morals I have been taught throughout my time in Chinmaya Mission will travel with me wherever I end up in life.

## **Nithin Tangirala**

My connection to my culture/religion has always been mostly family oriented, where I rarely got much of a chance to indulge it outside of that circle, aside from with close family friends. That changed when my family decided to join Chinmaya Mission. I was welcomed with open arms by the Frederick Chapter family, and I've been a part ever since. Some of my fondest memories include being a part of Chinmaya Musical. It was my first time ever doing something such as this, and the anticipation from the rehearsals all the way to the actual show is something I won't forget. It was also where I really felt like I had become a part of the group, as I was still fairly new in the chapter. I also fondly remember volunteering at the Chinmaya Summer Camp, where I got to take on a role of leadership and interact with the younger kids in my chapter as well. Chinmaya has given me a new outlook on not only my own life, but also on my culture and religion. I will make sure to take the life lessons that I've been given through this program and apply them in my future pursuits.

## **Akshay Subramaniam**

I am a Hindu. Since I was five, I've been attending classes at Chinmaya Mission. Our classes used to be held in schools such as West Springfield High School and Herndon High School. I was very excited and impressed when we moved in to the Chinmaya Somnath building. The motto of Chinmaya Mission is "to give maximum happiness to maximum people for maximum time." This goal is accomplished through an understanding of Hindu values of the oneness of humanity, love for all, and service to society. These classes have helped me to anchor a personal identity of my place in this world. The community is very caring and compassionate. We greet each other by saying "Hari Om", which means "all the love and consciousness". Even when fooling around, we would all become attentive and engaged when Swamiji started speaking. When I was younger, I used to learn mythological stories, sing, and. As we have gotten older, my peers and I

engage in discussions about how we can apply Hindu values to our modern-day lives. Now, we debate about God and interpretations of Hinduism; our teachers encourage such debates as introspection and self-realization are the highest goals of Hinduism. Above all, we are taught to respect and love everyone, no matter their race, religion, gender, etc. We are taught that Seva to others is done for one's own spiritual growth. I go with my peers to homeless shelters and make tacos for people I don't know. I frequently volunteer at carnival and fundraiser community events. Overall, this community has taught me that it is my dharma to perform my karma with virtue, courage, and wisdom.

## **Anika Rao**

I've come to cherish my Sunday mornings at Chinmaya Mission because there is no other place I would be able to learn so much about Hinduism and Hindu cultures and traditions unless, of course, I had grown up in India. Being able to learn and grow up with the same group of people for the last twelve years has helped me appreciate being part of a community and made me feel grateful to be a part of one such as Chinmaya. My favorite experiences from Chinmaya have come from volunteering as a counselor at the Chinmaya Summer Camp. I am extremely grateful to have attended Chinmaya since Kindergarten and for the past 11 years, as it has taught me so much and I have come to appreciate Hinduism so much more. I would like to thank all my teachers and my family who helped me grow so much over my time attending Chinmaya.

## **Arnav Tikhe**

I have been part of Chinmaya Somnath ever since I could remember. Even before I learned how to walk, my Dad held me in his hands as he had to pick up my brother from attending his Bala Vihar classes. One of my earliest memories was before I could attend the 2nd grade and I was waiting for my brother to be picked up from Chinmaya Mission's Annual Summer Camp. Seeing children smiling and

laughing as they ran around a blue mat with a square duct taped onto it caught my attention and initiated my passion to one day be having as much as fun as the children playing. Alongside attending Bala Vihar at a young age, I would look forward to the summer each year to this camp. I attained some of the greatest memories and important lessons after attending each year. As I grew earlier, I gradually learned how Chinmaya Somnath meant so much more than a camp of spending time and singing shlokas. The fun activities reiterate the message of “Keep Smiling” which I then learned to employ in my everyday life. The important life messages I learned every Sunday at Bala Vihar I realized can be useful in facing the challenges in life as well as dealing with my past problems. From the young toddler I was entering Chinmaya Somnath with the intent of spending time with my friends, I came out with so much more knowledge and experience to take with me.

## **Avyay Potarlanka**

I loved racing my friends down the hallways of Walkersville Middle School during Chinmaya Mission, but little did I know how my Bala Vihar journey would race by this quickly. I remember the days where I used to be so scared when asked to chant, and how now the same shlokas are second nature to me. I remember all the volunteer experiences I gained and how they transformed my perspective on how blessed I truly am. I remember the summer camps where I loved to compete with my friends in athletics and get to know them outside of Bala Vihar. While at the moment I may not have realized the benefit of all these dear memories, these experiences and Chinmaya Mission have played an integral role in shaping who I am today. Over eleven years I’ve become part of a tight-knit family that encourages me to pursue further self-discovery. With the knowledge I’ve gained from Chinmaya Mission, I have grown tremendously as a person, and I will continue to gain and test this knowledge in the future.

## **Divya Narayan**

Being in Chinmaya Mission for 11 years has truly been an experience that I am extremely grateful for. Growing up in Bala Vihar, I not only learned so much about my culture and my religion, but I realized how I could apply lessons from our scriptures in my daily life. Through some of the challenges I have faced, I found that Hinduism and spirituality have been anchors for me because of how much they have helped me overcome obstacles. From learning simple stories in my Madhuram class to having complex discussions in Chinmayam class, I have grown so much throughout my time at Chinmaya, and I know I wouldn’t be the person I am today without this experience. Throughout my time in Bala Vihar, JCHYK camp, and youth volunteering, I have met so many great people and I am thankful that I was able to form a community at Chinmaya. I hope to take all the lessons that I have learned and apply them throughout my life. I want to thank all my teachers, my parents, and the sevaks at Chinmaya for always guiding me, supporting me, and encouraging me. I appreciate you all so much.

## **Divya Sundaram**

I remember going to Chinmaya Mission for the first time in second grade worried about what it would entail. After eleven years, I can confidently say that Chinmaya Mission has altered the way I approach even the most mundane situations. It was the Tapovanam class that truly changed how I view not only Hinduism but the world. In this class, I felt that I was making the important connections that would eventually form my more advanced understanding of Hinduism. Attending the Chinmayam class has introduced ideas about dharma that I have applied to aspects in my everyday life. Moreover, the deep philosophical discussions we engage in have opened my eyes to idealist tendencies everyone should follow to attain true enlightenment. Most

importantly, my experience with Chinmaya Mission has transformed who I am today. While I may never be an expert in Hindu philosophies, I will take the knowledge that I have gained and apply it in my future endeavors.

## **Krivi Panidepu**

Chinmaya Mission has been a part of my life since a very young age. I first remember walking into the Dulles South Recreation Center and eagerly looking at the rest of the kids, running around and giggling - a representation of the happiness at the center. This was my first memory of Chinmaya. Back then, I didn't realize the impact Bala Vihar would have on my life. However, as I got older, the benefits started to become more apparent. Something I have always liked about Bala Vihar, is the different themes that are focused on each year, and through the years, the teachings have become more applicable to my daily life. One of the most important things I learned through attending Bala Vihar is about happiness. Happiness is such a generic term. However, after countless hours of classes, I was able to re-define it for myself: Giving. I have always noticed that giving back to others, has always improved my mood. Whenever I found myself stressed, I would take that negative energy and convert it into positive action by volunteering. Bala Vihar was able to help me realize this, and I will continue to carry this value for the rest of my life.

## **Neeharika Yallayi**

Chinmaya has taught me how to be more connected with my roots. It has not only given me long-lasting friendships but also lessons that I will take with me to college and future endeavors. I have learned to serve and live life with a purpose. Chinmaya has been a second home and has given me a sense of community.

## **Rakesh Pillai**

It feels like just yesterday I was playing tag in my Madhuram class. Throughout the years, the role

Chinmaya has played in life has been tremendous. In my Bala Vihar classes, I learned more than just Hinduism and spirituality. Through the many stories and lessons, I developed a strong set of core values and sharpened my sense of right and wrong. And during summer camps, I had the opportunity to connect with dozens of campers and understand Hinduism at a deeper level. Playing tag with friends, the countless of hopping games, having fun with Coach K in PE, buying chips and mango lassis after Bala Vihar class with my cousins-- I'm incredibly blessed to have made these invaluable memories at Chinmaya and I look forward to the memories to come.

## **Pranav Singh**

In the very short period I was a part of Chinmaya, I've learned countless lessons and made unforgettable memories with people who are now my closest friends. All of these lessons and memories have truly developed my character, and I know I wouldn't be the same person without them. Of all these lessons, there is one that I value the most: motivating myself by considering my impact on others. Whenever I'm not motivated to get a task done because of its limited impact on me, I use the positive impact that it will have on others to motivate me to get the job done. For example, there have been nights where I cook dinner for my family when my parents are busy, motivated by the fact that I will save them a lot of time and effort. All of the memories, from the all fun games with Coach K to the very meaningful lessons in the Bala Vihar classroom, they all make me very proud and grateful to say that I was a part of Chinmaya during my high school career.

## **Rushil Suresh**

Over the course of the last 14 years, I have become gradually more and more acquainted with Bala Vihar and the Chinmaya Mission family. It has been a journey that I will never forget and intend to pursue further into my life. All the way from learning simple bhajans and songs as a 4 year-old,

to learning complex Vedantic concepts this past year, I feel that Chinmaya Mission and Bala Vihar has without a doubt made me a better person and made me who I am today. And I'll never forget Shloka Class. Having done that one after-Bala Vihar class for almost 11 years straight, sitting through the days of Raji Mami singing by herself to my dad at the tiny Dulles Center, and now having two split classes just shows the growth of the mission. Overall, the Mission has made me a more efficient student, and a more healthy person living the best life I can.

## **Shivani Naik**

I started attending to Bala Vihar when I was in 4th grade. At first, I really didn't like the idea of having to wake up every Sunday morning at 9 am and go to Herndon High to learn about my religion. But thankfully my parents encouraged me to continue. Every Sunday, I made more friends and learned new things about my own community and myself. During my roughest times, I would always look forward to coming to Bala Vihar and learning about how to better myself while also being with these amazing people. Looking back at the years I have been here including Bala Vihar, summer camp, and JCHYK summer camp, I have learned so much about myself, gained a family, and guidance that will help me grow into a better person every day. One lesson I carry with myself and will always be with me that I learned through our scriptures in Chinmaya is "This too shall pass!" This has always helped me stay strong in all sorts of situations.

## **Shlok Ven**

I first attended Chinmaya Mission at South Riding where I learned alphabet values in my Satyam class. I still have fond memories of watching the creative skits and performances on Annual Day. It was so satisfying to finally have our own building for Chinmaya Mission after attending Bala Vihar at South Riding and Herndon High School. Bala Vihar was extremely rewarding, as I have gained valuable knowledge about my culture and religion. I have had wonderful teachers and classmates

throughout my years at Chinmaya. I will carry the values and lessons that I have learned as I begin the next chapter of my life.

## **Shreehari Srinivasan**

Chinmaya Mission has been a life changing experience. From the amazing Bala Vihar lessons to the exciting summer camps, I have learned so much throughout these 13 years. I remember learning about the various Krishna, Hanuman, and Rama stories as a young kid and slowly progressing towards more advanced vedantic concepts such as the BMI and Vasanas. My favorite lesson in Chinmaya has to be about likes and dislikes. I personally have several likes and dislikes throughout my life and this Bala Vihar lesson taught me that controlling those likes and dislikes will help me on my journey to permanent happiness. After that lesson, I have tried to carefully observe myself and control these tendencies. Without Chinmaya, I definitely wouldn't be the person I am today. I learnt so many good qualities throughout these years and have helped serve my community.

## **Shreeja Kikkiseti**

From learning about small stories from the ramayana and mahabharata to examining deep questions like "Who am I", I have learnt a lot from my various Chinmaya classes over the past couple of years. Throughout the years, valuable lessons from Chinmaya have helped me solve problems in my daily life. For instance, as a kid I learnt the importance of respecting my parents from the way Rama respected his mothers - a skill that I used in my life. Recently, I have learnt, from the bhagavad gita, that our focus must be on the action itself rather than the fruits of the action - a skill that has helped me in high school. Not only has Chinmaya helped me in my day-to-day life, but it has also broadened my experiences with my community, giving me a better understanding of the circumstances of the world outside my bubble. For instance, through volunteering at homeless shelters, I understood that not everyone is as privileged as

some of us and it is our job as humans to help those in need. In fact, due to my experiences at homeless shelters, my family and I donate one dollar every day to a homeless shelter or a poor school in India to really give others the opportunities that we are blessed with. In addition to this, I co founded an organization with my sister in order to raise money for educational scholarships for underprivileged areas in India. Overall, more than simply keeping in touch with my Indian roots, Chinmaya has helped me learn valuable lessons that I will continue to keep with me throughout the rest of my life.

## Shriya Varada

I have been a student at Chinmaya Mission for as long as I can remember. In a way, this institution raised me. From the stories and dances we read and learned in Madhuram, to the lessons of Hindu lore in Shivanandam, to the philosophical discussions of Chinmayam, Chinmaya has always been a place for me to develop and grow and become the best version of myself I can be. Learning about Hinduism and applying it to various parts of my life has been extremely rewarding, as I have gained discipline and better critical thinking skills. I've understood more about life and how to live it in the most beneficial way, even if that path is not what I expected before. Chanting the Geetha for the competition every year has helped me become closer and form a connection with the words of Lord Sri Krishna, which is a blessing in itself. My favorite memory of Chinmaya Mission is having fun with my friends when I attended summer camp. I so deeply appreciate my time at Chinmaya Mission and I will never forget the valuable lessons I have learned here.

## A Second Home Shruthi Kalathur

As I reflect back on my years growing up, I'm eternally grateful that I got to spend every Sunday at Chinmaya Mission. From the fun skits and dances in my younger classes to the more philosophical debates I've participated in later on, my experiences have constantly provided me peace

and guidance in everyday activities. Each story and sloka has impacted the way I try to live my life, whether I'm questioning how to time manage my work or setting goals for myself. I can confidently say when I look back, I remember having so much fun learning about different aspects of my culture. The crossover between daily life and the lessons learned in class are more interconnected than it seems, and I've implemented lessons such as devoting my actions to a higher cause in order to live a more enriching life. I've met some of my closest friends at Chinmaya as well and we've grown up together from preschool to present. There have been many adventures during summer camps where I had fun learning Gita verses, learning new dances with my group, and going on fun trips with the classmates I'm graduating with soon. Chinmaya also gave me the chance to attend a National CHYK camp in Texas, one which separated me from the hustle of school and allowed me to center myself. Despite being with much older students, this was easily one of the best memories I have because of how much I learned to conquer my personal storms in life. I'm so glad I got to grow up with everyone in Somnath and am very grateful that Chinmaya gave me much to reflect on as I continue my journey into college.

## Sriya Chavali

Bala Vihar was definitely an eye-opening experience for me throughout the years. I was able to understand the reality of Sanatana Dharma, as well as the great depth that it has. I am especially grateful to have joined Chinmaya Mission in the 7th grade, although I greatly wish that I should have joined much earlier in my life. I also realized how much of the Vedanta that is taught and practiced can be applied to daily life, and how this valuable, profound knowledge is certainly the key to understanding how to live life wisely. I also was able to collaborate, and connect within the Chinmaya community, and I am very grateful to have been a part of it. Although my time in Bala Vihar will be ending, I will definitely be coming back to be a part of the Chinmaya family, whether it be through being a volunteer, or helping at Summer

Camp, as well as continue my quest for more Vedantic knowledge.

## **A Home Away From Home Sudarshan Atmavilas**

To this day, I'm still discovering all the ways that Chinmaya Mission has impacted me. It was a nutrition plan for my intellect, sending a steady diet of values and morals my way through weekly Bala Vihar classes and annual summer camps. It was a steadying factor for my mind, channeling my thoughts through Shloka classes, art projects, and yoga sessions. It was a turbo boost for my body, generating enthusiasm and energy within me through hopping game and athletics periods at the kids and youth summer camps. It was even a comforting atmosphere for my social development, providing an unchanging community of family-friends and set of companions that I could rely on and grow up with. But most of all, it was a sledgehammer cutting away my ego, allowing me the opportunity to serve as a youth volunteer or clean the building during "seva time", so that I could contribute to something that was greater than myself. It has given me a vision and mission for my own life, as well as the inspiration needed to start on my self-development trajectory. I'm so fortunate that Chinmaya Mission has been part of my life, as it's played such a big role in what I have and who I am. Now that Chinmaya Mission has given me so much, I look forward to giving back to the Mission going forward.

## **Anjali Paliyam**

From the summer camps to Bala vihar classes, Chinmayam has allowed me to create friendships and meaningful bonds with others and discover how to live a meaningful life through selfless dedicated service. I am thankful to Swamiji and my teachers for guiding me throughout my life and helping me dive deeper into the meaningful lessons of the Bhagavat Geeta, while giving me the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions. I am thankful for the supportive and dedicated community at the

Mission. My favorite memory of Chinmaya Mission is being a volunteer at the summer camp, helping the campers in various activities and going on fun field trips. It was truly a rewarding experience and taught me several life lessons..

## **Devi Dutta-Sultan**

Ever since I can remember, I have been a very curious person. I always think about the ways of the world. "Who am I", "why are we here" and all such questions are my constant friends. And I've come to really love that. I have been studying such questions from a very young age, on my own, and with my family and friends. When I joined Chinmaya Mission in eighth grade, I found a whole new outlet to feed my curiosity and to ask all the questions that my mind could come up with. Here, I have had many opportunities to have many philosophical discussions about the nature and the role of the world, and our participation in it as a human race. Questions have led to answers, which have led to yet more questions. When that happens, that means true growth is happening, as an individual, and as a community. Chinmaya Mission has really helped me to become a better, more loving, kind, compassionate, and understanding person. It has also helped me to better hone my skills of philosophical inquiry and critical thinking. It has helped me to challenge any narrow-mindedness. I now have the goal to open my mind and heart as much as I ever can, to not be closed to any sort of learning and consideration, to be able to step into other people's shoes and seek to see the world from their point of view, to be a more empathetic person. It is what our world needs, open-minded and accepting people, to help make the world a better place. I cannot thank Chinmaya Mission enough for helping me to become a better version of myself, for instilling great values in me, and giving me a toolbox of great mental resources as I go out into the world to explore it to the fullest, and seek to help the world to the best of my abilities in any way I can.

## **Chinmaya Mission in My Eyes** **Manaswee Mishra**

I have been in Chinmaya Mission for 12 years. Since starting Bala Vihar in Michigan, it has been an integral part of life. As I have grown up in the halls of the Mission, my personality has grown with it. From learning about the tales of Hinduism to questioning everything that we believe in as human beings, the mission has created a space where I felt I could grow as an individual. It has also taught me how there is never only one way to solve a problem. The philosophies that I learned in Chinmaya Mission could be applied to the world around me. One of my favorite memories of Chinmaya Mission was going to different temples near the area and learning about the different practices. Thank you to all who helped me through my journey. Hari Om!

## **Pooja Sree Nagabhyru**

During all my years in Chinmaya Mission I have learned a lot about the Hindu culture. I learned a lot through the books I read over these years. Some of my favorite books were the Mahabharata and symbolism of Hinduism and the Holy Geeta . Another thing that I enjoyed during all my years I was in Chinmaya Mission was all the celebrations we would do. Also I would attend language classes after the main session every Saturday so that is another thing I enjoyed during Chinmaya Mission. The teachers were another thing.

## **Ramya Bommakanti**

As a kid, I was not always 100% okay with going to Chinmaya Mission every Saturday morning however, looking back at it, I am so glad that I went to Bala Vihar classes. At the time I did not care much about Hinduism however, Bala Vihar (truly) highlighted the importance of Hinduism to me and how prevalent it is in our daily life. My favorite memories include, but are certainly not limited to, playing hopping game, learning the ancient

Yakshagana art form, going on field trips, and talking with fellow campers and volunteers at summer camp. I am so happy I went to Chinmaya Mission all these years for sessions and for summer camp.

## **Saketh Karri**

One minute gita chanting, gita competition, Summer camps, Annual days, yakshagana, bhiksha with swamiji, etc are some of the most memorable times I had at Chinmaya Mission. Chinmaya Mission taught me what religion means. When I compare myself to other Hindu's i've noticed how much I've gained from Chinmaya Mission whether it be through learning the Ramayana and Mahabharata or diving deep into the meaning of verses in the Gita and applying it to my life. Something that stuck with me from Acharya Vivekji's Camp. was the idea of taking yourself on a date to know about yourself. It helped me in many ways throughout high school. I want to thank swamiji, the teachers, and the community for nurturing and guiding me during my years at chinmaya mission and Bala Vihar class..

## **A Second Home** **Shivani Sawant**

Chinmayan Mission has been a deeply formative experience for me and a constant throughout my life for the past twelve years. I have come a long way from the shy bookish elementary schooler being taught about the Ramayan. Throughout the years of shlokas, Swamiji's Common Time stories, Annual Day performances, and thought-provoking discussions on Bhagavad Gita and Self Unfoldment, I've learned so much: not only about Hinduism and spirituality, but about myself. Though at times I can feel apprehensive or unsure about what the future holds for me, I'm grateful for Chinmayan Mission because I know it has given me a solid foundation and years worth of lessons to draw from. I feel deep gratitude for all my teachers and Swami Dheerananda for shaping such a foundational part of my identity.

## Vishnu Lakshmanan

I have been part of Chinmaya Mission my whole life. Starting from the stories in Kailash Niwas to analyzing Self Unfoldment on Zoom, I can only attribute my spiritual growth to Chinmaya. In my time at the Mission, I have been exposed to many lessons such as Selfless Dedicated Service and values and practices such as meditation that I will continue to follow throughout my life. In short, Chinmaya has made me a better son, brother, friend, and also a better leader. But looking beyond the strong values that were taught, I have also made many friends and memories at Chinmaya. Among the countless memories that I have made at Chinmaya, the ones I will never forget were at Chinmaya's annual summer camp, both as a camper and as a volunteer.

## Alisha Mahajan

Chinmaya Mission has always been a second home to me and many of my peers. Growing up in a predominately white school and community, the Mission has provided as an outlet to connect to my culture and religion. I am gifted to be a part of the loving and supportive community fostered at Chinmaya Mission, and I have developed life-long friendships and relationships with my peers and teachers. I have learned to think critically and approach life and hardships with the principles and values we discuss in class. In Chinmayam we have been given the opportunity to explore and ask questions about the Gita and the world around us. Through our class discussions we are given the opportunity to bring in new perspectives and learn from each other. I am eternally grateful for my experiences at Chinmaya Mission for the past fifteen years, and I want to thank all of my teachers, peers, and Swami Ji for all the wonderful life lessons learned.

## Anisha Sankar

Over the years, Chinmaya Mission has not only provided me with strong friendships, different life

perspectives, and the support of my teachers and dear Swamiji, but it has also enabled me to understand Hinduism in the context of modern society. Last year, when my world history teacher incorrectly explained aspects of Hinduism in class, I was able to stay after the lesson and explain the misconceptions in his understanding of our religion as well as provide him with materials used in Bala Vihar and Dharma Ambassadors to further his understanding of concepts such as the varnas, caste system, and the Vedas. After this conversation, my teacher had me clarify these topics in class the next day and explain their application in modern life, which helped my classmates gain a more accurate picture of Hinduism. Bala Vihar has given me the confidence to present Hinduism accurately and respectfully to my peers and teachers. I am grateful that I can be proud of my culture and represent it well to others.

## Atharv Ananth

Hari Om! I am Atharv Ananth and I attend Sunday Morning sessions at Chinmayam. I have attended all three sessions in my 9 years associated with Chinmayam. One of the oldest memories I have of Chinmayam was of my first year of summer camp. It was a lot of fun and a fulfilling experience. It is one of my fond memories I have of my time at Chinmaya. Chinmayam was also the first place where I learnt to play on my little 1/8 size violin. I even got to learn Tabla one year. Over the years I took a few breaks but regardless I continued to find my way back and continue my spiritual journey. I am sure that the knowledge and experiences I have gained at Chinmayam will always be with me as I take my next steps in my life.

## A Second Home Divya Vydhanathan

When I think of Chinmaya Mission, I think of integrity, peace, and discovery. From common time, to Hindi, Bala Vihar, and Shloka classes, Chinmayam has helped me in exploring and discovering methods for a genuinely joyous and

rewarding lifestyle. I have grown to love and appreciate the supportive community at Chinmaya Mission. It is more than just “Sunday School”, but rather my second home since it is the first place besides my house that I first learned to love and completely accept my identity as a Indian Hindu growing up in America. Even if I am not physically in the building, I am still connected to the mission during the week through doing my best to apply the lessons taught there in real life experiences as well as the deep connections I made over the years with my classmates, teachers, and parents. My favorite memories here all involve applying some principles I have learnt in the mission in real life. This includes volunteering opportunities like summer camp and grocery drives, making funny skits about lessons learnt in class, and connecting with my friends who have also experienced the blessings of Chinmaya Mission. I am truly grateful for the mission, Swamiji, and all of my teachers being there for me for the last 10 years, helping me on my continuous journey of self-discovery.

## **Jahnavi Kirkire**

Hari Om! For me, this last year has felt almost like a hoax. Having grown up in Chinmaya Mission, it feels surreal to have completed my final year as a Bala Vihar student. While I will always consider myself a “Bala Vihar kid,” my journey has indeed come to an end. Chinmaya Mission has always been a second home to me, through summer camp, bhiksha, and of course, Bala Vihar. Over the last fifteen years, I have been equipped with knowledge that I will use for the rest of my life. Recently, looking back on those years, I have had time to reflect on all I’ve learned and understood. The biggest takeaway I have comprehended is that I must observe and adapt to the world around me – but I must also complete my dharma, my duty, as I go through each stage of life. The world is ever evolving, and as I’ve grown up, I’ve had the opportunity to view it through different perspectives, namely because of my Bala Vihar teachers. They each gave me a different colored lens that I have used to understand the world around me. Each of them has taught me countless lessons,

ranging from all the Deities to messages in the Bhagavad Gita. Swamiji, of course, has remained a constant presence in my life. Swamiji gave me the courage to try blackberries while simultaneously explaining the meaning of life. (Hint, the meaning of life is to fulfill your purpose – everlasting happiness!) To all of my teachers from Madhuram to Chinmayam: thank you for being a continuous inspiration.

## **Maya Vibhakar**

Growing up, Chinmaya Mission has always remained a constant in my childhood. Even as an elementary schooler, I was captivated by the stories told in class of Rama and Hanuman, of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas. My early introduction to religion laid the foundation for my faith, and I’ll be forever grateful to the teachers who took the time to teach their young students in such an engaging way. As I grew older, I found myself becoming even more intrigued with the philosophy being the scriptures, especially during Chinmayam. Some of my fondest memories are of the passionate weekly discussions on how to apply the meaning of each text to our own lives. Though I may have reached my final Bala Vihar class, I know that the lessons and philosophies I’ve learned within this great community will last me a lifetime.

## **Pooja Sivarajan**

Chinmaya has given me an environment to learn about my culture, religion, and has enabled me to grow as a person. Chinmaya not only introduced me to a rich culture, but a tight-knit community of people who have been by my side for as long as I can remember. I’m thankful to have had the opportunity to learn and will be forever grateful to the friends, teachers, and especially Swamiji who have made my time in Chinmaya so meaningful.

## **Rishika Jadhav**

Chinmaya Mission is a second home to many of us, but most importantly, it has provided me with perspective. I am eternally grateful for the connection to my culture and religion gifted to me by the Chinmaya family. Along with a sense of community, I have learned to think critically and deeply about the world around me, my choices, and what I can do to make myself and others happy. My time at Chinmaya Mission has encouraged me to learn principles relevant in my religion and culture, such as verses of the Bhagavad Gita, and apply them to my daily life. Every week at Chinmaya brings in new perspectives from people that look like me, practice the same traditions as me, and have gone through similar hardships as me. Coming to Chinmaya Mission every Sunday for the past fifteen years have provided me with a certain comfort, routine, and familiarity. It has been a constant in my life through which I am able to see myself grow along with my peers and my teachers. I owe much of this growth to my friends, all of my wonderful Bala Vihar teachers, my family, and Swamiji. Thank you for pushing me to become the best version of myself.

## **Rithvik Bhogavilli**

I started Chinmaya Mission at a very young age. Every week, I would listen as the teachers told us stories of animals finding themselves in trouble and then saving themselves due to their sheer will and perseverance. I would go to the classes purely due to the allure of getting food after class before going home. I never felt the realization or fulfillment that my parents had hoped to instill in me. As I advanced through the classes, the topics would get more introspective and conceptual and the fables of before eventually diminished. I was finally tasked with my first assignment as part of the class: present my favorite Gita verse. At first, I was clueless, wondering how I could think of a verse that applied to me in the slightest. After thinking about it, I began to realize its prevalence in my life. Our class discussions taught me what it meant to be a helpful

member in the community and taught me how to stay productive and accept results as they came. The scriptures we read in class described these exact problems, which I had overlooked for most of my life. I learned to spend my time focusing on my activities and accept whatever outcome, knowing that I did my best. Without these discussions, I wouldn't be the person I am today.

## **Shreedatta Indur**

Chinmaya Mission has a important impact on my life ever since I attended Chinmaya Mission. From Madhuram, when I was only focused on the snack after class, to Chinmayam, where I am able to understand the gita properly. Chinmaya Mission has taught me what it means to be a hindu where I am able to understand its traditions and customs while learning the rich history behind it. I was able to accept my identity as an Indian without succumbing to America's societal standards. Chinmaya Mission wasn't "Sunday school" rather it was another home where I was able to understand the Hindu values and history. My favorite experience from Chinmaya Mission would have to be the end of the year plays. We would be able to showcase our knowledge while providing sufficient entertainment. Chinmaya Mission was something I used to dread, but eventually I learned valuable information which made me understand Hindu history very well. From the Ramayan stories we learned to translating the Gita, Chinmaya Mission allowed me to uncover knowledge that always be useful to me.

## **Shruthi Venkatachari**

"Maximum happiness for maximum people for maximum time." Since the first day I walked in the Mission, whenever I hear this motto I am reminded that our greatest legacy is the happiness we bring to others. By keeping this idea in mind, I feel a constant sense of purpose; that I am able to make a positive impact on the people around me, regardless of how big or small my actions are. From a young age, I had been seeking answers to questions such as "Why does Lakshmi hold a lotus flower?" and

“What is the significance of fasting on Maha Shivratri?” When my family joined Chinmaya Mission in 2008, we were immediately welcomed into the family, and my curiosity found a home. During the weekly drives home from Bala Vihar, I would enthusiastically tell my parents what I had learned in class, such as the significance of Krishna’s skin color, the story of Khandavprastha, or how humans can channel our energy to achieve goals. Through my lessons at Chinmayam, I have become a more calm, open-minded, selfless, and empathetic person. As I move forward in life, I will continue to look back on all that I have learned, allowing me to remain grounded through life’s challenges. Chinmaya Mission has become an essential part of my growth over the years, bringing me truly maximum happiness.

## **Vinamr Pemmaraju**

For as long as I can remember, Chinmaya Mission has been an integral part of my life. From the coloring activities we would do in Madhuram Class, to the Gita analysis we do in Chinmayam, all of the experiences and lessons I have learned through the Mission will stick with me for the rest of my life. Some of my fondest memories originated from Chinmaya Mission. In elementary school, the Chinmaya Mission summer camps allowed me to learn about my culture, while also making new friends in a fun and interactive way -- especially during the exciting hopping games Swamiji would conduct. In middle school, I used what I learned in Bala Vihar to play the role of Steve Harvey in a hinduism-infused play of Family Feud for our annual day, which is an experience I will never forget. In high school, our passionate debates and hilarious discussions surrounding daily life and the Bhagavad Gita in Tapovanam and Chinmayam were truly unforgettable. Overall, I am extremely grateful to all of my teachers, as well as my parents, for allowing me to thrive in this environment, and I hope to stay connected to the Mission in the future.

## **Abhay Maloo**

Chinmaya Mission has had a profound impact on my life. Ever since I joined in in the first grade, the mission has fostered my spiritual journey and helped me develop into the person I am today. I have learned so much throughout the years, from learning intriguing stories in Satyam to gaining deeper insights of the Geeta in Chinmayam. I really appreciated the emphasis on intellectual openness and reasoning, which made me introspect on my life. Also, it helped me really apply what I learned into my every day actions. I am truly grateful for all of the knowledge from Swamiji and all my teachers. I still have a lot to learn, but I will try my best to conduct my life according to the principles I have learned, dedicated to service to others.

## **Anirudh C. Nallani**

Of all my experiences, nothing has impacted me as much as Chinmaya Mission. The center itself has been a safe and fun place where I have found friends and enjoyed my childhood. This center has taught me about my religion, my traditions, and has given me a strong grounding in my culture. I learned what it means to be a Hindu, an Indian, and in later years I learned what it means to be a human. Through Chinmaya Mission I have been given a place to challenge my mind, my logic, and systematically break down my misconceptions to understand how every aspect of my life relates to a higher purpose, and to do so in a manner that can always be implemented in my everyday life. I have been given a safe space to ask any questions, and taught how to ask the right questions. Everything I do in my life is decided on and reflected upon through the approaches and lessons I have learned in Bala Vihar. I know that I am and will be a better person, to others and to myself, because of this. Through the guidance of Swamiji, and my teachers, Chinmaya Mission has provided me with much knowledge that I will carry with me for the rest of my life, including the knowledge that I do not know everything, and that there is more to learn.

## Rohan Sai Kyasa

Chinmaya Mission has been an important part of my life. In the beginning, I didn't enjoy Chinmaya Mission and felt it was something I had to do because my parents forced me to do it. As I started learning Tabla in Sundaram, I enjoyed coming to Tabla class every week. From learning stories like Ramayana and Mahabharata to performing Annual Day skits, I enjoyed everything I did in Chinmaya Mission. As I got older, I enjoyed attending Chinmaya Mission every Sunday afternoon. From common time with Swamiji to Bala Vihar class, I learned something new every day. As I started attending Tapovanam and Chinmayam, I started to learn more about our scriptures in a philosophical manner and started reflecting on what I learned in class every week. Being able to talk about one verse in the Gita during Gita Jayanti was really helpful for me as well during Tapovanam and Chinmayam as I was able to show my parents, Swamiji, and Bala Vihar teachers what I have learned studying Gita. My most memorable moments in Chinmaya Mission is Bhiksha time with Swamiji where I got to learn valuable lessons and play games with Swamiji. The experiences I have gained attending Chinmaya Mission I will apply through the rest of my life. Finally, I would like to thank all of my Bala Vihar teachers and Swamiji for teaching me and helping me understand what it means to be a Hindu.

## Clearing doubt Saipraneeth Mukku

In middle school, I had questions about everything from my cultural and religious roots, and I had painstakingly roundabout existential questions I could find no answer to. I was confused about my cultural roots because although Indian culture and Hinduism was preserved in my home, I would find it to be sharply juxtaposed against the vastly different American culture I would experience more regularly. There were also relatively few Hindus like me, and although I never minded this, I was still curious about my religion. Seeking answers to these questions, my parents and I decided to enroll

in Bala Vihar, a decision I am very glad to have made. Bala Vihar not only built the framework for answering the burning questions I had, it also enlightened me to the fact that I was prone to overthinking, and that there are answers out there, I just needed to seek them with more intensity. I also had the chance to meet very great people, particularly my teachers, fellow students, and Swamiji. I plan to stay involved in my religion because I find that it has brought me happiness all around. I would like to thank all of my teachers for helping me answer my questions, and for everyone else that has made my Bala Vihar experience possible.

## Nimisha Panabakam

### Travelogue of trips to other Mission centers and meeting fellow members

At the conclusion of my sophomore year, I had just completed a fulfilling first year in the Chinmayam class. My teacher at the time, Priya ji, introduced us to the National CHYK camp that would take place that September at the Chinmaya Mangalam in Dallas, Texas. None of us high schoolers were old enough to attend the camp, but Priya ji insisted that we were prepared enough to attend. So, I along with a few of my friends spontaneously registered for the workshop. When I went to Dallas, I was only 15 years old; the youngest person to attend the camp. When we arrived, initially I felt intimidated, surrounded by much older CHYKs. However, as I met more people, I found an incredible group of friends. All of the CHYKs I met turned out to be immensely kind, and supportive of us high schoolers. They had so much knowledge and experience to share with us, and made us feel welcome throughout our stay.

Chinmaya Mangalam is in the outskirts of Dallas, on a beautiful piece of land. It is surrounded by woods, fields of grass, and unimaginable wildlife and critters. We adhered to a strict schedule in which we woke up at 5 am to start our day with meditation and yoga. The cabins we stayed in were a 5 minute walk from the main hall. That early morning walk served as one of the most peaceful moments in my life, as I looked into the dark, cool,

clear sky. The stars shined bright, and the insects chirped softly. It was that walk that allowed me to experience complete and true peace and calm.

The daily schedule of camp was usually full of a variety of activities including Satsang and bhajans with Swami Swaroopananda ji, brain games, and even dance offs. We would also have meals lovingly prepared and served by the Sevaks in the kitchen.

The whole experience made me feel a sense of belonging. I finally met like-minded people from all across the country who had the same values as me. I developed a connection with people I would not have otherwise met without Chinmaya. The Chinmaya community has not only offered me infinite knowledge, but also lifelong friends around the world.

## **A Life-Changing Experience Sudhish Chimaladinne**

When I first started attending Bala vihar classes, I didn't really know why I was attending. My parents dropped me off every Sunday, so I sat in class and learned. However, I soon realized my parents were providing me with one of the most valuable and accepting learning communities I'd ever be a part of. Chinmaya Mission has been an integral part of my life since as long as I can remember. The building has always been a safe place for me, and I looked forward to meeting my friends and learning about Hinduism every Sunday. Rather than seeming like a chore to attend, Bala vihar classes have taught me more important and relevant skills than I learned in school itself. I wouldn't trade these past 12 years at Chinmaya Mission for anything in the world, and I will take the values and skills I have learned with me for the rest of my life.

## **Shruthi Rajesh**

When I moved to the US in 8th grade from India, my mom wanted me to stay in contact with my culture, so she enrolled me into Chinmaya. I think now, looking back five years later I feel like I have learnt lots of valuable lessons from Chinmaya. The

biggest lesson I've taken from Chinmaya is "this too shall pass." "This too shall pass" is a message that, after I took it to heart, has become so valuable. Every time I'm stressed, I repeat to myself, "This too shall pass." Very few stressful situations are going to be around the next month or even the next week and it's important to remember that. By repeating this to myself, I can also get myself to stop stressing and start working. When I've felt overwhelmed because I have a theater show, schoolwork, and a tournament at the same time, I just remind myself that I've survived every stressful situation I've ever had, so I'll definitely survive this one too. I thank Chinmaya Mission and my teachers for all the valuable lessons they have taught me.

## **Sanyogeeta and Sagar Sawant**

"When we are teaching our children about life, our children are teaching us what life is all about!" My search for teaching my children about Indian culture and Hinduism is what led me to Chinmaya Mission, and in the process began my own quest of what life is all about. Through its structured Bala Vihar program, Chinmaya Mission has taught Shivani so much in the years she has been there. From stories in Ramayana and Mahabharat, to Bhagavad Gita and the basics of Vedanta in Self Unfoldment in Chinmayam this past year, Bala Vihar has given Shivani a strong foundation of what it means to be a true Hindu. In these years I have watched Shivani go through the entire gamut - from being excited to go, to being reluctant and dragging her feet to relishing it as part of her Saturdays. As parents we are proud and happy that she persisted and opened her mind to learning the valuable lessons that Chinmaya Mission has to offer. The lessons she has learnt at Bala Vihar have certainly shaped her and will help her as she gets ready to face the next stage in her life. Swamiji has said the lessons of the Bhagavad Gita are like a "life jacket in the ocean of samsara" and we will be forever grateful to Chinmaya Mission for giving not only Shivani but us all these "life jackets". We want to express our gratitude to all her Bala Vihar teachers, language teachers, Swami Dheerananda, Gurudev and the Guru-Shishya Parampara. Hari Om

## Desma Balachandran

It has been an enriching journey for me as a parent and for Pooja. Pooja tells me she is taking away some valuable lessons from all these years in Chinmaya, this has helped her over the years and I'm sure this will guide her on her journey ahead in life. As a mother, I was looking to instill some sense of pride in her ancestry and religion, to sow some seeds as guiding principles beyond what parents can provide. She is free to nurture and grow this foundation throughout her life if she chooses to. Some of these guiding principles which I gained from my great grandparents and grandparents growing up in Kerala and our way of life, Pooja has missed growing up in United States and our busy lifestyle. I am deeply indebted to our Swamiji, the amazing teacher and volunteers for providing us this platform and tethering us to our roots. Thank you for giving us the gift of a lifetime.

## Meena and Sankar

Hari Om!

I remember the time when we enrolled our baby Anisha for the very 1st time to Madhuram class, which was organized by the mission. To our amazement Anisha took it very well and made instantly friends with other BV children. She also found her good friendship with Jahnvi and Rishika and our families developed a close bond. We always celebrated events with the threesome as they longed to see themselves in their company. This relationship culminated in finding common objectives in music, dance and other programs. The great summer camps with Swamiji were another treat, which Anisha always enjoyed.

As Anisha grew up to be middle schooler, she actively took part in the dance drama (Yakshagana) event during summer camp. Anisha greatly enjoyed in the chanting of the verses from the Gita and has become an independent thinking girl on spirituality. She enjoyed her participation and presentation at the Hinduism training for MCPS teachers. In the past few years during summer, she attended

residential camps in Pune, India at the Chinmaya Kolvan facilities to enhance her Hindustani classical Music.

She thoroughly enjoyed her Bala Vihar classes. Anisha and her various fellow friends have developed such strong bondage as Chinmaya family, which will last forever beyond the School years and College times. She is beginning to look to her next stint in life after high school to the University well-armed with courage, discipline and unwavering firm Hindu spiritual knowledge to better her life as she grows to become a young woman. We are very confident that with Pujya Gurudev's grace, our Swamiji's blessings and the love of our Bala Vihar Teachers to all our children, they will grow and develop their life to being a caring and helpful citizen to our community and to this great nation.

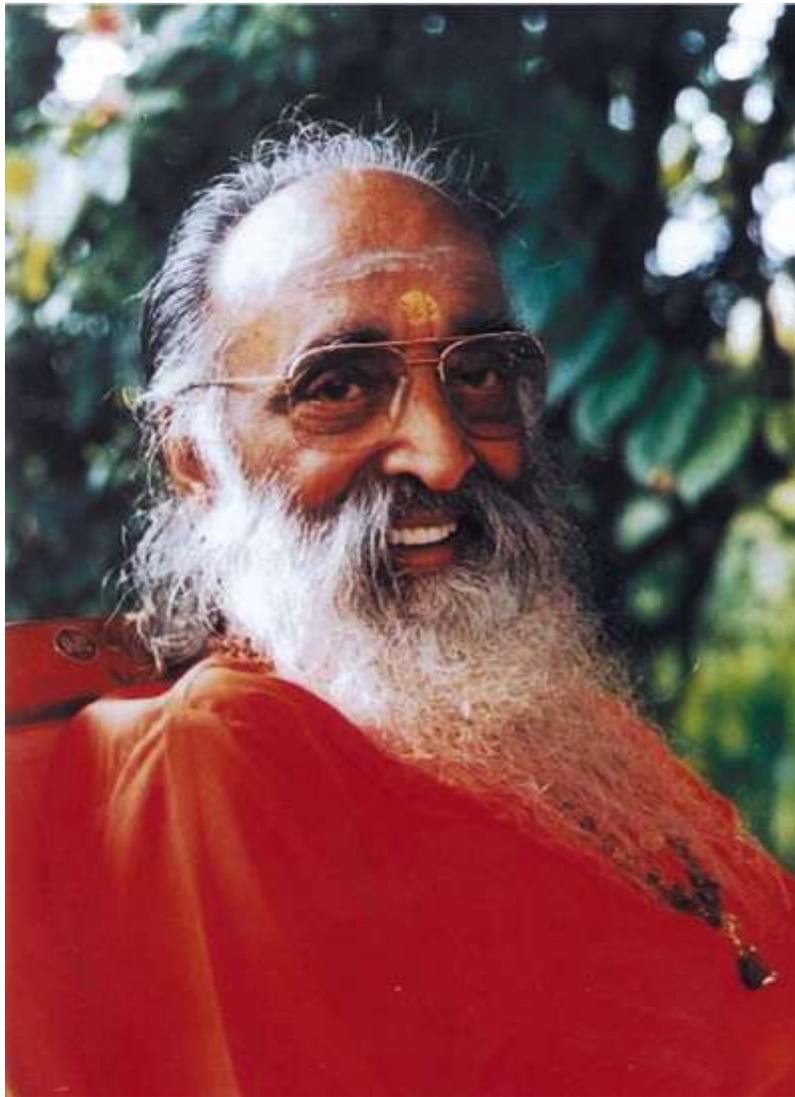
Hari Om!  
Sankar and Meena

### *A Graduate's Photograph*

*The indescribable energy that flows from each graduate is tangible in their photographs. Their stance of confidence, a magnetic pull one cannot resist. The mingling of hope and adventure as they reach out to grasp life shines through youthful aspirations reflected in their bio-sketches. We wish them well in their chosen path. May they achieve the goals they have set out to accomplish and return to Chinmaya Mission as responsible members of society.*

*Chetana Neerchal*

## Silently hear everyone....



Silently hear everyone. Accept what is good; reject and forget to remember what is bad. This is the way to live intelligently in life. It is not always possible to have nothing but what we like and what we want. The world is a mixture. Accept all and take only what you want; reject the rest and live happily. In Krishna's days there were Duryodhanas; in Rama's days there were Ravana. Among friends some will be good for some time; others bad at time; still others bad always...you have all but accept only the good as your friends. You try to be always good to all at all time.

Swami Chinmayananda  
June 30, 1956