

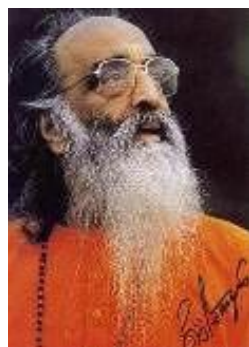


# Chinmaya Pradipika

CMSD Quarterly Newsletter



July 2015, No. 15



## The Master Speaks:

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

- **Swami Chinmayananda**

## In this issue of Chinmaya Pradīpikā

The special highlight of this quarter is the planning and commencement of the Chinmaya Birth Centenary Celebrations (CBCC) with *Gītā* chanting competition, Video *Jñāna Yajña* by Pujya Guruji on *stithapra jña lakṣaṇa* leading up to the grand celebrations of 99<sup>th</sup> Chinmaya Jayanti. Mothers' Day was celebrated the Chinmaya way with matr puja and special lunch. The premiere screening of the film "**On a Quest**" that afternoon made it extra special for all. Bala Vihar and language students presented their annual programs to the delight of parents and teachers. The 2014-15 Session concluded with Bala Vihar graduation ceremony and a grand feast. The quarter came to an end with the announcement of the Grand opening of *Chinmaya Blossoms Preschool*, and a Video *Jñāna Yajña* by Pujya Guruji on *Karma Yoga* in celebration of Pujya Guruji's birthday on June 30.

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## Chinmaya Birth Centenary Celebration-CBCC



Chinmaya Birth Centenary year-long celebration started at CMSD with Chapter 15 Gita Chanting Competition and a 5-day video *Jñāna Yajña* by Pujya Guruji on key attributes of a perfect being "*stithapra jña lakṣaṇa*" leading up to the Grand Chinmaya Jayanti Celebrations on May 8, 2015.





## 99<sup>th</sup> Chinmaya Jayanti Celebrations





## CMSD Mothers' Day Celebrations





## Gita Chanting Competition – May 2, 2015



23 children and  
13 adults  
chanted the  
15<sup>th</sup> chapter of  
the *Gītā*.

The winners of this competition will be participating in the National *Bhagavadgītā* Chanting Competition to be held in CM Chicago on Sept.5-6.

CMSD Participants at the National competition are:

**Advait Choksi**  
**Aniket Chakradeo**  
**Ankita Katarkar**  
**Ketki Chakradeo**  
**Shreya Choksi**  
**Amogh Kaushik**  
**Solana Garcia**

## **Ghar Ghar mein Gurudev; Ghar Ghar mein Jyoti**

That was the *sankalpa* or resolve made by CMSD to celebrate the Birth Centenary year of our Pujya Gurudev! *Guru Paduka puja* will be performed in 108 homes and the *Chinmaya Jyoti* will be lit.



## **Swami Arumuganathaswami of Kauai visits Chinmaya Jyoti**

**Swami Arumuganathaswami**, Editor-in-chief for *Hinduism today* visited CMSD on May 13 along with Sadhaka Jayanatha at the end of their trip to California. He made a presentation to the Bala Vihar teachers on the sixth grade Indian history and Hinduism textbook issue and how parents can become engaged in it.



## **Swami Chidatmananda of CM Andhra Pradesh visits Chinmaya Jyoti**



Lakshmi Ji and sukumar Ji  
Hariom ! Pranams!

I felt so Happy to see the divinely beautiful center manifesting through most sincere and dedicated souls at the feet of PARAMA Pujya Gurudev . What a dream it was many years ago and it manifested so beautifully.

I feel blessed to visit the divine center, so bountiful in its beauty of Nature. What a lovely place you have for the service of GURUDEV . I am so touched by your love and affection and your Seva Bhava unto HIM .

Thank you so much for taking so much of your time to show the entire ashram.

Thankful and Grateful to you

With regards

**Chidatma**



## Hanuman Jayanti: Sundarakāṇḍa pārayana – April 4, 2015

On April 4, 2015, the Hanuman Jayanti celebrations were held. The Hanuman *pūjā* was followed by *Sundarakāṇḍa pārayana* and *Hanumān Cālīsā*. The fourth grade Bala Vihar students also presented the *Hanumān Cālīsā* at the Sunday Assembly.



## Telugu and Tamil New Year Programs – April 5 & 12, 2015

Chinmaya Mission language programs impart children speaking and writing skills of regional languages of India. Regional language classes give children a taste of their mother tongue to become fluent and enable them to have closer interaction with grandparents and relatives, who may not speak English. As students advance, the language will also shed light on the regional life customs and more importantly expose them to a treasure trove of literature.



Telugu language class children presented a play as a part of 2014-15 annual presentations on April 5, 2015. The play is about a Mouse King who wants to get the strongest being as a groom for his daughter and sends his minister, commander and court jester for the search. The three go to seek Sun, who was thought to be the strongest, but the Sun tells them the power of the Cloud, who could cover him and cause the darkness. They go to seek the Cloud, who explains how slight gust of the wind blows him away and directs them to the wind. The Wind describes how powerless

he is in front of a Mountain, who does not budge to his might. The three then go to the Mountain to seek, who tells them how powerful their own kind are, who burrow holes all over the mountain. The Mouse King understands upon hearing that their own kind are the most suitable to marry his daughter. The moral of the play is to seek an equivalent in a relationship or debate. The presentation reminds us of Gurudev's quote to 'blossom where you are planted' and Lord Krishna's teaching of '*Swadharme nidhanam shreyah paradharmo bhayaavahah*' (3.35).

The play was enacted well and shown the language skills of children. The costumes made the presentation colorful. The tint of comedy added in to the play was entertaining. Salutations to the Sun, cloud, wind and mountain were well presented and elevating. The salutations to cloud, wind and mountain were especially composed for this presentation by Telugu poet and writer Sri Badami Jayarama Gupta garu, who is Shashi's father. The Telugu classes of different levels are taught by Hemadri, Shashirekha, Vasanthi, Divesh and Lalitha garu.



The Tamil class students presented the story of *Shabari* followed by the chanting of *Navagraha stotram*.



## Hindi class Programs – April 19, 26, 2015



Hindi class students guided by the sevaks and sevika-s presented a beautiful program with students speaking the language fluently with great ease.

One group of students sang lines from nostalgic old Hindi film songs depicting beautiful sentiments and values.



## **CMSD Annual Bala Vihar Presentations**

It is such a delight to see the Bala Vihar annual programs every year - a culmination of a full year's learnings compiled into very creative presentations. Starting from pre-k all the way to the graduating class, every class presented the concepts they learned so beautifully. This year, grades 1 through 8 were challenged to present their learning in musicals. Grades 9 – 12 presented skits. The program began with Bhajans by Chinmaya Dhvani followed by a presentation by the Tabla class students of Amarnath Puttur.



The Pre-K class shows a little bit of discipline and enthusiasm can go a long way. Most of the kids in this class have little or no exposure to the Hindu culture. The teachers have worked so hard and after their first full year in Bala Vihar, the kids chanted the daily prayers effortlessly. It was such a joy to see their smiling faces, dressed in the most colorful clothes reciting what they have learnt. Our little Chinmaya blossoms in every way!





The Kindergarten class took us all to the land of the Gods and Goddesses, dressed in impeccable costumes as Lord Brahma, Goddess Sarasvati, Lord Vishnu, Goddess Lakshmi, Lord Shiva, Lord Rama and the ever energetic Lord Hanuman. Such a fun way to learn about our deities - enacting the part will imprint these memories forever.

First graders showed us how to recite the alphabets – the Chinmaya way! So much meaning packed into the alphabets and yet so simple for the kids to memorize. Makes you wonder why all schools don't use those definitions. It is never too early or late to remind ourselves, it starts with an aspiration to reach a higher goal and the zeal to walk on the path of Dharma. We can, we must and we will!



Second graders described the beauty and charm of Lord Krishna in the lovely translation of the Madhurashtakam. Beautiful verses in their innocent voices filled the air. Dressed in colorful costumes as the Gopis and little Krishnas it was a sight to see when the entire class joined for a raas.

One of the most creative plays this year was the Ramayana Part I and Part II presented by the third and fourth graders. The kids enacted the Ramayana silently while the music was being played in the background with TV screen displaying some scenes from the story. The kids were fully in character and did an amazing job and took the audience to old world days of watching the Ramalila.







Fifth graders presented stories from the Bhagavatam. Each story was presented beautifully with many props and changing characters. The presentation was interspersed with the Dasavatarastotram.





Sixth graders presented rhymes on the 24 gurus from Avadhuta Gita and presented “Visvam gururmama”.



Seventh graders presented the teachings of *Vibhishana Gita* in a Disney musical. Even the shy ones in class came through in beautiful melody that was truly heartwarming.



The last of the musicals and a very creative one at that was our eight graders presenting the *Mahābhārata* in a Disney musical story theme. The *Mahābhārata* story was depicted using classic songs from Disney movies. The children were completely in character – some were too real. They put so much thought into selecting each song, which fit the story line perfectly. A rare treat for everyone, this musical got the entire audience involved – all the way from pre-K.







Bringing home the values of **'You are what you eat'** were the 9<sup>th</sup> graders in their short skit about a restaurant that goes from making hurried non-vegetarian meals in an unclear kitchen to a wholesome vegetarian restaurant where food is not only prepared with utmost devotion but is served with kindness. The skit reminded us that it is not only the contents of the food but the entire process from keeping the workspace clean, preparing with the right attitude and serving with compassion that transforms an ordinary meal that nurtures the body to a wholesome experience that nourishes the body, mind and soul.



The tenth graders presented on the three *guna*-s or personality traits.

Lastly, our 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders showed us how they can come through with a well put final presentation amidst all the chaos in their lives. Being a Bala Vihar student at that age can be a tough act but they showed us that the values they learned throughout their Bala Vihar days will always stay with them. They might be late to come up with a plan but can beat anyone in execution.





## CMSD Bala Vihar Graduation- 2015

Graduating high school seniors along with their families performed the *Guru Pādukā pūjā* led by Smt. Lakshmi Sukumar. The graduating students received their certificates and a copy of the book “The Science of Sciences”. Each student spoke about their years of study at the Bala Vihar *gurukula* and the teachings they take with them.



After *pūjā* and *ārati*, and receiving the blessings of the Chinmaya Family, they were officially initiated into CHYK- Chinmaya Yuva Kendra to pursue their spiritual practices. The families of the graduating class served lunch to all members of the CMSD family. Yet another year of Bala Vihar came to a grand finale .



## CMSD Recognitions of core Sevaks/Sevikas 2014-2015





## CMSD Awards 2014-2015



The annual CMSD awards ceremony and the graduation of high school senior students was held on June 21 2015. Smt. Lakshmi Sukumar, assisted by other teachers and sevaks, presented the awards for perfect attendance, Chapter 14 and Chapter 15 *Gītā* Chanting competition, Chinmaya *Slokanjali* , BV Quiz awards and to model class students.





## Workshop on “You Are What You Eat”– April 25, 2015

Although food is looked upon as a commodity in today's materialistic world, the workshop “You are what you eat” time depicts a *yuga* where food is meditated upon as God or *Brahman*.

*As the food, so the mind*

*As the mind, so the Faith*

*As the Faith, so the Man*

This sentiment was beautifully expressed by Lakshmi as she explained how our attitude towards food should be. Neither speak ill of food nor despise food, although food must be collected for distribution among the needy.

The relation between the three qualities of food and three processes of creation, substance and creative destruction was an interesting comparison and an allusion to the three main Gods of Hindus. *Sattvic* food nourishes the mind, *Rajasic* food sustains the *prana*-s and gives nutrients to the body, and *Tamasic* food is discarded as waste product to keep the body healthy.

The contemporary complication in eating food does not have to be so. Good eating habits can be developed by improving food quality, controlling food quantity, and regulating the timing of food consumption. Lastly, one should dine with a Divine attitude of gratitude.



After the presentation, our youth attendees followed Swaroopa auntie to the ashram garden to pick fresh greens like kale, chard and cilantro from our own backyard. They washed and cut these organically grown greens to prepare the meal.

The plate was a gastronomic delight for our mind and senses as well. We had a *Sattvic* colorful menu consisting of organic white and brown rice with organic ghee, *dal*, carrot & radish salad, kale and chard curry, plain ashram made yogurt and *badam kheer*.





## CMSD in the community



The Diamond Education Enhancement Program (DEEP) is an organization in Southeastern San Diego that works on bridging some of the critical gaps in the STEM pipeline for the kids in that neighborhood. There are six elementary schools in that area. DEEP's "Summer Readers/Future Leaders" summer literacy program will take place in two segments. The first segment, arranged for 90 rising third graders from Chollas Mead, will take place from June 22-July 24. The DATES for the second segment are: July 27-August 14th. There will be two schools participating in the second session (~180 kids).

Groundwork San Diego is the non-profit that manages the Earthlab. They agreed to give our Yuva Sevaks an Internship certificate if they participate in this summer program as teaching assistants. They will also be part of a larger effort from UCSD called the Community Stations BLUM Initiative that will have five college students as Interns at the Earthlab. They will receive training at the beginning of the Internship on how to interact with the kids, how to document the activities (video and other means) and how to evaluate their learning outcomes. **Prof. Bud Mehan, Camille Campion (Post Doc) and Srinivas Sukumar, Vice President** - Groundwork San Diego, will be working with all the interns throughout session 1 and 2.

Tuheen Manika, Ashwath Radhachandran, Sreevidhya Koya and Krishna Chandrabhatta have volunteered for the first session and the second session volunteers are Mihir Pandya, Ajay Manickam and Aditya Varrier.



"My time volunteering at the earth lab has been amazing. Going into the program, I wasn't exactly sure what to expect, but all I can say is that I was able to do and learn so much more than I ever would have imagined. The best part about working with the children is seeing their reactions to what you teach them and how something seemingly simple can have a huge impact on them by really getting them interested in science. Besides teaching the children, I have learned so many new things about our local environment, and I even got the chance to harvest farm-grown beans and help make a wooden bench. Overall, volunteering at the earth lab has been a great experience and I highly recommend it for

anyone interested." - **Tuheen Manika**

"Earthlab is not just a place for learning but also a place to have fun. As interns we get to teach the kids all the hands on activity that they are going to do. I personally find this the best part of the day because the kids are always so eager to learn, and have fun. They are always listening carefully and respectfully. And at the end of the day I always look forward to getting the bye hug! After the kids leave, we get to work around the Earthlab. Sometimes we also get fresh vegetables from the on-site farm. Being at the Earthlab is a very different and fun experience."

– **Sree Vidhya Koya**





“This summer I had the opportunity to spend time volunteering/interning at the San Diego Earthlab. The Earthlab is a 4-acre preserve and learning center in the Chollas Creek area. The main goal during the Earthlab internship was to foster an interest in science among elementary school students living in an underprivileged area. Other Chinmaya high schoolers and I helped the Earthlab teachers instruct the students based on an approved and informative curriculum. Along with the teachers and college interns, we led science-based activities and directed short hikes throughout the preserve. It was great to see the children react to the wildlife of the Earthlab and appreciate their newfound

interest in science. In addition to working with the students, we assisted in the overall maintenance of the Earthlab area by watering plants and building benches. The knowledge I have gained through this volunteering internship has been invaluable. I would strongly recommend other Chinmaya high schoolers to take advantage of this opportunity. The combination of the outdoor setting, the teaching environment and the opportunity to work with children has truly led to a memorable experience.” - **Ashwath Radhachandran**

## **Pujya Guruji's 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday**



Pujya Guruji was in CMLA on June 30 2015, where grand celebrations were held. Members of CMSD visited CM Bakersfield and CMLA to meet and pay respects to Pujya Guruji on his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.



Here at CMSD, members came together to celebrate the birthday of beloved Pujya Guruji with Chinmaya *Nāmāmṛtastotram* followed by *bhajans* by Chinmaya Dhvani, who were celebrating their 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary, *ārati* and *prasādam*.

A Video *Gītā Jñāna Yajña* by Pujya Guruji on *Karma Yoga* was held throughout the week. Thank you Guruji for teaching us the way to the Lord!



## Diorama by Grade 2 BV students on *Kṛṣṇalīlā*





## Chinmaya Blossoms Preschool at *Chinmaya Jyoti*



Chinmaya Mission San Diego was licensed by the State of California and the City of Poway on June 16, 2015 to run a preschool for 2.5-5 years old, at the beautiful property in Poway. This is the first state-licensed preschool to open in the USA under the auspices of Chinmaya Mission.

With the blessings of Pujya Gurudev and Pujya Guruji, an open house was conducted on June 20, 2015 by the Directors- Shalini Manika and Sangita Varrier.

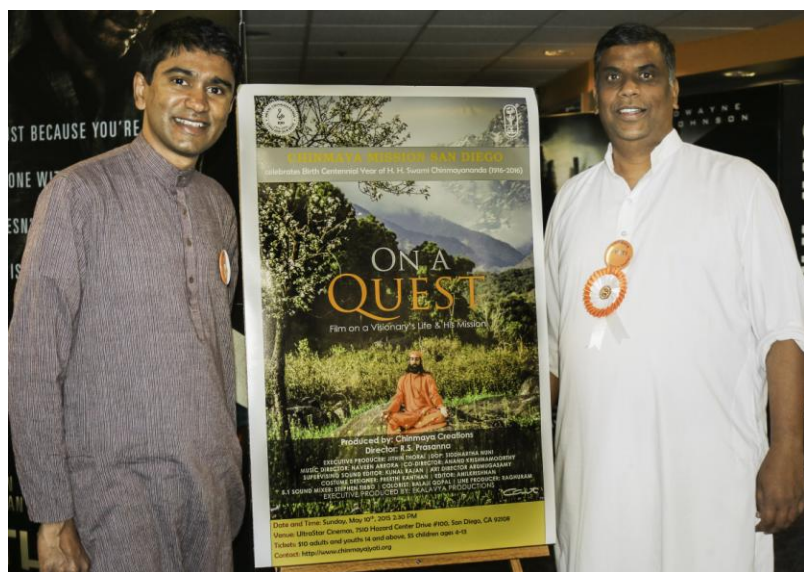
The motto and philosophy of the preschool were explained, the curriculum was discussed and teaching methods were demonstrated. Parents were also able to view a model classroom.

The Preschool will open on August 20, 2015.





## “On a Quest”- a biopic film on the life of Pujya Gurudev



CMSD-CBCC Co-ordinator **Nagesh Nookala** along with one of the core sevaks **Prem Venkatesan** is ready to welcome members and guests at the theater for the premiere of the biopic film “On a Quest” on May 10, 2015.



CMSD CHYK **Dheeraj Navani** waits at the bookstall outside the theater.

### Comments from viewers



“... As a Christian pastor, I find that the very depth of the message he sought and found in his life are the very same journey that I ‘m on and he will become an ally on that journey and help me become a better christian. I feel grateful for today, feel blessed for today.”

-**Rev. Glen Larsen of Community Church of Poway**



Dear Lakshmi and Srinivas,

I want to thank you so much for the kind invitation you extended to Abigail and me yesterday to view the movie "On A Quest." We have known you since 2005 and this very well done movie brought me closer to both understanding the goals of Vedanta and the Chinmaya Mission as well as knowing the founder of your movement, Swami Chinmayananda. The movie itself was a very well produced product both visually and historically. The film moved smoothly from one beautiful scene to the next and the actors made Swami Chinmayananda's life come alive. By the end of the film I felt that I understood more fully the foundations of the Hindu religion and its culture, the Swami himself, and I could relate to his search for meaning, his frustrations, and his many accomplishments. This is a beautiful film which spans religion and should be viewed by people of all religious persuasions. Again, thank you for giving us this opportunity.

Blessings,  
**Rev. Steve Albert**



"In the movie **On a Quest**, I learned a lot about and from Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda. I learned to never give up and to always try my best. I also learned to try answering the questions you have instead of not thinking and asking random questions.

Swami Chinmayananda Saraswati was a very nice man with knowledge that almost nobody knew. Learning with Swami Tapovanam was pretty tough but Gurudev worked with a teaching said only once.

Gurudev taught me that even with a giant illness, you should never give up. Swami Chinmayananda had an immense sense of humor and had good jokes that went with his yajnas. He makes me think that whenever there is trouble I should go fix it right away.

The movie was great and my favorite part was when he took blessings from Swami Tapovanam to give lectures on the Bhagavad Gita, and our Hindu culture."

**-Ankita Katarkar (Grade 2 Bala Vihar student)**

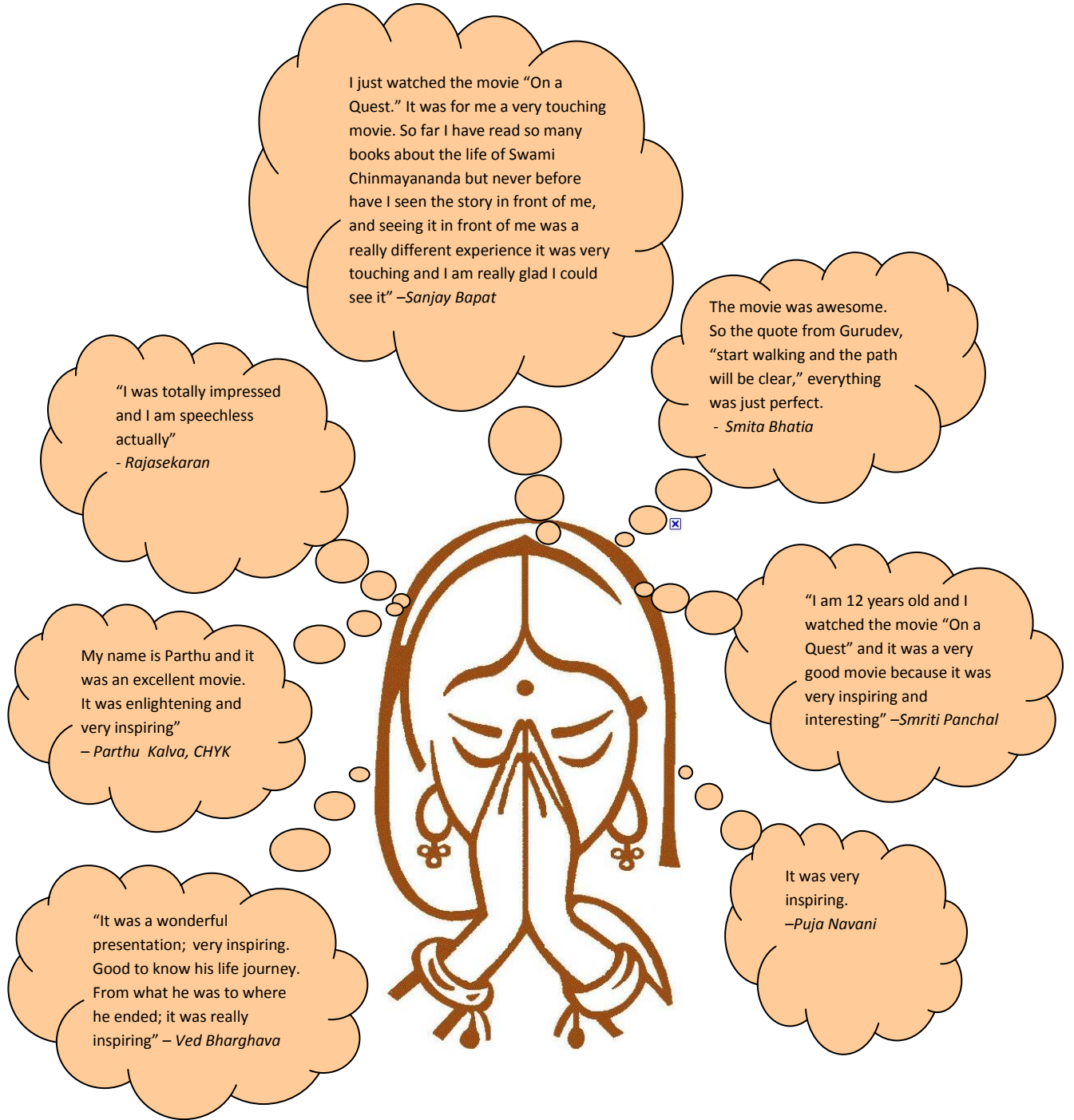


....I got to see what I have learned about Gurudev come to life right in front of my eye. I have learned a lot about Gurudev, this movie has given me a more clear vision about what our Gurudev's life. I found it amazing that we got to learn how he made a mission that grew so big that now we have missions at every corner of the world. I got to see how a man went from a journalist to a freedom fighter to a great saint who is now a very well known saint."

**-Zil Arya (Grade 5 Bala Vihar student)**



CMSD members express their feeling as they come out of the theater:



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

**-Swami Tejomayananda**

