



ஓம் முருகா

NEW ZEALAND THIRUMURUGAN TEMPLE SOCIETY INCORPORATED

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – 30 SEPTEMBER 2012

Dear Members,

திருமுருகன் திருக்கோவில் சங்கத்தின் வருடாந்தக் கூட்டத்திற்கு வருகை தந்திருக்கும் உங்கள் அனைவருக்கும் திருமுருகன் திருப்பணிச் சபையின் சார்பில் முதற்கண் எனது அன்பான, தாழ்மையான வணக்கத்தைத் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன். வருடாந்தக் கூட்டம் என்பது ஒரு ஸ்தாபனத்தின் மிக முக்கியமான நிகழ்ச்சிகளில் ஒன்றாகும். கோவில் சங்கத்தின் நடவடிக்கைகளைப் பற்றி அறிந்து பரிமாறவும், எதிர்காலத் திட்டங்களையும், வளர்ச்சிகளையும் பற்றிக் கலந்து ஆலோசிப்பதற்கும் இது ஒரு அறிய சந்தர்பத்தை தருகிறது. நடக்கவிருக்கும் கூட்டத்தில் முழுமையாகப் பங்கெடுத்து, கோவில் திருப்பணிச் சபையிற்கு உதவுமாறு தாழ்மையாகக் கேட்டுக்கொண்டு உங்களை மிக அன்புடன் வரவேற்கின்றேன். இப்போது உங்கள் அனுமதியுடன் எனது உரையை ஆங்கிலத்தில் தொடர்கிறேன்.

Good morning and a very warm welcome to all of you. We thank you sincerely for your presence here today and look forward to your input and participation at this important meeting. With the blessings of the Almighty, it gives me immense pleasure to present the President's report for the last 12 months.

The temple society was officially formed in February 2000 when a few of us had the opportunity to configure our constitution and formally complete the registration. That was a milestone year for the temple. Over the last 12 years, there have been numerous milestone moments in our short history. The purchase of the current temple building in June 2001 followed by Kumbhabhishekam in April 2002 were two of the major milestones however there have been several other significant events, far too many to mention over the years. Today, we are particularly delighted to report that with the blessings of the Almighty, our Lord Murugan, we have now purchased (pending settlement) a property for what we believe is the Society's next and final phase in our journey towards establishing a traditional temple – a goal that we set out to achieve right from the start. The purchase of property at 145 Church Street, Otahuhu was confirmed just two days ago, following a thorough and comprehensive scoping, analysis, negotiations and due diligence investigations over a period of three months. Full details in respect of this will be presented for discussions later in the meeting.

Apart from conducting all regular activities with on-going enhancements, we have primarily focused on the following identified priorities over the last twelve months:

- Completing a comprehensive scoping exercise of the Temple's next phase, with a view to critically analyse our current position, specific requirements, constraints, options and feasibilities.
- Pursuing options available within the framework of the scoping project for the next phase.
- Integration of youth and forming of a youth forum / circle
- Developing and launching a new web-site
- Synchronising the temple festival times to New Zealand time zones (where practical) with the help of appropriate experts
- Enhance the fundamental knowledge of Hinduism through weekly "Hindu Traditions email messages and reading of same on Fridays.
- Improving car parking facilities for patrons, particularly during business hours.
- Building enhancements and maintenance

Religious Festivals

With the blessings of the Almighty, strong devotion and dedication of the priests and remarkable support of devotees, all festivals have been conducted to the usual high standard. All major festivals including Skanda Shasti, Sooran Por, Navarathri, New Year (Jan 1st), Thai Poosam, Maha Shivarathri, Tamil New Year, Sangabhishekam, Thirukkalyanam, Vaikasi Visakam, Aadi Pooram, Varaluxmi Thiruvillakku Pooja, Vinayakar Chathurthi & Thiruvempavai were all celebrated well in accordance with the highest traditions. Participation of children and youth particularly on Fridays, Guru Poojas and Navarathri enhanced the events greatly.

There is strong commitment from all involved to manage pooja times without compromising the quality of service. Sponsorship of special poojas and festivals are generally fully taken however we do get periodic gaps in sponsoring poojas on Fridays. We are committed to providing new sponsorship opportunities in an open and transparent manner so that all devotees get equal opportunity to be part of it.

Educational & Welfare

- Educational and Pannisai classes held every Sunday, are continuing well with fluctuating numbers. These classes incorporate Hinduism as well as value based practical teaching.
- The weekly radio broadcast is used as a medium for educational purposes as well as updating the community on temple activities. This broadcast has a good level of regular audience.
- Weekly "Hindu Traditions" messages are sent every Friday morning and the message is read at the temple in the evenings on the same day. The value of this has generated strong positive feedback.
- Good researched educational books and "Saiva Neethi" are published periodically and well received by the community.
- The weekly library system is now well established and used regularly. Efforts are continuously made to increase the number of books in the library, particularly books that teach more about the traditions and meanings of Hindu Festivals.
- We have a sound relationship with other societies and organisations. We are part of the Hindu Organisations, Temples and Associations (HOTA) and represented well by three committee members.

Youth

We have recognised for sometime that our Youth is our future and identified that we should take steps to integrate them into the temple's fold, provide leadership opportunities and have a succession plan for future. The consequences of not taking this seriously are significant, including leaving our next generation without their identity and without a feeling of cultural and religious belonging, as has been demonstrated within many other communities. This is a reality facing all migrant community around the world and not just unique to us.

During the last twelve months, we made considerable progress in this area culminating in the formation of NZ Thirumurugan Temple Youth Circle. The knowledge that the youth circle's own communication processes including a dedicated face book page attracted a large number of youth, demonstrated to us that and that they are all proud and want to be part of the Thirumurugan Temple Youth Circle. We entrusted the Youth with the responsibility of managing the entire Waitangi Family Sports Day and also staging their own play at Muthucharam – both for the first time. The feedback received from the community proved that both of them have been outstanding successes. While it was a delight to see them receive all the accolades, it also highlighted to us the enormous leadership potential that is prevalent right across our youth. We have also seen an increase in participation of youth in many temple activities and that indicates our future is in safe hands. However, I must stress that we have only laid the foundation and are some way from where we want to be. It is my sincere hope that future committees would give this the highest priority it deserves and advance the progress.

Events & Projects

The society arranged a number of successful events/projects during the year to raise funds, enhance cultural experience and to increase the participation of the youth. These include:

- Food parcel fund raising projects (4)
- Waitangi Family Sports Day
- Pannum Bharathamum - cultural concert
- Muthuchcharam - cultural concert

All these events take place with a huge level of personal commitment, sacrifice, support and goodwill from the community and we are very grateful for it. Overall, these events helped to cover nearly 20.0% of the Society's operating expenses for last year.

Membership

Our legal status is an incorporated society and therefore membership of the society is fundamental. Our thanks go to everyone for renewing your membership. Overall, our membership as at 30 June 12 was Ordinary Members 164, Life Members 40 and Trustees 17. We record with much sadness the passing away of our friend and life member, Mr Kulasingam Indrakumar.

Financial

The society's approach to financial management is governed by the guiding principles of minimising financial risks, obtaining maximum value for money for the members and that all financial undertakings must enhance the core purposes of the society. Financial systems and practices that ensure discipline and integrity are well entrenched. The wonderful support of the community and application of these principles and disciplines have enabled the society to strengthen its net equity from \$78k in June 2000 to \$890k in June 2012, an average increase of \$68k per annum over the last 12 years. This approach has positioned the society well for the Temple's next phase, as highlighted earlier.

Communication – Web Site

The society places strong importance to timely, accurate communication. Our channels of communication include regular emails, weekly radio broadcasts, flyers at the temple and our web site. We had a revamp of our web site to provide more information and this was launched at Muthucharam on 28th July. We take the opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of one of our youth members, Aravinthan Krishnaraj in developing the new web site. We also acknowledge the contribution of Mr Shashikumar who developed our initial web site, maintained it for the last twelve years and sponsored all associated costs.

Building Maintenance

The society is committed to keeping the temple building accessible, comfortable, safe and clean. As such, costs of regular maintenance and minor projects of capital nature are particularly high. Earlier this year we replaced the entire ceiling tiles as the old tiles were badly worn and untidy. We acknowledge with gratitude the grant of \$5,000 received from the Dragon Community Trust towards the ceiling tile project. We are also pleased to advise that we have continued our arrangement to lease nine extra car parks making it more convenient for patrons, particularly during business hours. With the impending relocation of temple, we have now put on hold any major development work.

Flooding

The temple had a flooding incident on the night of 4th February 12, due to accidentally leaving a tap on while there was no water supply around the area due to repair work by the council. The incident caused extensive damage to floor covering, skirting and some parts of the wall. This also included extensive damage to the neighbours (Comag Industries) stock which resulted in multiple insurance claims. The tremendous response to the incident led by Mr Senthivijeyan showed how we can come together as a team when these types of situations arise. Following protracted processes and discussions, the total claims of \$17,633.82 were settled by insurance companies with the Society incurring the excess of \$1,750.00.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I wish to take the opportunity to acknowledge the management committee and the community overall, for the wonderful support and invaluable contribution over the last 12 months. I have always maintained that having the opportunity to serve our community in the name of God is an enormous privilege and calls for humility, dignity, discipline, sincerity, and most importantly respect for each other. With our Lord Murugan's grace I am humbled to experience these characteristics displayed at most times. Having led the team for some time and having given careful consideration, I have decided not to seek nomination as President in the new term and take the opportunity to wish my successor every success as we move forward. While we work towards the goal of establishing a traditional temple with energy, enthusiasm and excitement, I sincerely hope that we always retain the perspective that the temple is about people, their transformation on the spiritual path, integration of youth and safe guarding the values of our remarkable religion that has stood the test of times for over thousands of years. There is an African saying *"If you want to walk quick, walk alone"*, *"If you want to walk far, walk together"*. I certainly subscribe to the latter and collectively we have a long way to go so let us walk forward together.

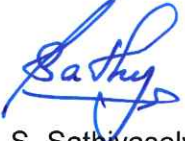
Acknowledgements

With the Grace of the omnipresent and the steadfast commitment of the community we have come a long way from where we started in 2000. It is our foremost duty to acknowledge and place on record the enormous contribution of the community that has been an integral part of our growth. While it is almost impossible to single out individuals we humbly wish to express our gratitude to the following:

- Our Patron Mr P Murugasu for his valuable advice, encouragement and guidance at all times.
- The Board of Trustees for their vision and direction.
- Our Priests Brahmashri Raja Rajeswara Kurukkal and Mayuranatha Kurukkal for their commitment to excellence in conducting the poojas at the highest standard.
- The members for renewing their membership annually and supporting the temple society.
- Our Honorary Auditor Mr S Navaneethan for his auditing services and recommendations.
- The regular financial donors without whose support we will not be able to meet our on going costs and build towards the future.
- The members who demonstrate great commitment by taking the regular Hinduism classes and Pannisai Classes.
- Members of the community who regularly volunteer their time to look after the reception area and also help out with the pooja proceedings.
- Members who volunteer their time to look after the weekly library system.
- The volunteer/s taking responsibility for on going maintenance, regular cleaning after poojas, and "siramathanam" days.
- The volunteers who make garlands for the temple week after week.
- The volunteers who support our food parcel and other fund raising activities with order taking, purchasing, donations, purchasing of ingredients, cooking, packing, delivering and cleaning.
- The co-ordinators, teachers, students, parents, food donors, advertisers, decoration experts, car park helpers and audience at our public events such as "Waitangi Family Sports Day", "Pannum Bharatham", "Science Show" and "Muthuchcharam".
- Those members who provide material for our weekly radio programme and help to present them.
- The music teachers, students and parents for their contribution, particularly every Friday, at "Guru" Poojas and "Navarathri" festivals.
- Those members, in particular the youth who take an active part in helping at major festivals.
- Those members who help us with maintaining our web site, email communication, and community newspaper pick up and distribution.
- Devotees for regularly sewing and preparing the Deity Clothes
- The community as a whole for the remarkable, unwavering, continuous support at all times.

The list is certainly not exhaustive. We the management committee are truly humbled by all your generosity and support and would like to record our sincere appreciation to each and everyone who has been part of the on going growth of the Society. We are truly grateful to God for giving us this opportunity to serve our wonderful community to the best of our abilities.

May our Lord Murugan's blessing be with everyone!



S. Sathiyaselvan
President

30 Sept 12