

NEW ZEALAND THIRUMURUGAN TEMPLE SOCIETY INCORPORATED

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2006

Dear Members,

Good afternoon, a very warm welcome to all of you. We very much appreciate your kind presence this afternoon and thank you for that. With absolute surrender to our beloved Lord Muruga, it gives me great pleasure to present the President's report for the last 12 months.

Thirumurugan Temple is now an integral part of our community. Regular visits to the temple particularly on auspicious days have become the norm for most of us. At the last annual general meeting our Chief Priest highlighted with some examples personal experiences of devotees from the might of Thirumurugan dwelling in our Temple. Let us hope and pray that His blessings are showered on all devotees.

The visit by Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami and the Inner search pilgrims from the Kauai Aadheenam earlier this year is undoubtedly one of the highlights of the last 12 months. We would like to acknowledge and thank members and well wishers who volunteered a tremendous amount of support to ensure that their visit was very special.

Patronage of the temple is continuing to grow, particularly during week days and major festivals. Our primary focus during the last 12 months has been:

- On going improvement to the temple's core activities – Festivals & Poojas
- Integration of Children and Youth on temple programmes.
- Improving Communication
- Identifying solution to support Priest Services
- Financial Stability

Festivals & Poojas

Our Chief Priest "Vethaaha Mamani" Brahmashri Rajeswara Kurukkal" with invaluable support of his family, "Brahmashri Venkatarama Sharma" and "Shri Ganesha Sharma" continued to ensure that all poojas and festivals were held to the highest standard. Elaborate decorations and well co-ordinated devotional singing have enhanced major festivals. The participation of "Thirumurai Pannisai" students on Fridays provided variety and vibration.

Integration of Children and Youth on temple activities

We have a particular focus to increase the participation of children and youth in activities organised by the temple. The organising committee responsible for looking after the Academy of Fine Arts (London) Public Examination in Thirumurai Pannisai, have worked hard to ensure good systems and processes are in place. Number of students sitting the exams is on the rise

demonstrating great commitment from both parents and children. We have had strong participation of children in the two “Muthucharam” and “Pannum Parathamum” held during the last 12 months. Participation in the “Thevara” classes fluctuate a bit, however it is not seen as negative, given that most of the children are continuing to learn the same as part of their “pannisai” curriculum. The lead shown by our youth to sponsor “Thaipposam” is another highlight that gave us great encouragement. We have had to temporarily discontinue the Hinduism classes mainly due to non availability of an appropriate teacher. We appeal to you to come forward and get involved in this worthwhile programme which we would love to recommence.

Improving Communication

We believe our communication with members and the wider community has improved with the introduction of email. Temple events and activities are also communicated through weekly radio broadcasts, announcements at the temple, web site and flyers distribution. A periodic newsletter with information on upcoming festivals / events and other activities of interest is also published. We will strive to ensure there is on going enhancement of our communication processes.

Identifying solution to support Priest Services

We have been exploring for quite some time permanent support and relief cover to our Chief Priest and priest services in general. We are conscious of the demand on our Priests particularly during major festivals. We are hopeful of a solution in the near future.

Financial Stability

The Society places strong emphasis on responsible financial management, integrity and transparency. A code of financial policies and procedures is in place to ensure key internal controls are adhered to. An Internal Auditor, independent of the finance committee reviews all transactions and monthly accounts are presented at Management meetings. The financial results are steady however forward projections indicate our income streams would need to be improved to absorb potential costs.

Membership

I wish to take this opportunity to remind all members and devotees that the temple’s legal status is incorporated society. Therefore, membership of the community is central and fundamental to its status. We kindly request devotees to formalise your membership by completing the membership form and paying the annual subscriptions.

Management Committee

We wish to acknowledge the contribution of two management committee members who have indicated their unavailability for nomination again.

Mr Muraliharan has been the joint secretary for the last two years. He also had the role of internal auditor with particular responsibility to scrutinise all payments. Our sincere thanks to Murali for his contribution and no doubt he will be a source of support as an active member.

Mr Sivapathasuntharam has been part of our management committee since our inception. Siva has held the position of Treasurer for the last 5-6 years. Siva's involvement with the temple went well beyond his role of treasurer. A stickler for procedures, rules and regulations, Siva facilitated the implementation of financial controls and discipline. We wish to record our sincere appreciation of Siva's tremendous contribution to the growth of the temple. Siva will no doubt continue to support the temple activities as an active member.

Acknowledgements

- The Society is blessed to have as our Chief Priest, "Vethaaha Mamani" Brahmashri Rajeswara Kurukkal", someone with profound knowledge of Hindu rites and traditions conducting his duties at the highest standard.
- The invaluable contribution of Brahmashri Venkatarama Sharma and Shri Ganesh Sharma is also appreciated very much.
- We are grateful to our patron Mr P Murugasu for his valuable advice and guidance at all times.
- The Management Committee would like to acknowledge the support and direction of the Board of Trustees.
- The regular donations / financial contribution made by all devotees are absolutely vital and therefore deserve our sincere acknowledgement.
- We wish to acknowledge the tremendous support of Music teachers, Thevara teachers, Hinduism teachers and the parents who support these important programmes.
- There have been also many in the community who have supported the Society by physical contributions, providing sponsorship, providing cultural events etc. We wish to sincerely acknowledge all their support.
- Finally, the remarkable, unwavering, continuous support of the whole community including everyone mentioned above has been tremendous and deserves a special mention.

The success of an organization like ours is entirely dependent on its volunteers. Enormous amount of financial, physical and moral support has been given at every step along the way by many people.

We the members of the management committee are humbled by all your 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 the community to the best of our abilities.

May our Lord Muruga's blessing be with everyone

T. Varnakulasingham
PRESIDENT

