

NEW ZEALAND THIRUMURUGAN TEMPLE SOCIETY INCORPORATED

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – 29 SEPTEMBER 2007

Dear Members,

Good afternoon, a very warm welcome to all of you. Thank you for taking the time to be present here this afternoon - your presence is very much valued and appreciated. With absolute surrender to the Almighty, it gives me great pleasure to present the President's report for the last 12 months.

Thirumurugan Temple is now well entrenched in our community. Regular visits to the temple particularly on Fridays and all auspicious days have become a way of life for many of us. Patronage of the temple is continuing to grow, particularly during week days and major festivals. While spiritual services and practices remain the primary activity of the Society, we are now involved in many diverse activities in accordance with our objectives. We continue to hear some wonderful personal experiences of devotees from the might of Thirumurugan dwelling in our Temple. Let us hope and pray that His blessings are showered on everyone.

A workshop was held late last year to identify our primary focus for the 12 months and to assign responsibilities to the various working committees. The following is a summary of them:

- Extension of opening hours and facilitation of Priest Services to the Community
- Enhancement (on going) to Festivals & Poojas
- Greater integration of Children and Youth on temple programmes.
- Strengthening our data bases to facilitate improved Communication
- Completing high priority building maintenance work
- Increasing fund raising opportunities to meet additional operating costs

We have given below a brief account of our progress in respect of these identified priorities:

Extension of Opening Hours and Facilitation of Priest Services to the Community

The engagement of a second Priest was a major milestone for the Temple. We welcomed Brahmashri Mayuranatha Kurukkal in October last year after having to deal with various challenges with his application processes. The appointment has enabled us to offer enhancements to our services including longer opening hours & Priest services to the community from the beginning of this year.

Festivals & Poojas

Our Chief Priest “Vethaaha Mamani” Brahmashri Rajeswara Kurukkal” with invaluable support from Brahmashri Mayuranatha Kurukkal and other Priests, continued to ensure that all poojas and festivals were held to the highest standard. During the year, a number of additional special poojas were held as part of our commitment to extend this service to the wider community. Elaborate decorations and well co-ordinated devotional singing have enhanced major festivals. The continued participation of “Thirumurai Pannisai” students on Fridays provided variety and vibration.

Integration of Children and Youth

We have a strong focus to increase the participation of children and youth in activities organised by the Society. Thirumurai Pannisai and Hinduism classes are held every Sunday with good attendance. A well structured arrangement is in place for the involvement of children at Friday devotional singing. We have had strong participation of young people in “Pannum Parathamum” and “Muthucharam” held this year. It is planned to involve children in presenting our weekly radio programme in the near future. Waitangi Day celebrations with the theme of a “family sports day” took place with wide participation by children, youth and their families. We plan to commemorate the treaty signing with additional activities next year.

Communication

During the year, a vast amount of time and energy was put in, to improve our administrative systems particularly in respect of membership data base, email groups and inventory record keeping to name a few. This has enabled us to improve our communication with the members and the wider community on a regular basis. 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. Communication will always be a priority for us so we will strive to ensure there is on going enhancement of our processes.

Building Maintenance Work

Maintenance requirements of the temple building are particularly high, given the growing patronage and the type of activities conducted with Hindu rituals. Therefore, an effective preventive maintenance programme is important to ensure that the building is safe, comfortable and that we do not incur major cost of repairs in the future. During the last twelve months, a number of maintenance works were completed including refurbish of the base of the “Moolasthanam”, painting of walls, laundry facilities etc.

High priority work identified but still to be done include installing effective smoke exhaust systems, installing efficient drainage facilities, plumbing from the Shrines to avoid the use of buckets, professional cleaning of the ceiling & carpet, building suitable storage/ tap facilities behind the Amman Altar, upgrading our sound systems, improving the appearance of the frontage, improving the reception area and refurbishing the wash room upstairs. We have obtained quotations to complete most of these projects but due to the costs involved, we can only address them one by one. Members and well wishers are welcome to support one or more of these projects by sponsoring them.

Financial

The engagement of the second Priest and the general increase in operating costs mean we need to constantly look at ways of increasing our income streams. A number of fund raising activities take place to support this. Member participation at these activities is very gratifying. Suggestions for additional opportunities to improve fund raising are always most welcome. 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 recommendations are implemented.

Priest Services

We place considerable value and importance to the Priest Services provided to all Temple Patrons. The Society is blessed to have as our Chief Priest, “Vethaaha Mamani” Brahmashri Raja Rajeswara Kurukkal”, someone with profound knowledge of Hindu rites and traditions conducting his duties at the highest standard. We are also truly fortunate to have some one in the calibre of Brahmashri Mayuranatha Kurukkal with us. The invaluable contribution of Brahmashri Venkatarama Sharma and other Priests who are ever willing to help us when there is a need is also appreciated very much. The Priests are always willing to provide a service to meet your individual specific requirement. Please do discuss with them or the temple representatives.

Membership

I wish to take this opportunity to remind all members and devotees that the temple’s legal status is an 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 our Treasurer Mr Kanasha who has temporarily stood down from his role to take up an overseas employment. Mr Kanasha has been part of the management committee since our inception and has been one of the true back bones of our Society over the years. He goes about doing his work in his own quiet but very efficient and accurate manner. We wish to record our sincere appreciation of Mr Kanasha and his family’s tremendous contribution to the growth of the temple. We have decided not to replace his position until confirmation of his future plans is known.

Acknowledgements

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. While it is almost impossible to single out individuals, please do bear with us as we 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.
- The members for renewing their membership annually and supporting the management.

- Our Honorary Auditor Mr S Ravichelvan for his auditing services and recommendations.
- The regular financial donors without whose support we will not be able to meet our on going costs.
- The members who demonstrate great commitment by taking the regular Hinduism classes and Pannisai Classes.
- Those members of the community who regularly volunteer their time to look after the reception area and also help out with the pooja proceedings
- The volunteers who help out with regular cleaning after poojas, general on going maintenance, “monthly working bee” and car parks.
- The volunteers who make garlands for the Temple week after week.
- The volunteers who support our food parcel 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 annual cultural programmes “Pannum Parathamum” and “Muthucharam”.
- Those members who provide material for our weekly radio programme and help to present them.
- The music teachers, students and parents for their contribution to Friday devotional singing.
- Those members, particularly the youth for the help with prasatham packing and distribution at regular and major festivals.
- Those medical professionals who help out with our “health awareness” programmes.
- Those members who help us with maintaining our web site, email communication, and community newspaper pick up and distribution.
- The community as a whole for the remarkable, unwavering, continuous support at all times.

The list goes on and on and is certainly not exhaustive. We the members of 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 the community to the best of our abilities.

May our Lord Muruga’s blessing be with everyone.

T. Varnakulasingham
PRESIDENT