

NEW ZEALAND THIRUMURUGAN TEMPLE SOCIETY INCORPORATED

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - 26 SEPTEMBER 2010

Dear Members,

Good morning and a very warm welcome to all of you. Thank you very much for giving up your precious Sunday morning to be here with us. We very much appreciate your valuable input and participation at this important meeting.

It is with great pleasure that I present the President's report for the last 12 months - with absolute surrender and dedication to the Almighty. It is fair to say the last twelve months could be described as a period of regrouping and refocusing for the majority of the Thirumurugan community, following the turn of events in Sri Lanka. The temple has provided a fitting environment for the community to get through the challenges with prayers and faith. The temple was also able to revert back to having some events that we cancelled last year.

Apart from regular temple activities the management committee focused on a number of priorities identified at our planning sessions and/or at the AGM last year. The following are some of them and their progress are outlined later on in the report.

- Extending the opening hours further.
- Additional "special poojas" in the Temple calendar
- Tamil to English translation of key messages at all major festivals to make the events understandable to children and non-Tamils.
- Efficient time management and communication of pooja times
- Reviewing and updating of membership database
- Representation of youth in temple activities including leadership opportunities
- Encouraging wider participation in devotional singing.

The following details our progress with on going activities and other priorities identified during the last 12 months:

Religious and Cultural

With the blessings of the Almighty, dedication of the priests and remarkable support of devotees, all festivals have been conducted to a very high standard, which has become somewhat of a benchmark for Thirumurugan Temple. 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 celebrated well with notable improvements and significant increase in attendance. Participation of children and youth particularly at the "Nayanar" (4) Guru Poojas and Navarathri was very pleasing to note. We were pleased to have "Panjamirtha Abhishekam" once again with Vaikasi Visakam. The manner in which Thirukkalyanam was celebrated in April was a major milestone in our short history and brought back a lot of memory for many of us.

In response to members and devotees, a number of additional festivals were included in the Temple calendar this year. The calendar itself was a major improvement both in terms of quality and information. In order to perform "Santhana Kaappu abishekam", "Eluntharuli Murugan" was also installed earlier in the year.

There is greater commitment to start and finish poojas within planned 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.

Educational & Welfare

- Educational classes held every Sunday are progressing well. These classes incorporate Hinduism as well as value based practical teaching.
- Hinduism classes held on Sundays are also going well with fluctuating numbers.
- The weekly radio broadcast is used as a medium for educational purposes as well updating the community on temple activities. This broadcast has a broad level of regular audience.
- A number of well researched educational books and "Saiva Neethi" are published 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. We are also exploring the options of bringing in more multi-media resources to make them more appealing to the young people.
- "Waitangi Family Sports Day" was held with very good turnout.
- A variety show with strong focus on science and mathematics was held in April. A good mix of youth, adults and seniors with vast knowledge and experience made this a successful educational and fund raising event.
- Involving the children and youth in temple activities and creating a pathway for leadership is a priority for us. Their involvement presently include weekly devotional singing, weekly classes, speeches at the temple and in the radio, writing in temple publications, awards of scholarship to final year high school students, joint sponsorship of festivals by youth (Thaippoosam), sports days and participation in events such as Pannum Parathamum, Muthuchcharam and variety show. We are presently exploring further ideas and thoughts on building this further.
- We have a sound relationship with other societies and organisations. We have become part of the Hindu Council of Temple Associations (HOTA) and represented regularly by three committee members.

Membership

Our legal status is an incorporated society and therefore membership of the society is fundamental. A huge effort was made during the year to update the membership database, particularly in the area of determining the membership status of regular contributors. As a result of the exercise I am very pleased to report that the total number of life members has increased by 20 during the year. Overall, our membership as at 30 June 10 was 163 Ordinary Members, 44 Life Members and 17 Trustees.

Financial

Financial systems and practices that ensure discipline and integrity are well entrenched. Apart from regular temple activities fund raising projects during the year included four food parcel deliveries, food stall at the Deepavali festival, Pannum Parathamum, Variety Show and Muthuchcharam. These projects are done with a huge amount of effort, support and goodwill from the community and we are very grateful for it.

As has been reported previously, costs of regular maintenance and minor projects of capital nature are particularly high. A number of projects were completed during the year including replacement of a refrigerator, heater, upgrading of sound system, improving the drainage facilities in conjunction with the body corporate and purchase of a number of stainless steel tables to name a few. Priority work identified include constructing an awning in front to provide some weather protection (which will take place shortly), constructing wheel chair access into the temple, installing efficient extractor system, painting the ceiling, replacement of two heaters, plumbing from the Altar to avoid the use of buckets and refurbishing the wash rooms. Members and well wishers are welcome to support one or more of these projects by sponsoring them.

Future

As well documented last year, the thought and aspiration of moving towards the next phase is never far from us. The present constraints are many including not having a wedding/dining hall, not enough facilities for educational classes, lack of facilities for large scale cooking, insufficient storage areas and so on. A number of options have been evaluated on a regular basis including looking at suitable land and/or building, along with the necessary feasibility scenarios. Some of the options explored will be presented as a separate item today with the view to seek some initial indication of enthusiasm and interest to proceed further. We are very conscious that any solution that we come up with would need to be practical and financially sustainable.

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 fund raising activities with order taking, purchasing, donations, purchasing of ingredients, cooking, packing, delivering and cleaning.
- The volunteers who make our Deepavali festival fund raising with a huge amount of workload and demanding commitment.

- The co-ordinators, teachers, students, parents, food donors, advertisers, decoration experts, car park helpers and audience at our public events such as "Pannum Parathamum", "Muthucharam" and the variety show.
- Those members who provide material for our weekly radio programme and help to present them.
- The music teachers, students and parents for their contribution at every Friday and at other special 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.
- 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.

Management Committee

On a personal note, I wish to take the opportunity to acknowledge the support and enormous contribution of the management committee over the last 12 months. We believe that serving the community in the name of God is a great privilege and calls for humility, commitment, fairness, discipline, sincerity and self sacrifice. With our Lord Muruga's grace we will strive to demonstrate these characteristics at all times.

"The boundless ocean of births can be crossed, indeed, but not without the intimate union with the infinity's Holy Feet"

- Kural 10

May our Lord Muruga's blessing be with everyone!



S. Sathiyaselvan
President

26 Sept 10