

ஓம் முருகா



NEW ZEALAND THIRUMURUGAN TEMPLE SOCIETY INCORPORATED

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – 25 SEPTEMBER 2011

Dear Members,

திருமுருகன் திருப்பணிச் சபையின் சார்பில் முதற்கண் எனது அன்பான, தாழ்மையான வணக்கத்தைத் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன். திருப்பணிச் சபையின் வருடாந்தக் கூட்டத்திற்கு நீங்கள் உங்கள் நேரத்தை அற்பணித்து இங்கு வந்திருப்பதற்கு எமது உள்ளம் கனிந்த நன்றிகள். உங்கள் அனுமதியுடன் எனது அறிக்கையை ஆங்கிலத்தில் தொடர்கிறேன்.

Good morning and a very warm welcome to all of you. We very much appreciate your valuable input and participation at this important meeting.

With absolute surrender to the Almighty, it gives me much pleasure to present the President's report for the last 12 months. The last twelve months have been particularly challenging for everyone around the world and New Zealanders in particular. A large section of our community in Sri Lanka is still reeling from the aftermath of the civil war. There were major natural disasters in many countries. The Pike River Mine disaster and the large earthquake in Christchurch were too close to us and have touched all our hearts. Economically, the country is still struggling to emerge from the recession. Amongst all, there is one thing that holds us together during these challenging times – that is our utmost faith in God. We are very fortunate to have a temple where everyone could offer our prayers in our traditional way, in a peaceful and harmonious manner.

All regular activities of the Society are taking place with on-going enhancements to most aspects. In addition to the regular activities, the management committee has been working on a number of priorities. They include:

- Increasing the number of "special poojas" in the Temple calendar.
- Synchronising the temple festival times to New Zealand time zones (where practical) with the help of appropriate experts.
- Tamil to English translation of key messages at all major festivals to make the events understandable to children and non-Tamils.
- Introducing a regular speech/reading on the meanings of Hindu festivals and traditions on Fridays, predominantly targeting the children and youth.
- Regular and timely communication of temple activities.
- Increasing fund raising opportunities to help with operational and building funds.
- Encouraging wider participation in devotional singing.
- Improving car parking facilities for patrons, particularly during business hours.
- Building enhancements and maintenance

Religious and Cultural

With the blessings of the Almighty, strong 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 the traditional manner. Greater participation of children and youth particularly on Fridays, Guru Poojas and Navarathri is very pleasing. Through the kind sponsorship of devotees, we now have new "Vahanams" for "Pillaiyar" and "Amman" and this has enabled us to have "Veethi Valam" at more festivals. We are also pleased to advise you that further "vahanams" are being arranged by devotees and are expected to arrive in the near future. "Nithiya Abhishekam" of the Deities commenced earlier this year and we are also pleased to advise of the purchase of some beautiful decorative items for the altars that have clearly enhanced the "alankarams".

There is strong commitment by the priests and the key helpers 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 going 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.
- 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, 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.
- We are also pleased to be able to raise a net sum of \$479.20 towards the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal, which was gratefully accepted by the organisation.

Events & Projects

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

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

The society also took the opportunity to raise funds at an external musical 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 more than 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 to you for renewing your membership. Overall, our membership as at 30 June 11 was Ordinary Members 170, Life Members 45 and Trustees 17 - a small increase from last year.

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 \$799k in June 2011, an average increase of \$66k per annum over the last 11 years. This result has positioned the society well towards our longer term objectives.

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. A number of projects were completed during the year including construction of an awning in front to provide weather protection (\$4,097), construction of a ramp for wheel chair access (\$1,140), replacement of all three heaters (\$7,905) and installation of an extractor hood (\$2,600) to increase the efficiency of the exhaust systems. The temple was also painted in March this year through the kind generosity of Bank of New Zealand's "Closed for Good" team and Painting System Ltd - well supported by a team of people helping with the preparations. We now have a formal arrangement for cleaning the temple's facilities. We are also pleased to advise that we have made an arrangement (temporary) to increase the number of car parks by nine, making it more convenient, particularly during business hours.

Priority works identified but not completed yet include painting the ceiling, plumbing to/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 documented and discussed in the past, the thought and aspiration of moving towards the next phase is never far from us. The present limitations are many including not having a purpose built temple with more Deities, appropriate size function/dining hall, not enough facilities for educational classes, lack of facilities for large scale cooking, inadequate storage areas, insufficient car park facilities and so on. A number of options have been considered on a regular basis including looking at suitable land and/or building and this will continue. We are very conscious that any solution that we come up with would need to meet at least most of the key criteria, practical and in accord with our financial guiding principles.

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 Bharathamum", "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.
- 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 invaluable 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, discipline, sincerity, respect for each other and self sacrifice. With our Lord Murugan's grace we will strive to demonstrate these characteristics at all times.

"Without being attached to the fruits of activities, one should act as a matter of duty, for by working without attachment, one attains the Supreme."

– Srimad Bhagavad Gita

May our Lord Muruga's blessing be with everyone!



S. Sathiyaselvan
President

25 Sept 11