

CHINMAYA MISSION
OTTAWA

UPCOMING
EVENTS

- * **May 8—CMO Open House: A glimpse of the Ramayana at 5 PM at Ron Kolbus Lakeside Gardens**
- * **May 15-22—Swamini ji Umananda of Chinmaya Mission France visits Ottawa. See program details on Page 2**
- * **April 30—CMO young adults plant trees with RVCA at Stillwater Creek**
- * **June 19—Father's Day Walkathon at Mer Bleu Bog**
- * **July 15—Guru Poornima**
- * **July 28—Aug.3—Swami Chinmayananda Mahasamadhi Camp in Chicago, IL. For details go to <http://www.mychinmaya.org>**
- * **Aug 18-21— Family camp with Swami Iswarananda**

Study Classes are held on Sundays, from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM, at Heron Community Centre, 1480 Heron Road. Chinmaya study classes are specifically designed for children, youth and adults.

All are welcome!

Articles and news submissions can be sent to

newslettercmo@gmail.com

Nityam

.....Eternal

APRIL 2011

Bhajan Sandhyaa night of divine music with Swami Siddhanandaji

Swami Siddhanandaji from Philadelphia blessed us with an evening of melodious bhajans on the 26th of March. Hundreds of people enjoyed Swamiji's wonderful singing in his divine voice. Swamiji took the audience effortlessly to a different plane of consciousness. It was a well-attended fundraiser program.

Ketaki Mhatre shares her experience: "I have been listening to Swami Siddhanandaji's bhajans from CDs and live at Mahasamadhi camps. I enjoyed them very much, and I always admired the accompaniment Swamiji chose, musical instruments as well as voice support. So when I was assigned to arrange for the accompaniment for the Ottawa Bhajan Sandhya, the picture was very clear in my mind. I invoked Parampujya Gurudev Swami



Chinmayananda for help to find people to make this program very special. And help came from all the directions. I am eternally grateful to Gita Parekh, Satish Mallya, and Krishnan Tirunellai for discovering Flute Siva and Amerjit Narula for Tabla accompaniment. Ashwini Hemmady was amazing on Harmonium. Sandeep Hemmady

helped with the PA system and appropriate percussion and sound effects to decorate each and every bhajan, with Satish Mallya at his side. Ramya Krishnan, Kala Iyar, Shalini Sahni, Gita Parekh, Krishnan Tirunellai, Arun Mhatre and myself, we sang as a chorus. Anish Krishnan played tabala when Amerjit switched to dholak. Chinmaya Mission committee and families helped to make this show a success.

(...continued on page 3)



Hari Om Dear Friends.....

Arrival of Spring brings the news of joy and festivities and openness. As we get busy cleaning our house for Spring, we should also remember to clean our minds and hearts for the new season. On his recent visit to Ottawa, Swami Siddhanandaji shared some nuggets of wisdom. He said if we followed three "Ss" in our lives then we can never go wrong. This being:

- * **Seva**—to help others without wanting anything in return.
- * **Satsang**—to always keep good company and learn from them.
- * **Scriptural Studies**—to study good books, scriptures that enlighten our mind. While we go to school and learn that learning is to enable us to earn a living, but we also

need to read books that open our minds for introspection and inner growth.

These are simple pearls of wisdom that can guide us for the rest of our lives.

So let's clear up the clutter or worries, and focus our lives on these three "Ss" and live a clean and beautiful life.

Enjoy the nature bounties this spring and stay safe outdoors.

Hari Om

Pragya Dubey



The art of prayer is surrendering ourselves to God!

Learning for Life- Anupallavi Sinha shares how attending the Bal Vihar classes has impacted her life

The Chinmaya Mission program has, without a doubt, changed my life. Before I was exposed to Chinmaya Mission, I was clueless when it came to religion and culture. I never experienced the real excitement of thoroughly understanding the meaning of life, and the meaning of God.

But after my first class at Bal-Vihar, it was as if a light was switched on somewhere in my mind.

To me, Prayer used to be chanting verses and merely remembering the

words. Was I ever wrong! **The art of Prayer is surrendering ourselves to God. To not only shut your eyes, but to turn off all other senses as well.**

Prayer is focusing on the Lord, and the Lord only, we should seek his grace and thank him for his kindness, justice, and blessings.

Chinmaya Mission has not only taught me how to pray with the right attitude, but to appreciate all that is surrounding me.

At Bal-Vihar, we begin with three Om's. I really

enjoy the chanting, singing bhajans, listening to stories of devotion, and having interactive discussions. After Aarti, everyone is served prashad. The food is definitely one of the best parts of attending Bal-Vihar classes

In summary, Chinmaya Mission has helped me appreciate life more thoroughly and I've learnt so much about my religion and culture. Chinmaya classes are beneficial from any and every perspective; and I'm loving every second of it!

- Anupallavi Sinha is a student of Youth class.



Holi A festival of colours

Holi marks the arrival of Spring and has been celebrated in India since ancient times. Holi is a time when man and nature alike throw off the gloom of winter and rejoice in the colors and liveliness of spring. Holi also celebrates various events in Hindu mythology, but for most Hindus it provides a temporary opportunity to disregard social norms and

indulge in merrymaking.

The legend celebrated by the festival of Holi involves an evil king named Hiranyakashipu. He forbade his son Prahlad from worshipping Vishnu, but Prahlad continued to offer prayers to Vishnu. Getting angry with his son, Hiranyakashipu challenged Prahlad to sit on a fire with his wicked aunt Holika who was believed to be immune to fire.

Prahlad accepted the challenge and prayed to Vishnu to keep him safe. When the fire started, everyone watched in amazement as Holika was burnt to death, while Prahlad survived without a scar to show for it. The burning of Holika is celebrated as Holi.

Holi is enjoyed by kids and elders alike as they throw colours and water on each other and have a merry celebration with good food and laughter.

- Shyam Singh is a student of Junior Youth class.

Swamini ji Umananda Visits Ottawa



Swamini ji Umananda

Swamini ji Umananda from Chinamya Mission France will be conducting a series of daytime workshops on wellness, and evening sessions on the Ramayana. Fluently bilingual, Swamini ji has been teaching Vedanta in Paris, France since 1992. Her warm and accepting manner puts the listener at ease, opening the dialogue for questions and discussion.

Wellness Workshops in French

Location: National Capital Commission, 40 Elgin Street, Room 702

Time: 10 am to 12 noon

Dates: May 16 "The Art of Mindful Living"
May 18 "Awaken to the Fluidity of Life"
May 20 "The Art of Meditation"

Weekend Workshop in English

Location: Heron Road Multi-Service Centre, 1480 Heron Road

Time: 9 am to 12 noon

Date: May 21 (topic will be based on the audience)

Evening Lectures in English

Location: Heron Road Multi-Service Centre, 1480 Heron Road

Time: 7:30 pm – 9 pm

Date: May 17-May 19 "The Ramayana"

Bhajan Sandhya ...continued from page 1



Singing with Swamiji, during three practices and on the stage was a divine experience for all of us, we were uplifted to some unknown realm which we cannot put into words. We are all looking forward to have this experience again. The best part was to watch the audience from the stage participating and getting drowned in Bhajanananda.

Shalini Sahni shares her experience:

"Chinmayam Krishna, Chinmayam Krishna, Chinmayam Krishna

It was wonderful to see Swamiji in Ottawa after a gap of more than 10 years. That melodious voice we have come to love through CDs and recordings was going to be LIVE in our city!! It was frigid cold outside, but Swamiji warmed our hearts with the depth of his devotion and super-fun rehearsals. Gita kept all well fed so that voices were robust and hands never got tired of playing accompaniment.

Swamiji added so many innovations to the performance! Now a temple bell, now all in chorus, now question and answer format ... it was so interactive, the audience of almost 300 was just glowing by the time it was finished!!!

People followed along with the newly released Chinmaya Siddhanjali and really seemed to appreciate the opportunity! Ottawa had never seen a bhajan sandhya like this before, and certainly this was a first for our CM Ottawa family. The hall was packed and I'm sure we'll need a bigger venue next time. In typical Ottawa style, all hands came together as needed, to do whatever was needed, whenever it was needed. Gurudev's presence resonated deep within and His touch followed each and every audience member home."



Chinmaya Youth Program... for young professionals seeking spiritual knowledge

When I first found out that Chinmaya Mission has classes for young adults and working professionals, I was pretty excited to get back on the regular dose of spiritual knowledge. The much awaited forum met together first on Dec 2009, during the middle of Chinmaya Mission Ottawa's 20th Year, which was the year of the Geeta. The class led by Shailesh uncle targeted for young students and professionals who like to seek Vedantic knowledge. Swamiji's discourse on the Bhagavad Geeta is the best blessing for this purpose.

Readers new to Swamiji's style of discourse will find that he has a beautiful way of explaining complex and sensitive topics in a simple and easily understandable format. The group meets every Thursday evening and has so far covered the first VI Chapters of the Bhagavad Gita. **The class is usually divided into time spent on reciting verses and listening to the day's lecture by Gurudev and the time spent contemplating and discussing concepts covered in the verses.** Students can comfortably share

their personal viewpoints and ideologies, and Shailesh Uncle supplements the discussion with his creative and insightful takes on these topics. Applying the power or the essence of true knowledge at the times of doubt is probably the first impact on understanding Vedantic scriptures. **With time, the conscious efforts of involving Vedanta in our day to day situations transforms into spontaneous habit.**

In celebration of the Chinmaya Youth Program's first year of the Bhagavad Gita class, we organized a winter weekend retreat at the Sutarwala's. The group discussed after listening to Gurudev's lecture on Value-Based Management and the ways in which the corporate world impacts the individual, directly and indirectly. The conclusion reached was that while today's Business Juggernaut operates on a "value-based" customer focus and "value-based" marketing strategy, the **core values** and **ethics** of mankind which was originally driving the conception of individual products are usually forgotten in favour of capitalistic



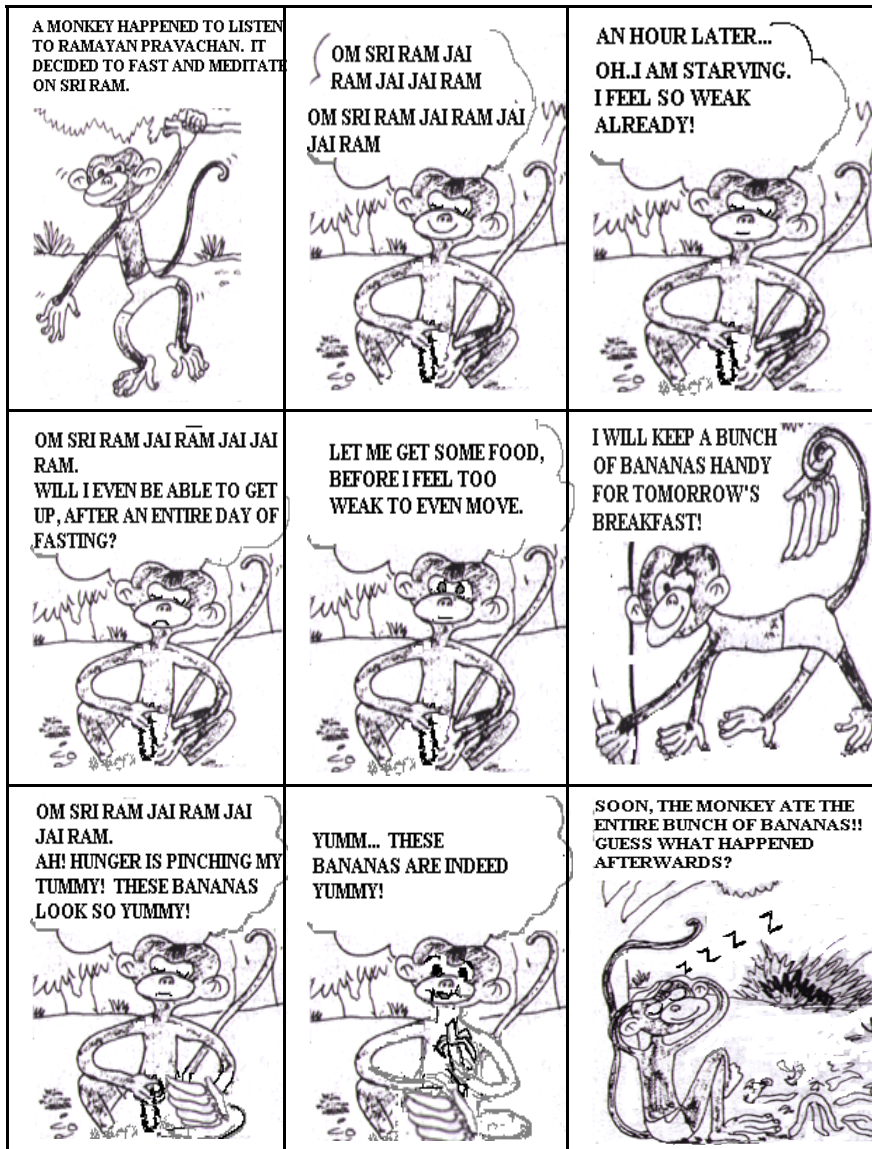
CMO young professionals group at the winter spiritual retreat at Shailesh and Bina Sutarwala's place.

benefits. The morning lecture was more targeted towards raising awareness to protect Mother Nature and point out how human actions negatively impact the future of planet Earth. **This lecture led to some of us taking personal initiatives to conserve our environment.** Swamiji's lectures, blended with a mix of competitive board games, morning meditation and Yoga/Pranayama class, it was a perfect getaway from our hectic work schedules. Thanks for the unique weekend planned for us by Shailesh uncle and Bina aunty with the great team work of Jay and Minal who coordinated the logistics. As the summer kicks in, our youth group has a bunch of fun outdoor activities planned, so stay tuned to hear from us! Hari Om!

Submission by Mahesh Narayanan, who attends the young professionals study group on Thursdays.

Swami Siddhanandaji Regales CMO families

Swami Siddhanandaji's presence in our Sunday class brought so much liveliness. We had the opportunity to listen to his memorable talk on Upavaas. He explained that Upa means "near" and Vaas means "to stay". Stay near whom? Near God of course! So, upavaas means "to remain in God thought". Swamiji gave some tips to practise Upavaas. It would be hard to concentrate on God with a full stomach. A full meal can make a person go to sleep. Will fasting help to contemplate on God easily? Swamiji answered this with a humorous story.



Artwork courtesy of an old Bai Vihar magazine and edited to fit the story.

Swamiji advised us that it is better to be balanced and have a light meal for a successful Upavaas.

- Anu Ramachandran



Go India!

Congratulations, Indian cricket team! You won the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011! A standing ovation to your excellent winning performance in the most thrilling finals. You made the dream of millions and millions of cricket fans come true! A happy and proud moment for all Indians world-wide!

Shivratri Pooja



On Shivratri day CMO organized Shiv pooja and bhajan. It was mesmerizing to celebrate this auspicious day together.



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Our mission is to provide to individuals from any background, the wisdom of Vedanta and the practical means for spiritual growth and happiness, enabling them to become positive contributors to society



Om Shri Chinmaya
Sadgurave Namah