



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

As always, the quarter for July to September was an exciting one, filled with activities. We didn't know how time flew, but it did! The major events of the quarter are the functions held by different units – Education Day is held in July on the birthday of the Founder President, Sri Kamaraj, Medical Day is celebrated in August to emphasise important aspects of our medical programme, and Founder's Day in September is a remembrance of Smt. Manjubhashini, the Founder of Bala Mandir. As is done every year, a common theme ran across all events – this year, the theme was holistic education. Since it is the 70th year of Bala Mandir, the units also took this as an opportunity to trace their own history, through innovative presentations.

With the 70th year, Bala Mandir has been reorganized into four distinct units of the Children's Programme, Education, Children with Special Needs, and Research, with common support systems of medical, skill training, administration, finance and cultural activities.

This issue marks the start of the sixth year of BM Connect. We are constantly on the lookout for ideas, feedback, your views, and maybe even pieces on your own experiences with Bala Mandir. These would greatly enhance our newsletter! Do write in to the mail ID below.

Happy reading!

Archana Natarajan, Editor
archana@balamandir.org

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MADRAS YOUTH CHOIR PROGRAMME

The children belonging to the Madras Youth Choir's Junior Choir were part of Madras Week celebrations at Jeeva Park on September 7, 2019. They sang songs on national integration, environmental awareness and human values.



NEWS BYTES: JULY 2019 TO SEPTEMBER 2019

Kamarajar's Birthday

On the Bala Mandir founder Sri Kamaraj's birthday on July 15, 2019 in the morning, the children went to Kamarajar Illam and sang bhajans. They participated in the programme held for his birthday. A special lunch was provided to the children, members and the staff.



Varalakshmi Viratham

Varalakshmi Viratham was celebrated on August 9, 2019 with ashtotram and bhajans. Girls belonging to Standards IX and X explained the stories of five Devis – Sita, Savitri, Anasuya, Draupadi and Sati.

Mass Chanting

Mass chanting of Chapter 1 of the Bhagawad Gita was organized for the sake of world peace in July, in commemoration of the Mahasamadhi of Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda.



Sri Gokula Baktha Bajanai Sabha Bhajans

The girls of Bala Mandir, down to children from Standard IV, took part in bhajan singing, organized by the Gokula Baktha Bajanai Sabha organized by Sri Venmani Kumar at a temple in Kodambakkam on August 25, 2019.

Kalpamma's Kadhais

The wonderful Ms. Kalpagam Narayanan or Kalpamma (Member, Executive Committee) was covered in the Indian Express on September 5, 2019. Her association with Bala Mandir's children, and her unique stories for them were covered as part of this article. You can read it at: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2019/sep/05/kalpamams-kadhais-2029011.html>

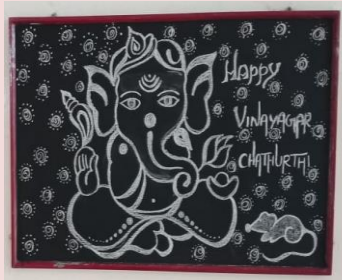


FESTIVALS IN BALA MANDIR

Multiple festivals and holidays were celebrated in Bala Mandir in this quarter. Here's a glimpse into the festivities and celebrations in different units for Krishna Jayanthi, Ganesh Chaturthi and Independence Day.



Ganesh Chaturthi in the BM Home with the idol being taken for immersion by the boys



Artwork in the Dining Hall for Chaturthi

Flag hoisting for Independence Day in the Home



Boys rolling cheedai for Krishna Jayanthi in the Home



Enacting the stories of Chaturthi and Krishna Jayanthi in the Day Care Centre



Making an eco-friendly Ganesha in the MNC



Independence Day celebrations in the Day Care Centre



Krishnas and Radhas in the MNC



Independence Day in SMHS



Dancing Krishnas and gopikas in Vidyalaya

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION VISIT TO MNC

Dr. Sowmya Swaminathan MD, Deputy Director General for Programmes, WHO, Geneva visited the Madhuram Narayanan Centre on August 5, 2019. She was really impressed with the methodology of the MNC programme, particularly the time table that engages the child on an hourly basis and the coordination of therapy and other interventions along with the special education. She added, “I am really impressed with the compassionate, quality care of high professional standards. Care for the intellectually disabled is an essential part of UHC (Universal Health Coverage)”. Parental involvement is another aspect that she greatly appreciated.



Dr. Sowmya with Ms. Jaya Krishnaswamy and Ms. Aruna Rathnam

THROWBALL COMPETITION

Girls from SMHS participated in the Throw Ball tournament held in Good Sheppard school on August 27, 2019, contesting in both the Under 14 and Under 17 category. Amongst the 8 schools that contested in each of the categories, SMHS won in the Under 14 group and got the Runners up place in the ‘Under 17 group’. The group that played ‘Under 14’ is now going forward to contest at the district level.



Under 14
←



Under 17
→

RSP AWARENESS

The RSP students of SMHS (Standard 9) did a project on ‘Road Safety and Awareness’ on July 11, 2019. They made placards on road safety rules and stood near the Gemini flyover signal. The placards reminded the owners of vehicles of rules like ‘No Drinking and Driving’, ‘Mandatory Use of Helmets’, etc. Some of the students even stopped two wheelers who were not wearing helmets and requested them to abide by traffic laws. This initiative was appreciated by the Traffic Police.



EDUCATION DAY

Education Day was celebrated on July 15, 2019. Mr P. Jayendra Panchapakesan, Co-founder, Real Image Media Technologies, and Trustee, Bhoomika Trust, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. A villipattu was performed by the students of BMPS and SMHS, on the life of Sri Kamaraj. Two students took on the personas of Sri Kamaraj and Smt. Manjubhashini, strolling through Bala Mandir, observing all the changes that had taken place since their time. A presentation, was made by the principals of the schools, who shed light on how the Bala Mandir schools have grown in the last 70 years. This was followed by the prize distribution ceremony for the toppers of class X (academic year 2018-2019), and an honour for the helpers across Bala Mandir. A special lunch was provided for members and guests.



MEDICAL DAY

Medical Day was celebrated on August 24, 2019. The Chief Guest was Dr. J. Prabhakaran, MBBS, M.A.E., DPH., DIH. Deputy Director of Public Health, and Preventive Medicine. Ministry of Health, Chennai. He spoke about the importance of human life and how children in Bala Mandir have to be responsible citizens who help society. A quiz programme was conducted by Dr. Suchitra for the children of SMHS. An audio visual presentation on the history of Bala Mandir's medical unit was presented by Ms. Premilla Rajan and Ms. Deepika.



FOUNDER'S DAY

Founder's Day was celebrated on September 24, 2019. The Chief Guest was Mr. Srikanth Chandrasekaran, Founder Trustee, Altius Foundation, who gave a very motivating speech. The children performed a 'Villu Paatu' on Manjamma's life, which was followed by a presentation about Bala Mandir's milestones by Mrs. Leela Natarajan. 20 year service awards were given to Mrs. Valli of DCC and Ms. Lokasundari from the Children's Programme. 25 year awards were given to Mrs. Usha Rani (Paramedical), Mr. Paneer Selvam (Admin) and Ms. Deepthi (DCC).



MIRANDA CORTI'S ANNUAL VISIT

Miranda Corti from the United Kingdom, her son Benedict and her niece Izzy spent two weeks in September with the children of Bala Mandir. They conducted various activities in the Main Block, like colouring and sketching, artwork like jellyfish, beadings, wool work, face masks, bookmarks, knitting, crispy cake making and sugar paste decoration. They taught rhymes and dances to the children. Izzy raised money selling lemonade, and received donations from Eurocommercial Properties, Italy. Using this money, the three of them made fruit salad for the children.



SCOUTS AND GUIDES PROGRAMME

A one-day Scouts and Guides Awareness programme was conducted on September 7, 2019 for the children between Standard VI and VIII. The programme was between 9am and 3pm, who were taught by Mrs. Vasantha Kumari, District Training Commission (Guides) who is also a physical education teacher in Queen Mary College. During the programme the children were given special guidance on scouts and guides, like the Scouting Prayer Song, Scouting and Guide Song, Scout Salute, Flag Song, Scout Claps and Scout Knot.



Samyam is celebrated every year in July. This project was conceived to bring the past students, present students and the new entrants together into the Centre during the year. The present students and the new entrants find motivation in coming together with the past students and interacting with them. The past students find guidance and reassurance in the teachers that they are on the right track.

The objective of Samyam is to bring together the three stages of children at the Madhuram Narayanan Centre:

- New children who have enrolled for the current academic year
- Existing children who are with Madhuram Narayanan Centre for the past few years
- Alumni who have moved ahead to mainstream schools and other special schools

Samyam creates a platform by bringing all the children along with parents together for:

- **Healthy interaction** to share the ideas and views for further development of the children
- **Maintain continuity** with Madhuram Narayanan Centre for guidance and counselling
- **Motivating new parents** to face the challenges in bringing up and training the children

Samyam was held this year on July 20, 2019. The Chief Guest this year was Mr. Joseph Ravi, District Welfare Officer for the Differently Abled, Chennai.



SATYAMURTHI HIGH SCHOOL ANNUAL DAY

The Annual Day of Satyamurthi High School was celebrated on August 31, 2019 and the chief guests for the function were alumni from the school, Ms. Subhashini and Ms. Nityalakshmi. Ms. Subhashini is a bank manager in SBI and Ms. Nityalakshmi is a newsreader and a film actress. The theme for the Annual Day was 'multiple intelligence' and it was incorporated beautifully into the programme. The programme began with a song on nature, followed by a dance on the theme of sharing and caring. The students also performed a mime show which exhibited the possibility of coexistence with nature and environment. The show came to an end with the English skit enacted by the students.



VISIT OF ITES STUDENTS

For the first time, a second batch of students from the Institute of Technical Education Singapore (ITES) came to Bala Mandir, for training in Community Care and Social Services. They were in the institution between September 25 and 26, 2019 (the first batch had come in June 2019 as they do every year).

On the first day, the students visited the Madhuram Narayanan Centre in the morning. In the afternoon they conducted some activities for the children in the Vidyalaya. On the second day, they had their first session with Ms. Marla George in Occupational Therapy, and in the afternoon again with the Vidyalaya children. They also performed for the children and the children in turn performed for them.

The students were extremely happy and found their visit to Bala Mandir very useful. They said they learnt a lot, especially in the MNC and in Occupational Therapy with Ms. Marla.



BMRF TRAINING PROGRAMME

On request from Michelin Tyres, two BMRF trainers conducted a half-day training session on Positive Parenting for over 30 Michelin Tyres female employees on September 26, 2019. The modules centred on life skills and behavioural problems and were geared for parents of a mixed-age group of children from early childhood through to adolescence. Ms. Deepika Kannan, Ms. Nirmala and Ms. Lakshmi Gopal conducted the session



HR NEWS

Welcome to Bala Mandir!

Nagercoil Home

- Narasimhan, Security
- Vijila, House Mother
- Sonia, House Mother
- Menamma, House Keeper
- Mariya Delph, Helper

DCC / Vidyalaya

- Sumathi, Helper
- Sowmiya, Helper
- Krithika, Special Educator

Welcome to Bala Mandir!

Children's Programme

- Asha, Social Worker
- Jayasree, Social Worker, Children's Programme
- Praveen Raj, Social Worker (Residential)
- Mariyammal, Helper
- Valli, Helper

Madhuram Narayanan Centre

- Sundrammal, Special Educator, MNC
- Sivakumari K, Special Educator, MNC

Ms. Vijayalakshmi rejoined BMRF as Coordinator

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Phone: +91 44 4867 9207

No. 8, G.N.Chetty Road, T.Nagar, Chennai 600 017
Email: main@balamandir.org Website: www.balamandir.org