



Chinmaya Mission San Jose

e-Newsletter

New Building Update

Volume 1 Issue 1

March 2006

Chinmaya Mission Bala Vihar Classes

"Love is to the human heart what sunshine is to flowers." Thus spake Swami Chinmayananda, the great visionary, who realized early on that in modern day urban society love, much like sunshine, would be in short supply. He believed that just as the strength of a building depends on the quality of each brick that goes into it, so too the health of a society depends on the quality of each individual comprising it. When individuals are healthy, society is healthy. Swamiji's strategy for building a healthy society, therefore, was to make individuals healthy by "catching 'em young" and imparting values. And the mechanism he devised to accomplish this was weekend school for children he called Bala Vihar.

Bala Vihar in the Bay Area was started in the early 80s with the help of just a handful of parent volunteers and a few children. Today, the program proclaims the support hundreds of volunteers and serves over 1300 children all over the Bay Area. Classes are held in rented facilities at three locations, namely, Danville, Fremont, and San Jose. Until last year, San Jose Bala Vihar was held at Sandeepany San Jose, but rapid growth in student enrollment coupled with lack of adequate infrastructure – primarily classroom space and parking - forced the move to a new location at the Lincoln High School this year. An erstwhile fourth location in Los Altos – at the Hillview Community Center - was also merged with the new San Jose location on account of the frequent lack of availability of class rooms there.

Bala Vihar enrollment has been experiencing meteoric growth over the last few years. In 2005 alone, a staggering total of 411 new students enrolled in the three locations of Bala Vihar. At these phenomenal rates of growth, it will not be long before the existing rented Bala Vihar facilities run out of space.



Student Growth



After Classes Crowd



Bal Vihar Assembly in Sandeepany



Crowded Classroom in Sandeepany

Chinmaya Mission Festivals and Events

Festivals and other events are an integral part of the Chinmaya vision, where the community comes together to perform pujas, celebrate festivals, and observe or commemorate events. Most Indian festivals and notable events are organized and celebrated, and Sandeepany San Jose is the hub for all these activities. With increased devotee participation in these activities the place has been bursting at its seams during these events, and just unable to accommodate everyone. Further more, it is no secret that many more who would like to participate refrain from trying, primarily due to the lack of adequate parking. Those who come are forced either to park far away and walk, or, occasionally, to turn back. To alleviate these problems, Chinmaya Mission San Jose has in recent years taken to holding popular events at the Jain Temple and other such rental facilities.



Rama Navami in Sandeepany



Diwali Festival at Sandeepany



Gita Chanting Competition in Sandeepany



Holi in Sandeepany

Usage of Rental Facilities



School Assembly in Fremont – already crowded

The rental facilities we use to provide for our community’s needs are often very expensive, making renting on a regular basis an unviable proposition. Perhaps more importantly, in many cases, these facilities are inadequate for our needs and/or not available on the dates we need them. As a result, we are on the constant lookout for new rental facilities that are both suitable and affordable. Unfortunately, such facilities are few and far between and in ever-increasing demand.



A Bala Vihar Class in Lincoln High School



Bal Utsav facility in Hillview Community Center – stage too small for large number of participants



Program during Swami Tejomayananda visit – in Jain Temple – too small to accommodate the gathering



Diwali Samashti Pooja in Hillview Community Center

New Facility Requirements

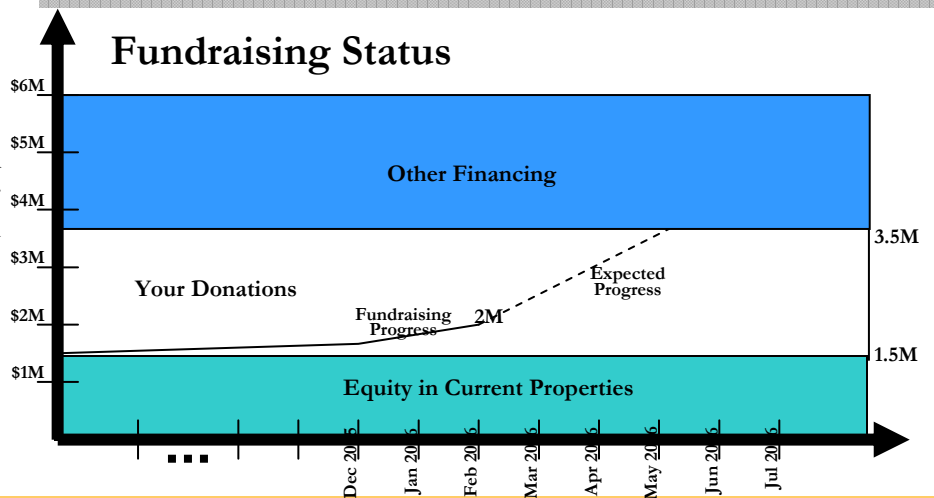
As Bala Vihar enrollment and devotee participation at events continue to grow, the Chinmaya vision is in real jeopardy. Due to reasons cited above, the only viable long term solution is to purchase a facility of our own that fully caters to our community’s needs, thereby allowing us to continue to uphold the Chinmaya vision.

- Convenient Location:** Central to San Jose, Fremont, and Los Altos
- Class rooms:** At least 20 classrooms, each to seat roughly 40 students
- Lecture Hall & Temple:** For Acharya’s regular lectures and for pujas; 200 people capacity
- Larger Lecture Hall for Yagnas:** Class rooms will be convertible into a large lecture hall
- Parking:** Enough parking for all events
- Longevity:** Support foreseeable needs for approximately 15 years

The Plan & Status

The plan is to build or acquire a facility that will meet the aforementioned requirements. To raise funds for this new facility, Chinmaya Mission San Jose has launched a two-pronged campaign – a grassroots level pledge drive for donations ranging from \$1000 to \$10,000 and an appeal to high net worth individuals for donations greater than \$10,000. Your active participation and support is crucial for the success of this campaign. With the Lord’s grace, Gurudev’s blessings, and your support, we are confident of moving into a facility of our own in the not too distant future.

Fundraising Status



Chinmaya Mission, San Jose is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (Tax ID # 77-0315648)