

# Maya Puwath - මායා පුවත්

*Bi-Monthly Newsletter of Mahamaya Girls' College  
Alumnae Association of North America (MGCAANA)*

**Volume 13 – Issue 3 – June 2017**



## Message from the Editors

Dear readers,

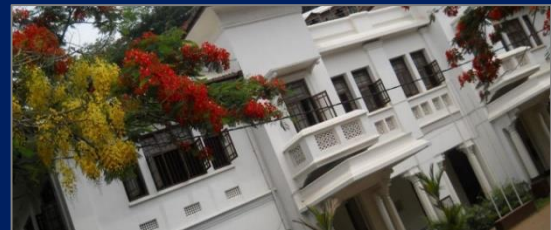
Quite a lot has happened in MGCAANA since the last time we connected with you through Maya Puwath. Our Association held its 13<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) & Dinner in Austin, Texas on May 28, 2017. The event was a great success and a memorable experience for those who attended, as you will hear from Sujatha Werake on page 5 of this issue. The new Board of Directors elected a new President, Secretary, Treasurer and a Webmaster for 2017-2018. We are hearing that the Officers and the Board of Directors are already working enthusiastically to promote a network of social, professional, educational, and cultural opportunities to MGCAANA members.

Aligning with this new beginning, the Newsletter Committee too has gone through a few changes. While a “key player” of our Committee has resigned owing to her busy schedule, we have two new additions whom we hope will bring in new talents and skill-sets to the table. We thank the outgoing editors for their hard work and welcome the incoming editors with much excitement. By now, you have already noticed that we also decided to change the “look” of Maya Puwath. Last but not least, we have a new addition to Maya Puwath called “Pause-Rewind-Play,” where we will be re-publishing excellent content provided by you, over the past 12 years, with the hope of connecting new members with the old. We hope you enjoy the new look and the new addition. Happy reading!

Maya Puwath Newsletter Committee

## In this issue

- Highlights from the 13<sup>th</sup> AGM of MGCAANA
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- Upcoming Activities
- Sujatha Werake on the 13<sup>th</sup> AGM
- AGM & Dinner in Pictures
- Pause-Rewind-Play **NEW!**
- Contributions
- MGCAANA News & Notices



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Health is the greatest gift,  
contentment is the greatest wealth,  
a trusted friend is the best relative,  
Nibbana is the greatest bliss.

**Dhammapada (Verse 204)**

## 13<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting & Dinner of MGCAANA

MGCAANA held its 13th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Austin, Texas, on Sunday, May 28, 2017. It was attended by Mayans from across the U.S. as well as Canada. The AGM was followed by a dinner hosted by two Mayans from Texas, Anusha Nanayakkara and Darshini Weeratunga.

The reports presented at the meeting as well as minutes of the meeting are posted on the MGCAANA website: <http://www.mahamayaalumnina.org/ThirteenAGMInfo.html>

### 2017-2018 MGCAANA Officers

President: Vihara Dharmaratne  
Secretary: Berlini Narampanawe  
Treasurer: Devi Gunasekera  
Webmaster: Taroshani Kasturiarachchi

### 2017-2018 Board of Directors

Devi Gunasekera  
Subhashinie Kariyawasam  
Taroshani Kasturiarachchi  
Lilika Molligoda  
Berlini Narampanawe  
Upamali Ratnayake  
Aloka Paragodaarachchi  
Shalini Wijeratne

### AGM Attendees

Geetha Eragoda  
Vihara Dharmaratne  
Himashinie Diyabalanage  
Nelum Dorabawila  
Sirima Gajameragedara  
Kanthi Leula  
Anusha Nanayakkara  
Upamali Ratnayake  
Sujatha Werake

*The AGM was also  
attended by guests of  
MGCAANA members*



## Message from the 2017-2018 President

It is truly an honor to write this message as the newly-elected President of Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae Association in North America (MGCAANA) for the 2017-2018 year. I was an undergraduate at the University of Mississippi when I first heard about MGCAANA, in 2009. In the following 8 years, I was able to take part in many rewarding experiences and meet so many amazing Mahamaya alumnae across North America. Having been a proud member of MGCAANA since 2009, I have been active with our Association in the following capacities:

- Vice President (October 2016-May 2017)
- Director, Board of Directors (2016-2017, 2010-2011, 2009-2010)
- Chair, Undergraduate & Graduate Scholarship Selection Committee (2016-present)
- Co-Chair, Endowment Committee (2015-2016, 2016 - March 2017)
- MGCAANA Representative, Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (2015-2016, 2016-March 2017)
- Editor, Newsletter Committee (2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2017-present)
- Webmaster (2010-2011)
- Secretary (2010-2011)
- Donor – Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (VSTF)
- MGCAANA Member (2009-present)

I also co-organized the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting in Ottawa, the first ever MGCAANA AGM to be held in Canada. Through all these experiences, both my professional and personal networks have expanded. MGCAANA has truly provided me with the opportunity to stay connected to my roots, through the rich relationships I have built over the years. As President, I hope that I could inspire you to strengthen your own relationships with this great organization, actively participate in our activities, share new ideas, recruit new members, donate to VSTF, hone your leadership skills, contribute to our newsletter, help organize an AGM, etc.

The new Executive Committee and the Board of Directors have already started assuming their duties and responsibilities with great excitement and enthusiasm, and I am truly fortunate to be working with a group of strong, keen, diligent, supportive, and inspiring women. I invite you to be part of that journey through 2017-2018!

Sincerely,

Vihara Dharmaratne

## Some Upcoming MGCAANA Activities

- Board Meetings (July & August)
- Next Newsletter (August)
- MGCAANA Graduate & Undergraduate Scholarship (September)
- Awarding Nanda Pussegoda Leula Memorial Scholarships (2018)
- Awarding Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (VSTF) Scholarships

## **The Most cherished moments happen when Mayans get together**

*By Sujatha Werake*

Celebration of our 13<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting and the Dinner Party in Austin, Texas, on May 28th, was one of those memorable moments. The meeting was held at the Public Library, Little Walnut Creek Branch, Austin, Texas. The Dinner was meticulously planned by Anusha Nanayakkara and her husband at their beautiful home.

The meeting started at 2:00 pm. The President welcomed the alumnae and their families and friends. In addition to Nelum Dorabawila, from the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, Vihara Dharmaratne and Upamali Ratnayake were present. Nelum flew in from Maryland, Vihara from Ottawa, Canada, Upamali from Washington, DC. Past Presidents, Himashinie Diyabalanage from Massachusetts, and Geetha Eragoda from California had flown in. Nanda Pussegoda Leula Memorial Scholarship donor Kanthi Leula also flew in from Los Angeles. Sirima Gajameragedara and Darshini Weeratunga drove from Houston, Texas. We flew from Seattle, Washington. According to the agenda, the reports of past year's activities, audited accounts, were presented, ballots were counted by our appointed returning officer Anusha Nanayakkara. The new Board of Directors were announced. The newly appointed Board of Directors had a teleconference and the Executive Committee was appointed by them. After the meeting was over, we had an outdoor party in the library garden. From there we all proceeded to Anusha Nanayakkara's residence for the dinner party.

When we arrived at the Nanayakkara residence, everything was ready for the party. We were welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Nanayakkara to their elegant home. Their beautiful spring garden was also ready for the party. Another Texan, Darshini Weeratunga helped out Anusha with the dinner. I know that Nelum and the Directors and Officers worked hard on planning of this major event. I am truly inspired by how our President, Board of Directors and the Executive Committee had risen to the occasion with hard work, unconditional support at all times, and unyielding commitment to uphold the shared values and to keep the Organization strong, and to light our way forward. Lot of laughter and warm conversations, excellent food, families of our alumnae, and joy of meeting one another, made that evening a memorable one. The husbands had their own fun times, Nelum's baby daughter became everyone's joy. Dancing and singing, listening to our Sinhala songs was a lot of fun, and at times nostalgic.

Each year, the AGM and the traditional Dinner that follows, is a humbling experience. MCGAANA AGMs truly reflect the love, respect, trust and care for each other. We all are Mayans and surely immigrants. Away from home, that uniqueness unites us and makes the bond stronger. I have no words to explain the humbling experience I get every year when we get together. All those young faces with smiles means their deeply felt love. I have passed my retirement age. These young ladies are part of the American and Canadian societies with rewarding careers. I always feel so proud of them. When we get together, there is no generational gap, or any other divisions. We are one. We all are Maya products. We all are proud of it.

We recognize and celebrate the hard work of the hosts Anusha Nanayakkara, her husband, and Darshini Weeratunga. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



## **The Most cherished moments happen when Mayans get together (contd.)**

### **The Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, 2016/2017:**

We take this opportunity to thank the outgoing President Nelum Dorabawila, President of the first six months, Indrani Gunawardana, Board of Directors and Executive Committee members, (in alphabetical order) Supipi Auwardt, Vihara Dharmaratne, Sriyani Dissanayake, Nelum Dorabawila, Indrani Gunawardana, Subhashinie Kariyawasam, Taroshani Kasturiarachchi, Sudharma Upamali Ratnayake, Geethanjali Wickramanayake for their commitment, trust, patience, love, and wonderful service rendered to the Organization.

### **The Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, 2017/2018:**

Congratulations to all of you!!! We are eager to embrace your leadership! With great appreciation we warmly welcome our new President Vihara Dharmaratne, the Board of Directors, and Executive Committee members, (in alphabetical order) Vihara Dharmaratne, Devi Gunasekera, Subhashinie Kariyawasam, Taroshani Kasturiarachchi, Lilika Molligoda, Berlini Nanayakkara, Aloka Paragodaarachchi, Sudharma Upamali Ratnayake, and Shalini Wijeratne for the year 2017/18. We are very fortunate to have you in our administrative positions. The members who are continuing to work on the Board and the Executive Committee, Vihara, Subhashinie, Taroshani and Upamali, We are so thankful to you, for being there for the newly elected members. All of you will be a tremendous asset to MGCAANA!!! We look forward to working with you.

### **Our dear Members, be active:**

I encourage all our members to contribute to our causes, to be connected, to be active, and serve in our committees. Look ahead with optimism and determination towards possibilities that future may hold. Bring your expertise to us, help us build understanding, and create positive change. Through these leadership experiences with MGCAANA, you can discover passions in life, you become independent thinkers and leaders, you gain skills you need to prepare for rewarding careers in your lives, your experiences help you to get into good colleges and receive worthy scholarships, your contribution to MGCAANA helps to serve its membership, Mahamaya, our Alma Mater and the societies that we live in. Your participation and support is so essential to the success of the MGCAANA and its programs, and in return, to yourselves.

### **Thank you!**

Finally, I personally give my heartfelt thanks to the hosts Mr. and Mrs. Nanayakkara for the excellent job they did in arranging the dinner party in their beautiful home and booking the library to have the Annual General Meeting in their conference room. Everything went so smoothly. We enjoyed every minute of it. Thank you!!!

*Sujatha Werake*

## MGCAANA 13<sup>th</sup> AGM & Dinner, Sunday, May 28, 2017



LR: Kanthi Leula (honorary member), Sirima Gajameragedara, Anusha Nanayakkara, Nelum Dorabawila, Upamali Ratnayake, Geetha Eragoda, Himashinie Diyabalanage, Sujatha Werake, Vihara Dharmaratne





## MGCAANA 13<sup>th</sup> AGM & Dinner, Sunday, May 28, 2017



**Thank You!**

MGCAANA would like to thank the wonderful hosts Anusha Nanayakkara and Darshini Weeratunga for making it possible for our Association to hold its 13<sup>th</sup> AGM in Austin, Texas. We would also like to thank your families for your generosity and kindness.

MGCAANA also thanks its Advisory Committee, 2016-2017 Officers and the Board of Directors, Auditor for 2016-2017, past Presidents, donors, MGCAANA members, guests, well-wishers and everyone who attended the AGM & Dinner. Your assistance, commitment and presence helped us all hold a successful AGM & Dinner this year!



Maya Puwath has been reaching the MGCAANA membership since 2005, and “Pause – Rewind – Play” segment of the newsletter will re-publish past contributions to Maya Puwath, made by MGCAANA members. The Newsletter Committee hopes that this new initiative will help connect new MGCAANA members with those who joined the Association many years ago. Enjoy!



### AMMA'S LESSONS

Many of you know my mother as Chitra Nugawela. In your minds you may recollect a simple woman with graying hair in a pointed osariya, soft in speech. A person who wore her sari jacket so long to ensure that bare flesh on her back was not exposed when she raised her hand to write on the black board, and who lined every single jacket she wore to school so that the under garments would not be visible through the sari jacket. Although English, Sewing and home science were her subjects she also sought to teach modesty and simplicity. Now as I remember both my parents with love and sincere gratitude I decided to share some of my memories of Amma with you.

1. Once I announced “Justice is on my side”. Amma said “Justice is never on anybody’s side, it is impartial. You make sure you are on the side of justice”.
2. When I wore make up Amma said, “What is so shameful about your face that you cannot present your true self? Why do you need to hide your face in paint?” Apparently, Amma refused to wear make up even as a bride.
3. When I asked why me? Amma said “You don’t have a right to question. This is Karma, accept there are bigger forces than you in this world, don’t waste time asking why, think about how to deal with the situation and carry on”.
4. Amma nursed Appachchi for 16 long years without a single day’s holiday after he fell ill. I offered to give her a break. Amma said “I married him for better or for worse. He is my responsibility till one of us die. There are no breaks from responsibility”
5. I asked what she would buy me if I passed my exams. Amma said, “They are your exams. As a Parent I am ensuring that you have the opportunity and all you need to perform. I will not bribe you”.
6. After asking for an expensive dress Amma responded. “We cannot afford it. We have enough to fulfill your needs but would never have enough to fulfill your greed. What you can do without, do without”.
7. I told Amma that a friend’s marriage was in trouble. Amma said, “Tell her, if there is a problem within a marriage the solution is also within them and to seek it. No third party can provide answers”.
8. When someone was proposed to me and asked what my parents were giving me as dowry, Amma and Appachchi said, “Our blessings”. The proposed guy never came back. As I languished on the shelf fast approaching my sell by date, I saluted their will to stick to their principles and not in effect bribe anyone to marry me.
9. When looking for a husband Amma said to me, “Find a man who would love you and respect you. It doesn’t have to be a rich man. Money can be made but happiness cannot be bought”.
10. After marriage, when I referred to my in laws as his (My husbands) relatives, Amma said, “make sure there is no yours and mine business in your marriage”.
11. When I was pregnant and reluctant to exercise, Amma said “Motherhood is about what is best for your child”.
12. When I went home and told Amma that I planned to marry a guy whom she had never met, Amma was taken aback. Amma asked “are you thinking about it or have you given him your word?” I said I had accepted his proposal. Amma was not happy but said “In that case now what is left to do is to see that “you honor your word to him”. “Unless your husband is unfaithful, or abuses you physically or psychologically, a marriage is for all intents and purposes a one way ticket. Meet him half way. It doesn’t always have to be your way”.
13. When I rejoiced at seeing a person who was nasty to us with a flat tire, Amma said “Revenge is not a pursuit for us mortals. I will not bribe you”. The forces of Karma, much greater than us will take care of all that when it is time”.
14. When I wanted to dye my hair as I started graying Amma said, “learn to grow old gracefully. There is no reason to despair. This is nature taking its own course, the impermanence of life manifesting it self. Don’t deny it. Accept it”.
15. When I advised a friend in trouble, Amma said “Never give unsolicited advice and read a quote from memory “Have compassion in another’s trouble and courage in your own”



## Contributions

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Amala Aravindani Jayasekara © 2017 Australia

First published on Amala's website "මන්දාකිණියේ තරු  
හිතැහෙද්දී ලියූ කවි ගී....." at:

<http://amalajayasekara.simplesite.com/>

### A note from Amala...

"I wrote the first version of this poem in 1997 as a song and sent it to a Sri Lankan group but did not receive even an acknowledgment. Since then, I have read more about the numerous interpretations of the Sigiriya frescoes, graffiti and archeology by various experts. The current version of the poem expresses my fascination and connection not only with Sigiriya but also with some of these interpretations. I am not agreeing with or opposing any of these theories as I have no expertise in this area but merely trying to engage with the various expert interpretations from a poet's perspective. I wish to acknowledge all expert interpretations I have incorporated into the poem. Please see three interesting online articles that discuss these various expert interpretations at:

<http://www.vidusara.com/2010/09/08/feature1.html>

<http://sigiriya.org/damsels.htm>

<http://sigiriya.org/sigiriya.ladies.who.why.htm>"

## Poson Bhakthi Gee

Mahamaya Girls' College held its 40<sup>th</sup> annual "Poson Bhakthi Gee" on Wednesday, June 7, 2017 at the school auditorium.

Consultant neurologist Dr. Deepani Rathnayake was the Chief Guest, and around 270 students participated in the event. Participants also included teachers and alumnae of Mahamaya.

(Sent by Shalini Wijeratne)



## MGCAANA News

### Want to know what your new Board of Directors (BOD) will be undertaking in 2017-2018?

Please read the minutes of the BOD's monthly meetings posted on MGCAANA website:

<http://www.mahamayaalumnina.org/minutes.php>

If you have new ideas, concerns, or suggestions to improve how MGCAANA operates etc. please feel free to connect with the BOD through e-mail:

[Mahamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com)

### Contributing to Maya Puwath

Contributing to Maya Puwath is a great and easy way you could be an active member of MGCAANA. We accept content produced by you, articles written by others with proper acknowledgement, content by children of MGCAANA members, as well as news from Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

Please send your contributions to the upcoming August issue of Maya Puwath:

[Mahamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com)

### Thank You Sriyani Dissanayake!

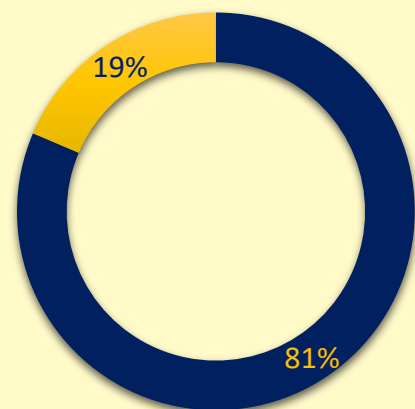
After being part of the Maya Puwath Newsletter Committee since 2013, Sriyani will be leaving the Committee to accommodate her busy schedule. MGCAANA is grateful for Sriyani's services and wishes you all the best in her other endeavors!

### Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (VSTF)

VSTF awards scholarships to the most deserving, economically-disadvantaged students who do well in their studies and extra curricular activities from grades 6 and up at Mahamaya. An initial goal of VSTF has been to establish a fund with a capital of, at least, \$20,000. As of May 2017, \$16,283.65 has been raised thanks to generous donors like you. If you would like to help VSTF reach its \$20,000 goal, please assist MGCAANA in its fundraising efforts. You can donate (online/check) and most importantly, encourage others to donate:

<http://www.mahamayaalumnina.org/vstf.php>

### VSTF Progress



■ Funds Raised ■ Remaining

**Newsletter Committee:** Vihara Dharmaratne, Vajeera Dorabawila, Lilika Molligoda

**Maya Puwath is a publication of Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae Association in North America (MGCAANA)**