

# Maya Puwath - මායා පුවත්

**Bi-Monthly Newsletter of Mahamaya Girls' College  
Alumnae Association of North America (MGCAANA)  
Volume 14 – Issue 3 – June 2018**



## Message from the Editors

Dear readers,

Quite a lot has happened in MGCAANA since the last time we connected with you through Maya Puwath. MGCAANA held its 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting & Dinner in Port Matilda, Pennsylvania on Sunday, May 27, 2018. The event was a great success and a memorable experience for all who attended; a couple of former teachers of Mahamaya Girls' College also graced the event with their presence, and fundraising activities during the event brought generous donations to both MGCAANA and the Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund. For those who couldn't join the event, we have shared with you some pictures from both the AGM and the Dinner.

The new Board of Directors elected a new Executive Committee, and you will see a message from Berlini Narampanawe, the newly-elected President in this issue. We also took the opportunity to interview Berlini in our new "Interview" segment, so that we could all get to know our President better.

We will also be sharing some news from Sri Lanka in this issue: the passing of a beloved English teacher at Mahamaya, Mrs. Sujatha Herathge; Mahamaya Girls' College retaining the coveted All Island School Swimming Championship for the 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

In this newsletter we have also included some valuable information on how to deal with crisis situations.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of Maya Puwath.

Sincerely,

Maya Puwath Newsletter Committee

## In this issue

- Highlights from the 14<sup>th</sup> AGM
- Message from the New President
- The New BOD & Executive Committee
- Appreciation for Mrs. S. Herathge
- Dealing with Crisis Situations in Life
- The Interview
- Pause-Rewind-Play/Recipe Corner
- Sri Lankan Festivals in June & July
- News from Mahamaya Girls' College



Udakam hi nayanti nettika  
usukara namayanti tejanam  
darum namayanti tacchaka  
attanam damayanti pandita.



"Just as farmers channel the  
water to their paddy field,  
fletchers straighten arrows ,  
carpenters craft wood work  
from timber, a wise person  
*tames oneself.*"

[Dhammapada \(Verse 080\)](#)

## 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) & Dinner of Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae Association in North America

MGCAANA held its 14<sup>th</sup> AGM & Dinner in Port Matilda, Pennsylvania on Sunday, May 27, 2018. The event was a great success and a memorable experience for all who attended. A couple of former teachers of Mahamaya Girls' College—Mrs. Lalitha Pilapitiya and Mrs. Eloma Hettiarachchi—also graced the event with their presence, and fundraising activities during the event brought generous donations to both MGCAANA and the Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund. A special thanks goes to Dr. Subhashinie Kariyawasam and her family for hosting the event!





## A Big Thank You to Dr. Subhashinie Kariyawasam & Family!

As the outgoing President of MGCAANA, I would like to thank Dr. Subhashinie Kariyawasam, her husband Thomas and daughter Prabhavi for their generosity and hospitality in hosting an excellent and memorable AGM & Dinner. Members and guests who attended this special occasion left with full hearts (and stomachs!) owing to a well-organized event.

The biggest challenge for a president during her presidency is confirming a venue to host an AGM & Dinner, and I am personally indebted and grateful to Dr. Kariyawasam who not only opened her home for all of us, but also provided continued support with the event planning, leading up to the event. I would also like to thank family friends of the Kariyawasams from Pennsylvania as well as all Mayans and well-wishers who ensured that we had a successful event. Your kindness is noted and I look forward to re-connecting with you all in the future!

Sincerely,

Vihara Dharmaratne  
*Outgoing President of MGCAANA (2017-2018)*



## Message from the Incoming MGCAANA President (2018-2019)

First of all, I would like to thank all the members who attended and showed tremendous support at our AGM and to the members who voted to elect the new Board of Directors (BOD). I would like to extend my thanks to Dr. Subhashinie Kariyawasam, our host and her lovely family for hosting the AGM and the dinner.

I am honored to have this opportunity to address my fellow Mayans as the newly-elected President of Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae Association in North America (MGCAANA) for the year of 2018-2019. I joined MGCAANA in 2012 and a member since then. Last year, I had the greatest opportunity to take part in MGCAANA as a member of the Board of Directors (BOD) and as the Secretary of our Association. Being part of the BOD and serving as the Secretary gave me the opportunity to meet fellow Mayans who have been part of our organization for quite some time. Last year helped me to not only connect with other Mayans in the U.S. and Canada but also gave me insights of our organization and what it stands for.

We have accomplished a lot last year as an organization; raising fund for the computer project, donating to two charities, awarding two scholarships and many more. As the President, this year I am looking forward continue to work with intelligent, smart and strong set of women in the BOD to fulfil the mission of our organization and see MGCAANA thrive in one of its golden years. I hope everyone out there reading this will join us and help us achieve another great year!

Sincerely,

Berlini Narampanawe

### MGCAANA Executive Committee (2018-2019)

**President:**

Berlini Narampanawe

**Secretary:**

Lilika Tarini Seneviratne Molligoda

**Treasurer:**

Devi Gunasekara (nee Subasinghe)

**Webmaster:**

Shalini Wijeratne

### MGCAANA Board of Directors (2018-2019)

1. Devi Gunasekara (nee Subasinghe)
2. Lakmali Jayasinghe
3. Charithri Nanayakkara Yapa
4. Berlini Narampanawe
5. Anushka Palipana
6. Taniya Pathirage
7. Lilika Tarini Seneviratne Molligoda
8. Shalini Wijeratne

**Congratulations to the newly-elected MGCAANA Board of Directors and the Executive Committee for 2018-2019! We hope you have a great year!**

## **The Passing of Mrs. Sujatha Herathge**

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Mrs. Sujatha Herathge, a beloved teacher at Mahamaya Girls' College who taught English. After battling cancer for two years, she passed away on Sunday, June 17, 2018, and her funeral was held at Mahaiyawa Cemetery on the same day. Mrs. Herathge taught English to many Mayans, and she also worked with the Prefects Guild. We will remember her for her grace and her passion for teaching. May she attain the supreme bliss of Nirvana...

### **Appreciation in Memory of a Loving Teacher: Mrs. Sujatha Herathge**

Mrs. Herathge has undoubtedly been a guidance for many Mayans around the world. She was an exceptional teacher who gave sublime worth for the noble profession of teaching. She was all about caring, sharing and giving selflessly for the budding Mayans for nearly two decades. Although Mrs. Herathge is no longer with us, her legacy and spirit will live in the hearts of Mayans forever.

I was privileged to be her student during my time at Mahamaya in grades 9, 10 and 11. Since then to date, Mrs. Herathge had been a close teacher and a warm woman of substance in my life, as she was the person to subtly build my self-confidence, instill the skills of leadership and fearlessness during my last years of high school in Sri Lanka. According to my parents, her guidance not only helped my performance as a student but also paved the path to the platform I stand on as a professional and a human being in Australia today.

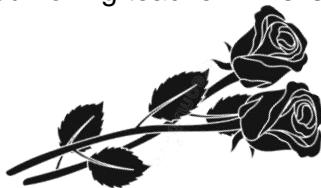
Her kind thoughts toward the betterment of other children, her far sight toward the future of children and the numerous help she extended to many Mayans anonymously and in the most dignified ways in the past and more recently in the last days of her own life, was an inspiration to myself for the worth a human being can extend to another, irrespective of our own hardships.

It has been heartwarming to learn by example from her resilience and positive outlook battling through a terminal illness for the past 2 years. Her courage, perseverance and introspection were praiseworthy. While Mrs. Herathge had a graceful and highly respectable personality that all Mayans respected due to her strong will to see well-disciplined children, she had the softest heart when it came to the wellbeing of a student.

I was fortunate enough to talk to her 3 weeks before her passing. The kind words, various support extended by many people, teachers and students worldwide brought her solace and peace. Although she was unwell and preferred her solitude during the last 6 months, our teacher left with a grateful heart for all the kindness that she was showered with by all her loving students and colleagues worldwide.

It will be invaluable if all Mayans could forever be a sweet sister to her lovely daughter who will be the one to bring us the fond memories of our loving teacher. This is my personal request to all readers.

Chamini Wijesundera (Class of 2006)  
From Australia





## **Crisis situations in life:**

### **You are not alone**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255, or local 24 hour crisis line, or call 911 for immediate assistance.

Everyone experiences a crisis, trauma, or unusual stress. However, your response to crisis is very individual and can be influenced by many factors.

If you or someone you know, experiencing:

- Anxiety or loneliness
- Family or relationship difficulties
- Symptoms of mental illness
- Loss of a job
- Health concerns
- Abuse
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Thoughts of suicide

The 24-Hour Crisis Line provides immediate help to individuals, families and friends who are in emotional crisis. The help that you get can determine if you or your loved one needs professional consultation and if so, they can link you to the appropriate services. Help is just a phone call away.

They need to speak with you directly on the phone to provide you with the best possible assistance. By talking with you anonymously and confidentially, they will be able to find out the specifics of your situation and work with you to find answers.

A person's reaction to a crisis can take many forms:

#### **Physically, these are some symptoms:**

nausea, upset stomach, tremor, feeling uncoordinated, profuse sweating, chills, diarrhea, dizziness, difficulty in sleeping, headaches, rapid breathing.

#### **Mentally:**

slowed thinking, fearful thoughts, disorientation, memory problems, distressing dreams, blaming, illogical thinking, flashbacks of a previous trauma, poor judgment, difficulty making decisions.

#### **Emotionally:**

Anxiousness, fear, guilt, grief, denial, depression, sadness, feeling lost and abandoned, numbness, feeling isolated, anger, irritability, hopelessness, helplessness.

#### **Behaviorally:**

Crying spells, extreme hyperactivity, change in activity level, withdrawal, increase or decrease in appetite, sleep, or sex drive, increased smoking, drug and/or alcohol use, startle easily, conflicts with others, change in hygiene and/or self-care, change in social patterns and/or communication, significant decrease or increase in productivity.

If you experience chest pains, rapid heartbeat or increased blood pressure, call 9-1-1 or go to a hospital immediately.

If these responses continue for several weeks or do not go away over time, you must seek help from a friend, loved one, physician or a counselor. You can talk with a professionally trained volunteer about your situation and get a referral to a mental health counselor by contacting the 24-hour Crisis Line. (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-2737.)

*Provided by Sujatha Werake*



#### **For readers from Canada**

- [Crisis Services Canada](#)
- [Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention](#)

#### **For readers from Sri Lanka**

- [Sri Lanka Suicide Hotlines](#)
- [Sumithrayo](#)

## The Interview

*In this segment, the Maya Puwath team sits down with a MGCAANA member to hear about what they are up to these days, their experience with MGCAANA, and any advice and tips they would like to share with our readers. E-mail [mahamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com) if you would like to be interviewed by the Maya Puwath team or if you know of a MGCAANA member you would like featured in "The Interview".*

### Berlini Narampanawe

**First of all, congratulations on being elected as the new President of MGCAANA! You are also the youngest ever member to serve as President! Please tell us a bit about who you are and what you are up to these days.**

Thank you! I am very excited to be a part of our organization and looking forward to carry the legacy. I was a student at Mahamaya till end of my 10th grade (2007). While I was there, I played badminton, went to numerous tournaments with the team. I also took part in events at the inter-house sports-meet (go Maya!). I moved to U.S. in 2008. I went to Arlington High School in LaGrangeville, NY, pursued my A.S. from Dutchess Community College, Poughkeepsie, NY and received my B.S. in Biology from Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY. Currently I live in NY with my family. I recently graduated from New York Medical College with my M.S. Medical Sciences. These days I am preparing for my MCATs while applying to jobs.



**Can you talk a bit about your experience with MGCAANA?**

I joined MGCAANA in 2012. It was not until last year I got more involved in MGCAANA. I became a director in the board of directors (BOD) and the Secretary for the MGCAANA. I was very fortunate to be under a great group of Mayans in my first year in a BOD. Their experience and knowledge about MGCAANA really helped me fit in and learn about organization. This year I am hoping to accomplish much more with the help of the new BOD and fellow members of MGCAANA.

**It sounds like you have a busy life with work, studies and volunteering. How do you manage your time to do all of this?**

As I got older I realized, I can't do everything in a day. So I try my best to take it one day at a time. Once in a while I have to tell myself to "breathe"!! One thing I do is listen to some good music while I tackle my busy day. It is very important to get out the house/work place and enjoy some time with your family and friends. As I realized over the past two years being in graduate school, time management is crucial. If you are juggling five six things at time, it's a calling to buy one of those pretty planners and organize each day/week or month if possible. Don't forget to spend some time outdoors, especially on these nice summer days!

**What do you do for fun? What are your hobbies?**

One of my favorite things to do is play badminton whenever I get a chance. I am an outdoor lover, so I go on hiking and participate in outdoor adventures. If I ever get in touch with a great book, I will read it until I'm done! I also love cooking and baking.

**We have readers who are not yet members of MGCAANA. What's your message to them, to encourage them to become members of our great organization?**

I know everyone is busy with their lives and it is so hard to keep up with everything going on. I think joining MGCAANA will give members an opportunity to reconnect with fellow Mayans, support those who are in need and support other non-profit organizations around U.S and Canada. It will also be a great support to our organization to have new bright and intelligent members by becoming a member of the BOD and hold an executive role to help continue our organization to flourish. So I encourage all of you to join MGCAANA and make a difference!

**Thank you so much Berlini, for taking the time to talk with us. We wish you all the best in your future endeavors both with and outside MGCAANA!**

Maya Puwath has been reaching the MGCAANA membership since 2005, and “Pause – Rewind – Play” re-publishes past contributions to Maya Puwath, by MGCAANA members.

### Recipe Corner

**Bitter Melon (karavila)** It is a great vegetable for good health. It helps to reduce blood sugar levels. Unfortunately lot of people dislike the taste of it. There are ways to cook to make it one of your favorites.

#### **Karavila curry:**

2-3 bitter melon cut into 2” long pieces and cut again lengthwise,  
1 can of coconut milk,  
goraka 4-5 pieces (You can substitute goraka with tamarind/Siyambala.),  
1 round table spoon sugar,  
chili powder – 1-2 tsp. or to your taste,  
turmeric – ½ tsp.,  
Sri Lankan curry powder 1 tsp. or more,  
curry leaves,  
1 cup chopped red onions,  
3 garlic cloves,  
2 tps. Maldive fish,  
salt,  
cut pieces of long thin fresh white coconut meat if available,  
2 green chilies cut into long pieces  
1 ½ cups water or coconut water of a mature coconut

**Method:** Except coconut milk, mix all other ingredients into 1 ½ cups water or coconut water and cook Karavila under medium heat until the water evaporates. Then add thick coconut milk and



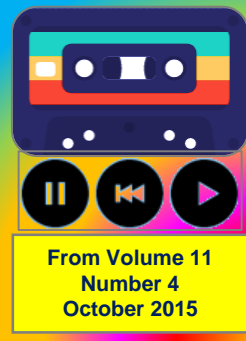
let it cook slowly for ½ hour or more until it is cooked well. If it is still bitter, add more sugar and salt.

#### **Karavila salad:**

1 whole bitter melon gourd cut into small and thin pieces  
1 whole onion cut into thin and small pieces  
lime/lemon juice (of one lime/lemon)  
½ - 1 tomato cut into pieces  
1-2 green chilies  
Maldive fish - one full table spoon  
Freshly shredded coconut – ½ cup or more  
Salt

**Method:** Mix all ingredients well together and serve. It is delicious!

*Sent by Sujatha Werake*



### Some Upcoming MGCAANA Activities

- Board Meetings (June & July)
- Next Newsletter (August)
- MGCAANA Undergraduate and Graduate Scholarship (Application period starts September 1)



## Poson Poya Day

June 27, 2018

*"Poson full-moon poya day (Poson Poya Day/Poson Festival) is celebrated the arrival of Buddhism in [Sri Lanka](#) in the 3rd century BC, a festival of great historical and religious significance celebrated island-wide by Buddhists. Poson, held on the full moon day of June, commemorates the occasion over 2,000 years ago when Arahat Mahinda, son of Emperor Asoka of India, converted King Devanampiyatissa to Buddhism. The main center of celebration is [Mihintale](#), the ancient monastic complex where the royal missionary monk Mahinda perched the first sermon to the ruling king and at [Anuradhapura](#) the ancient capital, to which large crowd of pilgrims converge. Mass religious observances, illuminations pageants are part of the celebrations."*  
(excerpt extracted from: [lanka.com](#))



## Kandy Esala Perahera

Tentative dates: July 17-27, 2018

*"The Esala Perahera in [Kandy](#) is one of the oldest and grandest of all Buddhist festivals in Sri Lanka, featuring dancers, jugglers, musicians, fire-breathers, and lavishly decorated elephants. This is held in Esala (July or August) which is the month that is believed to commemorate the first teaching given by the Buddha after he attained enlightenment. The [Kandy Esala Perahera](#) lasts for ten days while various festivities can be witnessed right throughout. The Sinhalese term 'Perahera' means a parade of musicians, dancers, singers, acrobats and various other performers accompanied by a large number of caparisoned Tuskers and Elephants parading the streets in celebration of a religious event."*  
(excerpt extracted from: [daladamaligawa.org](#))

### Mahamaya Girls' College Wins All Island Swimming Championship



MGCAANA wishes to congratulate the swim team of Mahamaya Girls' College for retaining the coveted All Island School Swimming Championship for the 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive year! The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual All Island Swimming Championship was held at the Sugathadasa Stadium swimming pool from June 6-10, 2018. We are very proud of your achievement and wish you continued success in all your future endeavors!

← Image source: [ThePapare.com](http://ThePapare.com)



*Maheshika Hewege, the captain of the Mahamaya swim team receiving the trophy from acting Principal, Himali Senadheera at a felicitation ceremony at the school premises. (Source: [Sunday Observer](http://SundayObserver.lk))*



## Want to know what your new Board of Directors (BOD) will be undertaking in 2018-2019?

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, as well as news from Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

No time to write an article but would still like to contribute to Maya Puwath? Not a problem! We welcome content produced by children of MGCAANA member that we will feature in the Kids' Corner of Maya Puwath.

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

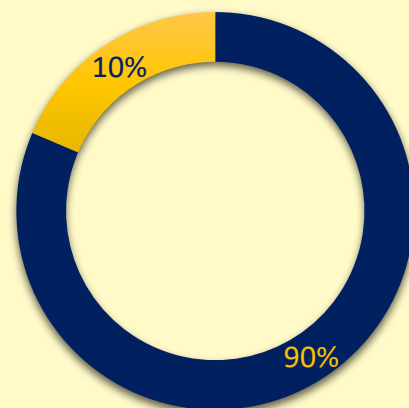
[Mahamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com)

## 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 June 2018, **\$18,000.00** has been raised thanks to generous donors like you! If you would like to help VSTF reach its \$20,000 goal more quickly, 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)***