

Maya Puwath - මායා පුවත්

*Bi-Monthly Newsletter of Mahamaya Girls' College
Alumnae Association of North America (MGCAANA)*
Volume 14 – Issue 4 – August 2018



Message from the Editors

Dear readers,

It is hard to believe that summer is almost coming to an end! We, the members of the MayaPuwath Newsletter Committee have been unusually busy over the past couple of months, juggling multiple responsibilities at work, home and the community. All in all, it has been a good summer, and we hope that yours too has been a good one.

Let us be the first to share with you some great news about MGCAANA's Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (VSTF). Many of you probably recall that we have been striving to reach an initial goal of \$20,000.00. Well, we have officially achieved that goal as of August 2018! We are certain that the recipients of Vidya scholarships from our alma mater are very grateful for your generosity over the years.

In this issue you will also find announcements related to MGCAANA's annual activities, including our annual charitable donations and also the Undergraduate & Graduate Scholarship Program for 2018-2019.

In addition to our usual segments, you will find in this issue: a poem to ponder about "free" education; a heartfelt appreciation for late Mrs. Sujatha Herathge; useful words of advice on money matters; and an eye-opening article titled "Deterioration in Quality of Social Interaction with Increased Internet Usage."

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of Maya Puwath and enjoy the remainder of summer.

Sincerely,

Maya Puwath Newsletter Committee

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Durangamam ekacaram
asariram guhasayam
ye cittam samyamissanti
mokkhanti marabandhana.



"The mind wanders far and moves about alone: it is non-material; it lies in the cave (chamber) of the heart. Those who control their mind will be free from the bonds of Mara."

[Dhammapada \(Verse 037\)](#)

MGCAANA's Charitable Donations

In 2017, the Executive Committee and the new Board of Directors (BOD) explored new ways to engage our valued MGCAANA members from both Canada and the United States. Continuing that practice, the current Executive Committee and the BOD are looking to engage you in selecting two charitable organizations of members' choice toward which MGCAANA will contribute its annual charitable donations. Please visit this [survey link](#) to cast your vote and pick a charity of your choice to give back to the communities we live in!



MGCAANA UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (2018-2019)

The Selection Committee of the MGCAANA Undergraduate & Graduate Scholarship Program is looking for Mahamaya alumnae who demonstrate outstanding academic achievements, leadership and active participation in extra curricular activities and also a significant level of financial need. Intended to cover the cost of textbooks for a semester, scholarships of \$500.00 each will be awarded to two (2) candidates.

Application Period & Deadline: September 1, 2018-December 31, 2018

Award Notification: By January 31, 2019

Once the application period begins, please visit <http://www.mahamayaalumna.org/scholarship.html> to view and download the scholarship application. If you have any questions about this scholarship program, please contact us at mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com.

We look forward to receiving your applications!

Products of “Free” Education

By S. M. U. P. Mawalagedera

Can you define “Free” in Education?
Could it possibly have been free for 13 Years?
For some it is a total of 17 Years!
In a system that you do not;
even know of the origin,
How many knows of;
1945 Free Education Act,
How many knows of;
Christopher William Wijekoon Kannangara,
Bottom-line how many knows of;
Tax payers’ money!
Here we are free from a system we grew up,
Are we entitled to be free of responsibility,
Do we choose to ignore?
Or do we chose to recollect?
Choice my friend - is yours!

**Poetry
to
Ponder**



S. M.U. P. Mawalagedera is a second-generation Mahamayan from the Class of 2006, currently residing in Australia doing graduate studies. This “Poetry to Ponder” segment would be an ode to where she came from and what she has experienced.

A beloved teacher, caretaker and custodian - Sujatha Herathge

Our lives would have never been the same
Without all the memories you left behind
For when we were teenagers in our prime
You let our spirits and souls unwind
We got scolded many a time in class
When we did not heed your advice
We rebelled against your rules
But our respect for you was never concise
You gave us freedom to be ourselves
But you always kept a watchful eye
For given the girls that we were in school
One can never let their confidence on us rely
It was the best days of our school life
Grade nine, ten and eleven
Doubts were amok whether we will ever survive the O/Levels
But your faith in us helped us leaven

When we were mad about celebrities
Going nuts about Cricket
You simply joined in the fun
For you too enjoyed many a gossip snippet
We were a bunch of imps
But you made us settle down
We were immature and crazy
But in our madness, you never let us drown

When we walked up the path behind you
On the seventeenth of June, to where you finally lay
We were crying a river inside of us
For there was nothing more to say
May you be at peace wherever you are
For you deserve nothing more
A beloved teacher, caretaker and custodian
Of our reminiscences of yore

Written by Dr. Viduranga Y. Waisundara

(This appreciation was originally published on the [Sunday Times](#) on July 8, 2018)



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...

Viduranga (Class of 1999) resides in Sri Lanka, pursuing independent consultancy and editorial work. She is the Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI) Ambassador to Sri Lanka - an organization exploring and promoting food safety regulations and improving food security. She is presently working with the National Education Commission of Sri Lanka to study Postgraduate Education and Research in the country for policy recommendations and reformulation.

Words of Advice on Money Matters...

By Sujatha Werake



Roth IRAs for Kids:

Do you wish your children could start saving for retirement long before you did? It may be possible with a Roth IRA. It can help them learn the art of saving money early. The children can invest money earned from jobs such as babysitting, mowing lawns, chores, etc. Talk to your financial advisor about tax issues and how to set up a Roth IRA. Find a kid-friendly mutual fund or broker who will permit you to cosign for it and be sure meticulous records are kept of earnings.



Money—Live Within Your Means:

Most importantly, stay out of debt. Start by identifying and eliminating the monthly costs you and your family are willing to do without, such as satellite television, renting a movie rather than going to the cinema, eating out less, taking your own lunch to work from home, etc. The money saved can then go toward paying off debt. Then, identify and eliminate the big things you and your family are willing to do without, such as one car instead of two, moving into a smaller house, etc. Try not to make purchases, big or small, if they are not absolutely necessary.



For Canadian readers: the Canadian equivalent of a Roth IRA is a Tax Free Savings Account (TFSA). Follow [this link](#) for a general comparison.

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 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".

Dharshani Nanayakkara

Please tell us a bit about who you are and what you are up to these days. I am a proud Mayan and an alumna of the class of 2001. Upon completion of the O/L exam, I migrated to the US with my parents. I was a member of the school dance team. I earned my BS in biology at University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), MS in public health at Columbia University in New York, and MD at University of Nevada School of Medicine. I then completed my residency training in combined internal medicine and pediatrics as well as fellowship training in infectious diseases at University of Southern California. I'm currently pursuing a advanced training in transplant infectious diseases at UCLA.

Can you talk a bit about your experience with MGCAANA? I have been a member of MGCAANA since its inception in 2005. I was the secretary during its inaugural year and absolutely loved learning how to run this amazing organization. Working with the founding members, including Mrs. Sujatha Werake, has been such a pleasurable experience. I became the MGCAANA President in 2006 and hosted the AGM in Las Vegas, Nevada. I co-chaired the Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund and created the introductory pamphlet as well as the scholarship application, that are used till date. I served as the chair of the Scholarship Selection Committee for nearly 10 years. I currently am the chair of the Nanda Pussegoda Leula Memorial Scholarship. I am also an advisor to the BOD and executive committee. Despite my busy life, I have enjoyed being a part of MGCAANA. I proudly spoke about all my work with the organization during medical school, residency and fellowship interviews. I love being able to give back to the school that is very dear to my heart. Mrs. Werake is like a mother to me and has guided me through life for the past 18 years. I treasure all the friendships I have made through MGCAANA.

Those who know you know you as someone who is quite busy with work & life. How do you maintain a good work-life balance? I feel like I work all the time. I have literally been studying and training all my life. I recently got married in August 2017, so I'm slowly learning how to manage a healthy work-life balance. I try to stay connected to my Sri Lankan roots. I enjoy going to the temple with my parents and attending Sri Lankan events in Los Angeles.

What do you do for fun? What are your hobbies? I love traveling. My husband and I went to Athens and Santorini, Greece in April and Kauai, Hawaii last week. I have many countries on my list of places to visit. I love spending time with my friends - we like to do low key things, such as movies, including Bollywood movies, brunch dates, mani-pedis, massages, and shopping. My partner-in-crime and shopping buddy forever is my beautiful mom. I used to have many hobbies before medical school, such as reading, playing the piano, writing, etc., but it all disappeared after day one of medical school. I have found a new love for cooking... when I have time!

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? MGCAANA is a great platform to network with amazing women! I have learned so much from and have sought help/advice from many of our members. Plus, you can get involved in many projects to help us give back to our alma mater. It does not take much time to get involved with our BOD and different committees.

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



Pause – Rewind – Play

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

Source: Kelly Nault, MA award winning parenting of *When You’re About To Go Off The Deep End, Don’t Take Your Kids With You* inspires moms to put themselves first—for the sake of their children. She shares time-tested tools that motivate children to want to be well behaved, responsible and happy!

Law of Attraction Used for Your Parenting Success

By Kelly Nault, M.A.

Law of Attraction and Effective Parenting

Struggle is not part of the natural order of life. One never sees a cherry tree struggle to produce blossoms when given the right environment. Why? Because the tree is simply following its purpose—its basic nature. Fortunately, struggle does not have to be part of the parenting equation either. This is good news for many parents because if we choose to use the law of attraction we can experience a happier, more peaceful and respectful home. Yes, this can even mean eliminating award-winning temper tantrums for good. Sound too good to be true? Read on.

What is Attraction Parenting?

Attraction parenting employs the principle that the behavior we experience in our home we have attracted to us by our thoughts, deeds and actions. You see, the people around us, especially those closest to us (like our children), simply reflect and respond to our own feelings and actions. As much as we would like to blame our kids for their behavior (especially when they are pushing every button we have, plus some we never knew we had!), generally our kids’ only mirror what is going on within us. So, if your kids currently have you spluttering and dog-paddling in the “parenting deep end”, it may be time to ask yourself: How am I contributing to my kids behavior? (Gulp!) Are my kids responding to my lack of patience and skyrocketing stress? Are my children desperately seeking quality time with me because I haven’t been giving them much special time lately? Are my kids no fun to be around because frankly, I am not fun to be around? Answering these questions truthfully can quickly get to the root cause of their misbehavior.

The Four Secret Parenting Law of Attraction Tips

There are six parenting tips below that can positively transform any household of chaos, frustration and stress into harmony, joy and peace.

The Secret Parenting Law of Attraction Tip #1 – You are modeling for your children how to behave each moment of every day

Children watch what we do far more than they listen to what we say. Thus, if you yell at them to be quiet, push them to do what you want them to do, and use a disrespectful tone when frustrated—you only teach them how to treat you. Stop! Take a breath and make a commitment to walk your talk. Model for your child how a happy, healthy and sane human being looks, talks and acts. Then watch them follow your lead.

The Secret Parenting Law of Attraction Tip #2 – You are your child’s most powerful self-esteem mirror

Your child seeks approval from you more than anyone else. You are the mirror that tells them how deserving or unworthy they are. They will believe

whatever you reflect to them—positive or negative! Overt and even subtle put-downs can be devastating to their sense of self-worth and wellbeing. When a child has low self-esteem they will often act out, misbehave and drive you nuts! By using the power of positive words and actions to encourage, rather than discourage, you can be a beacon of light illuminating your child’s worth. This gift of positive mirroring can inspire your child to believe in themselves, follow their passions and ultimately be someone who is a delight to be around. Therefore, choose to reflect your child’s brilliance, special god-given talents, and worth by being grateful for what they are and do.

The Secret Parenting Law of Attraction Tip #3 – The more you focus on the positives of your child, the more you will experience them

One of the most powerful aspects of the law of attraction is that whatever you focus on, expands. Thus, if you spend much of the day nagging about all the things your child isn’t doing, or all the bad things your child is doing, you simply attract more of these frustrating experiences to you. Instead, we can take affirmative steps to create the behaviors we want by simply noticing and being grateful for what we do like. One of my favorite parenting gratitude techniques is what I call the “Dog Factor!” You know how dogs unconditionally show us love and affection—greeting us at the door enthusiastically, whether we’ve been gone for two days or two minutes? Well, apply this approach to your own family. Beam with love when they come home or when they enter the room. Remember that no matter what you are experiencing right now with your family, there are thousands of people in this world (like those who can’t have kids!) who would gladly trade places with you.

The Secret Parenting Law of Attraction Tip #4 – Discipline only teaches children to do better next time, when they feel better

This is probably the most difficult parenting tip to accept. Discipline doesn’t have to feel bad to be effective. In fact, most discipline that is based on punitive punishment (things like yelling and taking away privileges), only teaches our kids to lie, and not get caught next time! You reap what you sow. Thus, if your punishment is focused on rehashing all the bad things your child has done, you are only attracting more of this bad behavior to you in the near future. For discipline to really inspire children to do better next time it needs to be: Be respectful Focus on the solution (and how to do better next time) By filling our home with gratitude for all we do have and with positive words and actions, we can begin to experience more pleasant interactions and actively create the family life of our dreams.

Sent By Nilmini Wickremeratne



Some Upcoming MGCAANA Activities

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

Sticky Toffee Pudding

Recipe Corner

Ingredients

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ Cups pitted chopped dates
1 Teaspoon baking soda
 $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup boiling water
 $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup white sugar
 $\frac{1}{3}$ Cup butter
2 Beaten eggs
1 $\frac{1}{8}$ Cups self-rising flour
 $\frac{1}{3}$ Cup butter
 $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup packed brown sugar
 $\frac{2}{3}$ Cup evaporated milk
1 Teaspoon vanilla

Directions

Preheat oven 350°. Combine dates and baking soda. Pour enough boiling water over to cover dates and soak it covering the dish.

Cream the butter with white sugar until light, add the egg mixture (beaten eggs), then the flour and date mixture including water and mix well.

Pour to a buttered baking dish and bake until its set, about thirty to forty minutes.

The Sauce

Into a small saucepan combine brown sugar, butter and evaporated milk.

Cook over medium heat and bring to boil. Turn heat down and cook for another five minutes, stirring a little.

Take it off the fire. Pour the sauce over individual servings of the pudding.



Sent by Lilika Molligoda

Deterioration in Quality of Social Interaction with Increased Internet Usage

Kids Corner

By Medha Dorabawila Bulumulla

As the internet emerged and expanded, it enhanced the ability to develop connections all over the world. Yet overall, it has decreased the quality of social interaction. Parts of society is addicted to the internet, has isolated those addicted, and decreased their participation in real life activities. Individuals can develop friendships online, but these will not have the same quality and sustainability as real life friendships. With the ability to access information and activities online, humans are more likely to be isolated in homes, and less likely to participate in the community as in the absence of the internet. There is also an increased level of bullying that occurs online which negatively impacts society. Social interactions have deteriorated or negatively impact due to excessive internet usage.

With the emergence of the internet humans have become addicted to online activity. People are spending an enormous amount of the time on the internet. It is estimated that people aged 16 and 24 years spend more than 27 hours a week on the internet. By spending an inordinate amount of time online, they lose the opportunity to develop solid quality relationships with other humans. They tend to disconnect with their family and current relationships due to their addiction to the internet. Spending increased time on the internet can cause increased levels of dopamine which makes the brain want to spend longer time online. Those with decreased levels of dopamine and serotonin will seek ways to get these hormones. This behavior is like other kinds of addictions. Many online interactions including general surfing, pornography, chat rooms, message boards, social networking sites, video games, email, texting, cloud applications and games provide rewards which can be equivalent to or similar to gambling. These addictions can ruin how they interact with others because their focus will be on these internet activities.

Some may argue that being online can increase social circles, but the relationships created online are not the same. Online relationships may lack trust because one cannot see their friends face to face. For example, with the prevalent occurrences of 'catfishing' (trick using a fictional online profile) and other tricking online the same kind of trust as with face to face relationships cannot be built. 'Catfishing' is not illegal even though it is against the rules of certain websites like Facebook's terms and conditions. In the absence of legal protections to prevent such, users will continue trick others to achieve their goals. An individual was 'catfished' by a woman who was pretending to be celebrity. He purchased a ring for her because he believed he was speaking to her. This type of trickery will cause both emotional and financial harm to the victim. Given this, it is difficult to build trust in online relationships as threats such as catfishing remain. Although, lack of trust can exist in real life relationships, cases of catfishing, lying and viruses are more prevalent with relationships developed online.

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An advantage in online use may be the ability to discuss certain aspects or topics that are difficult to communicate in in-person relationships, but this has limitations and may not be the best form of social interaction. In the long run, it will limit and create barriers in their abilities for real life and open discussion due a number of reasons. Habits of developing friendships online limit the individual to remain inside and impedes the ability become an active participant in their community. It is important to socialize and understand individuals with different interests, personalities, cultures and backgrounds. While there is diversity in individuals available online, as humans we gravitate towards those similar. As such, online activity can limit the ability to meet, and develop relationships with diverse individuals in the real world and would result in a restricted social circle.

Unequal online access has a negative impact on society and social interactions. Whether the individual chooses not to be online or they are unable to be online, an artificial divide is created between those with access and those that do not. Those that are not online will not be as informed or have the same degree of contacts as those online regularly. It also excludes this group of people from this new social interaction. Popular and perhaps necessary or useful information available online will not be shared equally and a group will be constantly excluded.

While the internet has enabled people to perform many tasks online, it compromises overall health of society. Now people can shop, watch movies, and find means to entertain themselves online. Some may argue that this benefits the individual because there is a ready supply of activities for them to be involved in, but this limits their social interactions. In daily life, humans communicate with others by simply leaving the homes to perform daily tasks. It is healthy for humans to perform daily tasks like shopping and fun activities outside of the home. If most tasks are performed online, 'small talk' which can help the individual become more comfortable in social interactions and meet new people is decreased. This also limits individuals from becoming active and productive participants of the community, isolates and compromises their health.

The internet has enabled humans to be constantly connected to those they love and care about. Some may believe this is beneficial for humanity because it increases social interaction, but this constant connection is not beneficial for humanity. This devalues normal social interaction -- seeing people and spending time will lose value given the ability to communicate on the phone or over text. This has enabled people to have long distance relationships and stay connected to old friends. Some may believe this is beneficial, but this still isolates them. They will remain connected to people that are no longer in their life and limits them from meeting and developing relationships in their new life. For example, if someone moves away and focuses on staying close to old friends from their hometown, they will be unable to create friends in their new environment. This isolates the individual and negatively impacts future social interactions.

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Individuals are susceptible to bullying online. People feel more comfortable saying things online behind a screen and often fail to fully comprehend or recognize the consequences of their actions. Society does not need another outlet to harm others. A recent survey found that about half of youth have experienced cyberbullying of some kind, but only half of them communicated this to an adult. Cyber bullying is more secretive and harder to detect than traditional bullying. Cyber bullying can include a variety of actions. These include spreading rumors, pictures or videos that people do not want seen, making fun of, sending threatening messages to an individual or stalking. Because there is such a variation of cyberbullying that can happen online, there is a lot of different actions that can negatively impact others. There is a positive association between depression and cyberbullying. If the internet is hurting individuals, this means that the internet is negatively impacting social interaction.

Social interaction has been negatively impact with the internet. People devote excessive time online, limiting them in creating, sustaining and maintaining meaningful real life relationships. Internet limits the ability to meet new diverse individuals and relationships built will not have the same quality. To ensure meaningful social interactions, we need to reduce internet usage.



This September, Medha Bulumulla will be a Senior at Niskayuna High School in Niskayuna, New York. A version of this article was a part of an assignment in a Summer College class she took at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

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.mahamayaalumna.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

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

Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (VSTF)

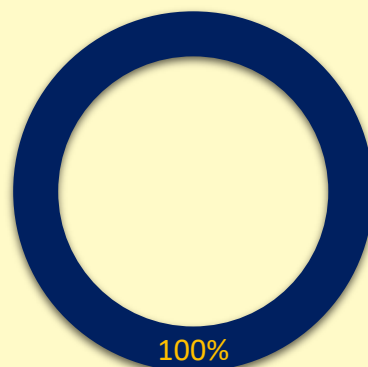
VSTF awards scholarships to the most deserving, economically-disadvantaged students who do well in their studies and extra curricular activities from grades 6 and up at Mahamaya. **We are happy to announce that VSTF has officially reached its initial goal of \$20,000 thanks to generous donors like you!**

If you would like to support MGCAANA in its fundraising efforts, you can donate (online/check) and most importantly, encourage others to donate:

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

Stay tuned for VSTF's next goal!

VSTF Progress: Initial Goal of 20,000.00



■ Funds Raised

Newsletter Committee: Vihara Dharmaratne, Vajeera Dorabawila, Lilika Molligoda

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