

# Maya Puwath - මායා පුවත්

**Bi-Monthly Newsletter of Mahamaya Girls' College  
Alumnae Association of North America (MGCAANA)  
Volume 15 – Issue 1 – February 2019**



## Message from the Editors

Dear readers,

We hope that your holidays were wonderful and that the new year has been treating you well so far. In this first issue of Maya Puwath for 2019, you will find a lot of exciting information about various MGCAANA-related activities.

In this issue, we announce the two recipients of the 2018-2019 MGCAANA Undergraduate & Graduate Scholarships. We would like to congratulate MGCAANA members Manushi Welandawe and Kavisha Silva for receiving these scholarships. We are very excited for you! You will also be pleased to see some important information about the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of MGCAANA. We hope you can make a trip to Connecticut, USA during the Memorial Day long weekend. We will share more information in the coming months.

We also give you a sneak peek into an exciting fundraising project that the MGCAANA Board of Directors plan on launching soon. Do take a look to check out some nice MGCAANA swag you will receive if you support the fundraising project.

We interviewed one of our former MGCAANA Presidents Sriyani Dissanayake for our interview segment, and we hope especially our non-MGCAANA members will read it. Sriyani's experience with MGCAANA is truly inspiring, and she has some encouraging words for Mayans in North America who have not yet joined MGCAANA.

We are also featuring a tasty recipe by one of our MGCAANA members: Sri Lankan style spicy chicken pizza from scratch. Do let us know if you try it out! Last but not least, we also have some words of wisdom on road safety by our dear Mrs. Sujatha Werake. Do take a moment to read it, especially given the hazardous driving conditions during this winter weather.

Happy reading and best wishes,

Maya Puwath Newsletter Committee

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***Appamatto pamattesu  
suttesu bahu jagaro  
abalassa mva sighthasso  
hitva yati sumedhaso.***



“Mindful amongst the negligent, highly vigilant amongst the drowsy, the person of wisdom advances like a race-horse, leaving the jade behind.”

**[Dhammapada \(Verse 29\)](#)**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**15<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of  
Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae  
Association in North America (MGCAANA)**

**When:** Memorial Day Long Weekend (May 25-27, 2019)

**Where:** University of Hartford, 200 Bloomfield Avenue, West  
Hartford, Connecticut 06117, USA

**Host:** Dr. Hashini Mohottala

**Nearest Airport:** <http://www.bradleyairport.com/>

*The AGM will be followed by a dinner reception (venue TBC).  
Stay tuned for more information to come! For specific  
inquiries, please write to us at  
[mahamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com).*



**PLAN YOUR TRIP AND SEE YOU IN MAY 2019!**



# PLANNING YOUR AGM TRIP!

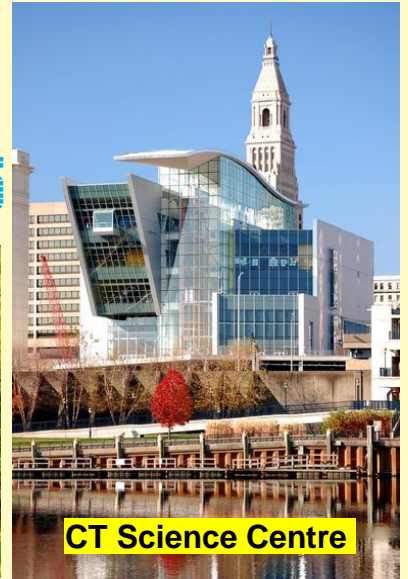
## NEARBY ATTRACTIONS



**Rose Garden, Elizabeth Park  
West Hartford**



**Mark Twain House**



**CT Science Centre**

## OTHER ATTRACTIONS IN CONNECTICUT



**Gillette Castle**



**Mystic Seaport**



**Essex Steam Train and  
Riverboat experience**



**Foxwoods Highflyer**



## *Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae Association of North America*

### **Congratulations to our 2018-2019 Scholarship Recipients!**

We received applications from several of our alumnae who have demonstrated excellence in their academic achievements, leadership ability, and participation in extracurricular activities. We would like to thank all our applicants who took the time and effort to send in their application. Our goal is to motivate our student members to shine academically as well as personally, so we truly hope that you will take advantage of this wonderful opportunity in the years to come, if you did not receive a scholarship this year. As always, if there is anything that we can do to help you, please let us know.

We are extremely proud to announce our 2018-2019 MGCAANA Scholars – **Manushi Welandawe** and **Kavisha Silva**. As this year's MGCAANA scholars, they will each receive a \$500.00 scholarship.

**Manushi** is currently an MS candidate in Statistics at the University of Rhode Island (URI). She completed her G.C.E. O/L education at Mahamaya Girls' College before entering Devi Balika Vidyalaya, Colombo. She graduated from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura with first-class honors in 2015 under the specialization of Statistics. She was a temporary Teaching Assistant with the Department of Statistics at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and later held a Junior Analyst position in Peppercube Consultants Pvt. Ltd. During her Master's education at URI, she worked as a Teaching Assistant and she is currently working as a Graduate Administrative Assistant. Her research contributions at URI includes collaborating with URI's College of Nursing on developing a statistical model to identify the relationship between early life stress of infants and their developing gut microbiomes. Her thesis research involves developing a new statistical model to analyze missing data in gut microbiome compositions. She has been recently awarded a Ph.D. position from the University of Connecticut's Department of Statistics. Currently, she holds the Treasurer position of the American Statistical Association's URI Student Chapter.

**Kavisha** is an undergraduate student at the University of Maryland College Park, majoring in Cell Biology. She was a student at Mahamaya Girls' College until grade 10. Kavisha was part of Mahamaya Swim team for 10 years. During that time she received Special Awards in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2014 for her All Island performance in swimming. She was also a member of Mahamaya's Girl Guide Association and the Art Society. Kavisha moved to the USA in 2014 and graduated from Wheaton High school in 2018 with honors. At Wheaton High school she was a member of school's Varsity Swim Team and Biomedicine Academy. She has been interning at National Institutes of Health during summer for the past two years, studying about gene expression levels of the kidney transplant patients' adipose tissue.

On behalf of MGCAANA, the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, and the Scholarship Selection Committee would like to sincerely congratulate Manushi and Kavisha, and wish them continued success in their academic and professional pursuits!



## 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".*

### Sriyani Dissanayake

**Q: Please tell us a bit about who you are what you are up to these days.**

**A:** At Mahamaya, I was known by my maiden name Sriyani Galahitiyawa. I graduated from Mahamaya alongside the 1979 batch. Currently I live in Gainesville, Florida and I am an elementary school teacher at a private school. Though I have been in this position for many years, I was not a teacher throughout my life. I was employed for ten years as a Laboratory Technician at the Faculty of Medicine within the Biochemistry Department at University of Peradeniya. After I got married, my husband and I moved to Boston, Massachusetts where I worked in a bank, starting as a teller and working my way up to become an Assistant Branch Manager. I stayed within the banking industry for approximately ten years before transitioning to teaching, where I have been for almost 12 years. During the transition, I lived with my family in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, just outside Dubai for 4 years. Over the past three decades, living in three different countries, I have been blessed with many experiences. I am married to Dr. Senarath Dissanayake, a retired medical college professor. We have a daughter, Upuli, Anuradha Dissanayake who is a PhD student at the University of Florida College of Medicine.



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

**A:** I joined MGCAANA a very long time ago. My first experience was attending the AGM held in West Palm Beach, Florida. That gathering gave me greater exposure of what MGCAANA encompasses, showing me a warm welcome between old and new members. Since then, I have been closely associated with the association, engaging in charitable events while doing my best to contribute to the association. I was honored to have been invited to participate in the Executive Committee of 2014, with the additional honor of serving as President of MGCAANA from 2014 to 2016. My experience has been both positive and rewarding. I worked with great people and beautiful minds to achieve our goals, centered on MGCAANA's original theme of providing help where it is needed most. Working with such an intelligent and motivated group of Mayans, spread across the USA and Canada was logistically challenging, but highlighted our ability to rise above challenges to come together.

**Q: For those who know you well, you're known to be a busy person. Do you have any tips or advice on maintaining a healthy work-life balance while also actively participating in MGCAANA activities?**

**A:** I have always aimed to structure my thinking around the philosophy of 'If you truly want to do something, you will find a way to make the time.' This central thought served as my guidance throughout my leadership with MGCAANA. Like many of our members and leadership, I was busy as both a mother and wife while also working full time as a fifth-grade teacher. Though I often had only moments of free time I made a point to prioritize MGCAANA without compromising my other responsibilities, sometimes sacrificing my sleep to do so. The work ethic ingrained in me by my education at Mahamaya all those years ago gave me the motivation to accomplish my tasks to the best of my ability. I also received incredible support from experienced fellow Mayans with the MGCAANA, who provided valuable advice throughout my time. Though there are many individuals to whom I give credit in this regard, I wish to specifically mention one inspiring woman in particular; one of the founders of MGCAANA and my former teacher at Mahamaya, Mrs. Sujatha Werake. She was my guiding light throughout my many MGCAANA decisions and projects. Between the influence and support of our alumni community, and my passion to provide the best service to our organization, I was able to draw strength and balance the many responsibilities in life we face. **(continued on next page...)**

## The Interview (contd.)

*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".*

### Sriyani Dissanayake (contd.)

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

**A:** In recent years I have been lucky enough to find time for many recreational activities. Though I love to try new hobbies at every opportunity, two activities have quickly become favorites: tennis and yoga. I now play for the USTA Gainesville League, and often spend so much time practicing with teammates that I have little time for much else! It's truly a great source of exercise and fun! I also love to swim and run, participating in as many local 5k runs as I can. When at home I like to spend time with crochet, oil painting, and writing.

**Q: 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?**

**A:** For any alumnae deciding on becoming an active member with MGCAANA, the message I'd like to leave with you is this: what legacy will you leave behind for your community? MGCAANA allowed me, and others, to proactively give back to our society while pushing our alumnae community forward, providing necessary foundations so that our association can continue to give back to our community for many years to come. As adults, we have achieved the milestones in our life because of the education we received from Mahamaya in our youth, but we are more than just a sum of our accomplishments. We are a community that promotes unity, generosity, and equity for future generations to be given the best chances through free education and access to teachers who serve as lifelong mentors. We provide a platform for graduates to continue to foster bonds between batch mates, cultivating relationships to show the importance of the people around you who help make your achievements possible. Our school is a vital resource to the new generations of our beloved Sri Lanka. Being a Mahamaya alumna is something to be proud of but being a member of MGCAANA is a way to show your appreciation and give back to the community you are proud to be a part of. I invite you to consider what we stand for and to consider joining us; we are a great organization because of individuals like you who work hard to make us great.

**Thank you so much Sriyani for your valuable time and also for providing us with a couple of wonderful photos from your time at Mahamaya! It's been a pleasure interviewing you!**

Thank you, my pleasure!





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

## **Fatigue-Fighting Tips**

*Fatigue is a feeling that you're chronically tired – mentally and physically. It can be caused by a number of factors, including unhealthy lifestyle choices, workplace problems and stress. There are many different ways you can boost your energy. See your health practitioner first to make sure you don't have an underlying medical problem. Dietary suggestions If you want more energy, look at your diet and make sure you're following these basic guidelines:*

- Drink lots of water. A dehydrated body functions less efficiently.
- Be careful with caffeine. 1 or 2 caffeinated drinks per day like coffee, tea or cola can boost your energy and mental alertness, but more than 6 caffeinated drinks per day may make you anxious, irritable, and negatively affect your performance.
- Eat breakfast. Food boosts your metabolism and gives your body energy to burn. The brain relies on glucose for fuel, so choose carbohydrate-rich breakfast foods such as cereals or whole grain bread..
- Don't skip meals. Going without food for too long allows blood sugar levels to dip. Try to eat regularly to maintain your energy levels throughout the day.
- Don't crash diet. Low calorie diets or diets that severely restrict carbohydrates don't contain enough energy for your body's needs. The typical crash diet also deprives the body of nutrients such as vitamins, minerals and trace elements.
- Eat a healthy diet. Increase the amount of fruit, vegetables, whole grain foods, low fat dairy products and lean meats in your diet. Reduce the amount of high fat, high sugar and high salt foods.
- Don't overeat. Large meals can drain your energy. Instead of eating 3 big meals per day, try eating 6 mini-meals to spread your calorie intake more evenly. This will result in more constant blood sugar and insulin levels. You'll also find it easier to lose excess body fat.
- Eat iron rich foods. Women in particular are prone to iron-deficiency (anemia). Make sure your diet includes iron rich foods such as lean red meat.

(Source: <http://www.actnowbc.ca/>)

Sent by: Nazrana Caffoor

## **Some Upcoming MGCAANA Activities**

- Board Meetings (March, April)
- Next Newsletter (April)
- Annual General Meeting (May – Memorial Day Weekend in Connecticut)

# Sri Lankan-Style Spicy Chicken Pizza from Scratch *By Sureni Ranasinghe*

## Recipe Corner

### INGREDIENTS

#### For the dough

3 cups all-purpose flour  
(*Tip: Start from 2 1/2 cups and add remaining flour when kneading*)  
1 1/2 cups hot water  
One packet (8.75g) active dry yeast  
1 tsp sugar  
2 tbsp olive oil  
1/4tsp salt

**\*\*Note: note that the amount of ingredients to marinate and cook the chicken are for two (2) pizzas. If you plan on making only one pizza, use half the ingredients.**

### STEPS

#### Making the dough

Start by mixing dry yeast with little hot water, use about 1/4cup of hot water for this. Mix well & set aside for about 5-10 minutes.

In a large bowl start mixing flour and water, start with 2 1/2 cups of flour.

To the flour add salt, sugar and give it a mix.

Then add oil and the yeast mixture with the remaining water. Mix everything using a spatula or a wooded spoon, then start adding flour little at time to get the right consistency. When the dough is still a little sticky, transfer to a floured surface.

Sprinkle some flour on to the hands and knead the dough for about 5-8 minutes. While kneading add flour to reduce the stickiness. Dough should be little sticky but not too sticky. Altogether, 3 cups of flour is used.

Once the right consistency is achieved, shape the dough in to a ball, place it in a greased bowl, cover with a dry cloth and rest it in a warm place. Leave it minimum for an hour, if possible leave it for few hours. Prepare the chicken while the dough is sitting to proof.

#### Marinating and Cooking the Chicken

Cut chicken into one-inch pieces.

Add chili flakes, roasted curry powder, salt to taste, and paprika; mix well.

Add vinegar, soy sauce mix again and leave it to marinate for half an hour.

In a saucepan add olive oil, and to that sliced garlic. When garlic turns a little brown add onions, curry leaves and sauté everything for a few minutes.

To this, add the marinated chicken.

Combine well and fry on high heat to evaporate the gravy.

Once the chicken is cooked, turn off the cooker and let it cool.

#### For the chicken marinade \*\*

450g chicken thighs  
1 1/2 tsp chili flakes  
2 tsp roasted curry powder  
1 tsp paprika  
1 1/2 tsp vinegar (or lime juice)  
2 tsp soy sauce

#### To cook the chicken \*\*

2 tbsp olive oil  
2-3 cloves garlic, sliced  
1/2 onion, cubed  
Few curry leaves, thinly sliced

#### For the pizza topping

2 tbsp olive oil to brush the dough  
4-5 tbsp chili garlic sauce  
160g fresh mozzarella cheese  
Half of the cooked chicken \*\*  
¼ onion, sliced & separated  
2 jalapeño peppers, sliced (or banana peppers)  
1/4 cup black olives, sliced



#### Making the Pizza

Preheat oven to 400F degrees.

After at least an hour, take the dough and transfer it to a floured surface, press down with floured fingertips, flattening the dough into a flat disk (flat ball).

Work from the center and push the dough outward making the dough in to a larger round.

Pick the dough up and transfer to a pizza tray/pan, lightly flour the tray; slightly press the dough around to the edges of the pan.

Brush the entire dough with olive oil before adding any toppings, this will seal the dough.

Spread the chili garlic sauce on to the dough; you can use marinara sauce instead. Chili garlic sauce adds little spiciness to the pizza.

Put a layer of cheese, fresh mozzarella cheese is used for the pizza pictured here.

Add the remaining topping, chicken followed by onions, jalapeño peppers, and olives.

Bake the pizza for about 25-30 minutes, baking time can change slightly depend on the oven.

Slice the pizza when it is still hot; you can also brush some olive oil around the crust.

A YouTube video for this recipe is available at:

<https://bit.ly/2TdLjn2>



# Road Safety in All Weather Conditions

By Sujatha Werake



**Ice (especially black ice), rain, snow, and other slippery conditions** can be more hazardous while driving.

**What is black ice?** Black ice, sometimes called clear ice, is a thin coating of glaze ice on a surface, especially on roads. The ice itself is not black, but visually transparent. The glasslike ice on black road below seems like black ice. Black ice can be the cause for lot of accidents.

**How is black ice made?** Not only snow and rain, but a little moisture in the air and the road surface that is cold enough to freeze can make black ice. It is difficult to see. Black ice can form in the shade and on bridges before it forms anywhere else. Slow down and be mindful of the situation.

**Fog, heavy rains and snow are the causes of low-visibility.** Slow down and keep your concentration on safe driving when you encounter these conditions.

**Leaves, debris, and oil** can make the road slick. The first 10 minutes **after** light **rain** begins are the most dangerous from the accumulation of **oils, grease, tire residue**, and fluids that leak from motor vehicles on the **road**. During long periods of dry weather, **oils** and other fluids dry and build up on **roads**. The so-called "first wet" is indeed the most hazardous. That's when rainwater loosens the surface **oils**, creating nasty, greasy driving surfaces that often catch drivers off guard.

**Moss buildup** becomes a problem on roads for driving.

**Water on roads:** Hydroplaning can be nerve-wracking and most dangerous.

**What is Hydroplaning?** Hydroplaning happens when the water in front of the tires builds up faster than your car tires can push it out of the way. This causes the car to rise up and slide on a thin layer of water between your tires and the roadway. When your speed increased to the point where the water has not time to be pushed out of the way quick enough, the tire starts to ride up on top of the water. That leads to lose control of the vehicle.

## **What we can do as responsible drivers:**

- Keep a sharp eye out for these hazardous conditions.
- Slow down. Drive at a slower speed that is appropriate for the conditions of the road, and your vehicle. Remember that posted speed limits are intended for ideal driving conditions.
- Give yourself plenty of room between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you. It takes longer to slow down and come to a stop in wet weather.
- If you find yourself hydroplaning, stay calm. Do not brake or turn suddenly. Ease your foot off the gas pedal until you can feel the road surface again. Brake gently to slow down further and gain even more traction control.
- DO NOT use cruise control in adverse weather conditions.
- Turn on your headlights in low visibility, any time your wipers are on, or during times of low light. It is an excellent practice.
- Give yourself and others on the road, plenty of room to make mistakes and enough time for you to react to them.
- Keep away from cell phone use while driving. Keep away from distractions.

## **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)

## **Sneak Peek: 2019 MGCAANA Fundraising Project**

The MGCAANA Board of Directors will soon launch its 2019 Fundraising Project! You will also get an opportunity own some cool MGCAANA swag of your choice for a \$20 donation:

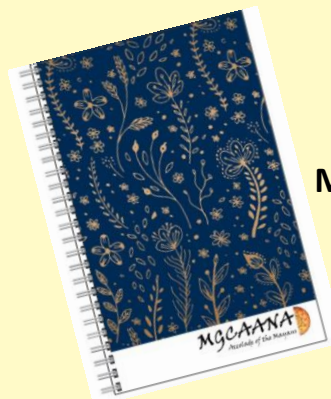


**MGCAANA Mug (11 oz)**

**OR**

**3 Premium ballpoint pens in black**

**OR**



**MGCAANA Notebook**

**Stay tuned for more information!**

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

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