

# Maya Puwath - මායා පුවත්

**Bi-Monthly Newsletter of Mahamaya Girls' College  
Alumnae Association of North America (MGCAANA)  
Volume 17 – Issue 1 – February 2021**



## Message from the Editors

Dear readers,

As this is the first time we are meeting you this year, we hope that 2021 has been treating you well so far. We imagine that you continue to take precautions against COVID-19 and its variants, patiently waiting for some normalcy. While the pandemic has impacted us in everything we do, fortunately MGCAANA has been able to adapt to this reality and continue to thrive. In this issue, you will see more information about the 17th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of MGCAANA going virtual. We hope those who couldn't travel to previous AGMs will join our virtual AGM! Also, if you are interested in nominating yourself to be part of next year's Board of Directors, don't hesitate to reach out to MGCAANA.

In this issue, you will also find information on the upcoming MGCAANA Guest Speaker Webinar; the announcement of the 2020-2021 MGCAANA Undergraduate/Graduate Scholarship recipient; as well as how to make a donation to support renovations at Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy. Speaking of our alma mater, Mahamaya Girls' College celebrated its 89th anniversary on January 14th, 2021. In this issue, you will find some photos of how the school celebrated the anniversary, by offering 2564 books to the Temple of the Tooth Relic to mark the 2564 Sambuddha Jayanthi.

While we are only into the first couple of months of this year, you will see that there have been a lot of celebrations in our community, including some upcoming ones: 73rd Independence Day of Sri Lanka (February 4th); Black History Month (February); International Women's Day (March 8); Sinhala Hindu New Year (April 14th) etc. To celebrate these occasions meaningfully, we have included relevant resources in this newsletter.

On a somber note, also included is an obituary, of the father of our dear MGCAANA member Mrs. Niranjala Tillakaratne, who passed away on February 14th, 2021; our sincere condolences to Mrs. Tilakaratne's family.

Last but not least, we included not one, but two delicious recipes that you could try out! We hope that you enjoy reading this issue of Maya Puwath. If you have any contribution for the next issue, we always welcome those!

Until we meet in April, take good care!

The Newsletter Committee

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## Dhammapadha

*Etha passathimam lokam  
cittam rajarathupamam  
yattha bala visidanti  
nattbi sango vijanat*



Come, look at this world (i.e., the five khandhas), which is like an ornamented royal carriage. Fools flounder in this world of the khandhas, but the wise are not attached to it.

**Dhammapadha**  
**(Verse 171)**

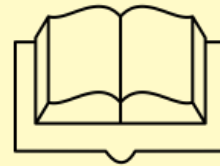
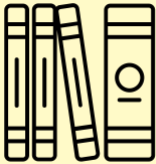
# Celebration of the 89th Anniversary of Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy

Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy celebrated its 89th anniversary on January 14th, 2021. To mark this anniversary and to celebrate the occasion of the 2564th Sambuddha Jayanthi, 2564 books that were written and illustrated by students and teachers of Mahamaya Girls' College, were offered to the sacred Temple of the Tooth Relic. Here are some captures by the Photographic Society of Mahamaya Girls' College.





# Celebration of the 89th Anniversary of Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy



Source: [“Photographic Society of Mahamaya Girls' College” Facebook Page](#)

# Mahamaya Fundraiser!



**It's time to show our gratitude to mother Mahamaya. Help us with the fundraiser event to renovate our school.  
Please donate generously!**

1. Navigate to: <http://www.mahamayaalumnina.org/>
2. Click on “[Donate Online Now](#)” Button
3. Type description as ‘Mahamaya Renovations’ when submitting your donation

**Please make your donation by March 13th, 2021**

**Happy 73rd  
Independence  
Day Sri Lanka!**



Visit NewsFirst on how Sri Lanka celebrated its 73rd Independence Day on February 4th, 2021: <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2021/02/04/sri-lanka-celebrates-73rd-independence-day-today/>

# The 17th Annual General Meeting of MGCAANA

Even though we were very hopeful to do an in person Annual General Meeting (AGM) this year, given the current pandemic situation and the CDC/Health Canada guidelines, the Board of Directors & the Executive Committee have decided to yet again hold a virtual AGM. As such, the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of MGCAANA would like to invite you to the **17th MGCAANA Annual General Meeting** on **Saturday, May 22nd, 2021 @ 4 p.m. EDT**. MGCAANA members will receive the agenda and the Zoom information in due course.

## **Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae Association of North America (MGCAANA)**



*Cordially invites you to the*

### **17<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

*Conducted Virtually*

*on*

**Saturday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021 at 4pm EDT**

*\*Zoom Information to Follow*

**We hope to see you in great numbers at the 17th Annual General Meeting!**

### **Calling All MGCAANA Members:**

**Serving in the Next MGCAANA Board of Directors (BOD) for 2021-2022**

Interested in honing your leadership skills and working with a dynamic group of Mayans across Canada and the U.S.? If the answer is "yes," you could become part of the MGCAANA BOD for 2021-2022! You must be a MGCAANA member, but no prior experience required. Former BOD members who have served in the BOD for 1 year or 2 years are also encouraged to nominate yourself for the next BOD. Please send an email to [Mahamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com) to indicate your interest. If you have questions regarding specific responsibilities, time commitment etc., feel free to email your questions as well!



## MGCAANA Guest Speaker Webinar Series

We are excited that the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee continue to introduce more guest speakers in the coming months to conduct lectures/talks on topics that will benefit our member community. We hope that you already got a chance to participate in the webinars hosted so far, over the past few months. For those new to this series, a few examples of the topics we would like to cover include: mindfulness; entrepreneurship; leadership; medical advice; advice for international students; COVID-19 and the pandemic season; college admissions; financial and retirement planning; buying a house or a property; balancing family/work/life; social issues; introducing Sri Lankan culture to our children, etc.

We can be proud that we have many MGCAANA members and honorary members excelling in a multitude of fields in the USA and Canada. We cordially invite you to support by contributing toward conducting a session to share your knowledge/expertise with the community. Please also note that we welcome guest speakers outside the MGCAANA community as well.

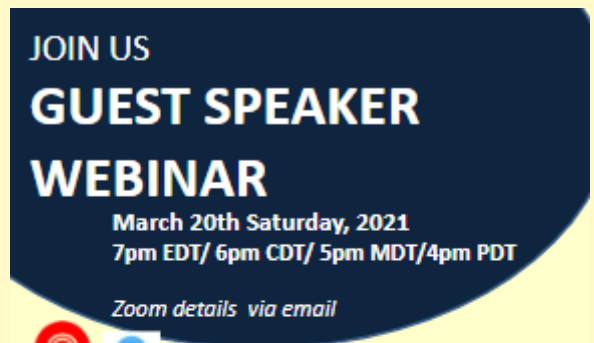
These sessions will be held virtually via Zoom, in the form of a webinar (with possible live streaming on MGCAANA Facebook page). The duration of each event so far has varied between 45 minutes to one hour. The dates & times will be decided based on the number of speakers & speakers' availability. MGCAANA members will receive meeting invitation with a Zoom link prior to each webinar.

### **Upcoming webinar:**

- "Q&A with a Neurologist" by Dr. K. Sivakumar (March 20, 2021)

### **Past webinars:**

- "Financial Strategies at Different Stages of Life: Youth, Middle Age, and Retirement" Anoma Kulathunga (February 20, 2021)
- "Pathways to Your American Dream" by Harshi Waters (January 23, 2021)
- "Let's Talk Life...", by Aruni Marapane (Pilapitiya) (November 21, 2020)
- "Speech- Language, voice, swallowing, & cognition: SLP tips for birth to 100+" by Dakshika Bandaranayake (October 17, 2020)
- "Gratitude and Mental Health," by Sugi Subawickrama (September 19, 2020)
- "Entrepreneurship: What Does It Take to Start Your Own Business?" by Gaya Samarasingha (August 15, 2020)
- "Mindfulness & Its Impact on Excelling Day-to-Day Life," by Ven. Nedagamuwe Samitha Thero (July 12, 2020)



JOIN US  
**GUEST SPEAKER  
WEBINAR**  
March 20th Saturday, 2021  
7pm EDT/ 6pm CDT/ 5pm MDT/4pm PDT  
Zoom details via email



### **Q&A with a Neurologist**

#### **K. Sivakumar, MD**

Associate Professor of Clinical Neurology  
-University of Arizona College of Medicine





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

### **Congratulations to our 20120-2021 Scholarship Recipient!**

Every year, MGCAANA receives 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. As always, if there is anything that we can do to help you, please let us know.

We are extremely proud to announce our 2020-2021 MGCAANA Scholar – Lasangi Dhanapala. As this year's MGCAANA scholar, she will receive a \$300.00 scholarship.

Lasangi is currently a Ph.D. student at the Department of Chemistry, University of Connecticut (UConn). Lasangi completed her primary and secondary education at Mahamaya Girls' college until she graduated in 2010, completing her G.C.E A/L examination. After completing her studies, she joined the Institute of Fundamental Studies (IFS), Hantana as a student Research Assistant and her research work there was awarded with a National Research Council (NRC) merit award for scientific publication in 2015. She then joined the Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya and graduated in 2017 with a First-Class Honors degree specialized in Chemistry. Soon after her graduation, she joined the University of Peradeniya as a Teaching Assistant, where she worked until she joined UConn. Lasangi worked as a Teaching Assistant at UConn in 2017 and 2018, and she was awarded the "Excellence in Teaching" Award for two consecutive years. Currently, she is working as a Research Assistant focusing her studies on the development of microfluidic devices for detection of protein cancer biomarkers, focusing particularly on prostate cancer. The research effort is mainly directed towards developing an early detection system to red-flag cancer before it starts to spread into the aggressive forms.

On behalf of MGCAANA, the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, and the Scholarship Selection Committee would like to sincerely congratulate Lasangi and wish her continued success in her academic and professional pursuits.

## Recipe Corner

### New York-Style Cheesecake

Made by Berlini Narampanawe, inspired by [onceuponachef.com](https://www.onceuponachef.com)

Link to the recipe:

<https://www.onceuponachef.com/recipes/new-york-style-cheesecake.html>



### Shakshuka Dinner



*"This one-skillet wonder is perfect for busy weeknights when you need to get dinner on the table fast. It's a comforting dish that makes a hearty breakfast or delicious brunch, too."*



Link to the recipe: <https://www.eggs.ca/recipes/shakshuka-dinner>

### Contributing to Recipe Corner

Would you like to share with us photos of your food creations to be featured on Recipe Corner? Or do you have any of your own recipes that you would like to share with your fellow Maya Puwath readers? If so, please send in your photos, recipes as well as links to the original recipes to the MGCAANA e-mail address: [Mahamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com)





## International Women's Day (March 8, 2021)

UN Women announces the theme for International Women's Day, March 8th, 2021 (IWD 2021) as, **"Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world."** The theme celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.



Please visit UN Women for more information:  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/11/announcer-international-womens-day-2021>

## February: Black History Month

- Black History Month is celebrated in the U.S. and in Canada.
- In the U.S., to commemorate and celebrate the contributions to the U.S. made by people of African descent, American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week nearly a century ago.
- In Canada, during Black History Month, people celebrate the many achievements and contributions of Black Canadians and their communities who, throughout history, have done so much to make Canada the culturally diverse, compassionate, and prosperous nation it is today.

### Useful links for more information:

- [US Census Bureau - National African American \(Black\) History Month: February 2021](#)
- [Government of Canada - Black history in Canada](#)

## Happy Sinhala & Hindu New Year (April 14, 2021)

The Maya Puwath Newsletter Committee would like to wish all MGCAANA members in Canada and the United States a Happy Sinhala and Tamil New Year!



# Obituary

*It is with our deepest sorrow that we inform you the death of Mr. L.B.S. Wickramasinghe, the beloved father of our dear MGCAANA member Mrs. Niranjala Tillakaratne. We, the MGCAANA family wish to extend our sincere condolences to Mrs. Niranjala Tillakaratne and her family during these difficult times. May the love of family and support of the friends bring them comfort during these difficult times.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Please find below obituary shared by Mrs. Niranjala Tillakaratne:

L.B.S. Wickramasinghe passed away peacefully the morning of Sunday, February 14, 2021 in Los Angeles, California after a brief battle with COVID. He was the father of Mahamaya alumnae Dr. Niranjala Tillakaratne (1974) and Manjula Wickramasinghe (1983), and grandfather to Mahamaya alumnae Lalindika Wickramasinghe (2006), Sumudu Abeynayake (until 11th grade, 2003), and Thanuji Ranasinghe (until 10th grade, 2013). He was 93 years old.

Born in 1927 in Nugaliyadda, Pahatha Hewaheta, Kandy, he was the oldest of 4 brothers and 8 sisters. He was in the Sri Lankan police for 40 years and retired as a Chief Police Inspector.

He had 8 children: Damayanthi (husband Harold), Dr. Niranjala (husband Tillak), Lalith (deceased, wife Lathuka Navaratne, Mahamaya alumna 1978), Renuka (late husband Gamini), Kosala (deceased), Manjula (husband Senaka), Chaminda (wife Shakya), and Jagath (wife Yasmika). He had 7 grandchildren: Dr. Lalinda, Mihiri, Lalindika, Sumudu, Thanuji, Ruhara, and Thedara. He was predeceased by his first wife Sumana in 1976, and his second wife Nanda in 2014.

If you would like to know more about Mr. Wickramasinghe, his son-in-law L.B. Tillakaratne (Tillak), wrote an article about his long and illustrious life for Ceylon Today last year: <https://ceylontoday.lk/news/a-bit-of-unorthodox-history-of-the-police>.



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***May he attain the Supreme Bliss of Nibbana!***

## Reaching the New Goal Set for Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (VSTF)

The Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (VSTF) set up by MGCAANA provides financial aid to financially-disadvantaged students at Mahamaya Girls' College. Scholarships from VSTF pay for educational expenses and/or boarding fees of students attending Mahamaya. "Vidya," a Sanskrit word, means knowledge or wisdom. Our initial goal was to raise at least \$20,000. We reached this goal in 2019.

To continue this noble cause, a new goal was set to **\$30,000**, and as of February 2021, \$28,155 has been raised. We were able to donate 13 scholarships for the year 2020 despite Covid related obstacles and school closures.

To donate online or by cheque, please visit:

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

### VSTF Progress



■ Funds Raised ■ Remaining

## Want to know what your Board of Directors (BOD) is up to?

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)

## Upcoming MGCAANA Activities

- Board Meetings (March, April, May)
- Guest Speaker Webinar (March 20th, 2021)
- Next Newsletter (April)
- 17th AGM (Virtual) (May 22nd, 2021)

### Newsletter Committee:

Vihara Dharmaratne, Vajeera Dorabawila, Berlini Narampanawe

### JOIN US!

**MGCAANA Newsletter Committee is looking to recruit new committee members to work on "Maya Puwath," the bi-monthly newsletter of MGCAANA. As part of the Newsletter Committee, you'll be able to develop these useful skills: communication; writing; graphic design; team work; creative thinking; time management; leadership etc.**

**If you are interested, please reach out to the Committee through:**

[Mayamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:Mayamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com)