



## DHAMMAPADA

“Just as a tree, though cut down, can grow again and again if its roots are undamaged and strong, in the same way if the roots of craving are not wholly uprooted sorrows will come again and again.”

“Be capable, upright, & straightforward, easy to instruct, gentle, & not conceited, content & easy to support, with few duties, living lightly, with peaceful faculties, masterful, modest, & no greed for supporters. Do not do the slightest thing that the wise would later censure.”  
Sutta Nipata I, 8



## Quotes from Mark Twain:

**“ The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex, overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.”**

**“Don’t go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first.”**

**" Brick walls are there for a reason. The brick walls are not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to show how badly we want something. Because the brick walls are there to stop the people who don't want something badly enough. They are there to keep out the other people"**

**Randy Pausch ( the Last Lecture)**



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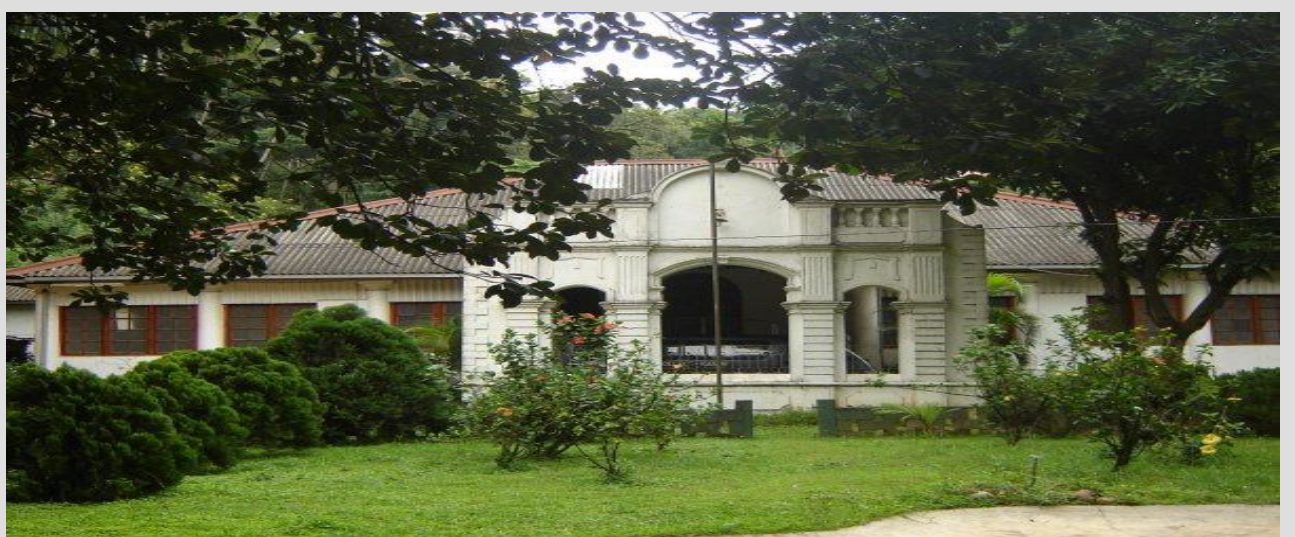
*Dear Readers,*

*We are just about to complete our fifth successful year of Mahamaya Girls' College Alumni Association in North America. MGCAANA will officially begin its 6<sup>th</sup> year at the next Annual General Meeting which is to be held on July 3, 2010 in Valencia, California. At the moment, the Board of Directors, the Steering Committee and our wonderful organizers living in the California area are preparing for the AGM with great enthusiasm.*

*The AGM is the only event of the year where MGCAANA members can meet each other and get together in person. Therefore we encourage our dear readers to attend the AGM to take the wonderful opportunity of meeting your fellow MGCAANA members and well wishers and celebrate together the years of success our Association has achieved.*

*As this issue of Maya Puwath is dedicated mainly to MGCAANA's upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, today you will get to hear from our Board of Directors. They will be sharing their thoughts and experiences of being part of MGCAANA Board of Directors. Additional information about the AGM is also included in this issue, so our readers still have the opportunity to consider attending the AGM if you haven't already planned on doing so.*

*Finally, the Maya Puwath editorial committee would like to thank the outgoing Executive Committee and the Board of Directors and look forward to welcoming the new officers who will be elected at the AGM on July 3, 2010. We appreciate the support given to us by the Board of Directors throughout the whole year. We also thank our dear readers who have been with us this year contributing to Maya Puwath and supporting us, and we hope that you all join with us in beginning a wonderful 6<sup>th</sup> year of Mahamaya Girls' College Alumni Association in North America.*





**The honor of your presence is requested at**

**The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of**

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

**On Saturday July 03, 2010**  
**At 2 p.m. (PST).**

**Venue :**  
**Old Orchard Elementary School**  
**25141 North Avenida Rondel, Valencia, CA 91355.**

**Alumnae, their families, honorary members, & well-wishers ,**  
**are cordially invited to join us for dinner following the AGM.**

**On July 03, 2010**  
**At 7.30 p.m. (PST)**  
**At**  
**28246 Matador Place.**  
**Dinner is hosted by ,**  
**Mrs. Geetha Eragoda & Mr. Charitha Eragoda**

**Please RSVP at Mahamaya\_alumnae@yahoo.com or**  
**- (817)-542-5599 or 425-260-0997**

***Cast your votes today!***

*As a member of MGCAANA it is your right to vote to elect the Board of Directors at the AGM. Those who are unable to attend the AGM can vote by proxy. For this purpose, the paper proxy ballots and AGM invitations were mailed out last week, and you should have already received it at your address. As a convenience, we are providing you with another opportunity to cast your vote online instead of mailing it in. You can use the following link to vote online. Your votes will remain confidential and will be counted at the AGM by a third party.*

<http://www.mahamayaalumna.org/ballot1011.php>

**ATTENTION VOTERS**

*Who is eligible to vote?*

*The members who have paid their membership dues for the year 2009/2010 or 2010/2011. The membership payments will be accepted until July 3rd for the year 2009/2010.*

*Thank you!*

*Board of Directors of MGCAANA (2009/2010).*



***MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT***

It is truly hard to believe how quickly a year has passed and that I am writing this article as the soon-to- be past President of MGCAANA. It was certainly a busy year, which has probably led to it passing in the blink of an eye.

I am very thankful for the dedication of the MGCAANA BOD members, executive committee members, advisors, all MGCAANA members and other volunteers who have worked tirelessly to advance the goals and the visibility of our organization this year. I sincerely appreciate the support I've had from the BOD & the executive committee, the advisors, and the members.

We were able to successfully complete several projects during my time as president and I am excited about the momentum we have gained during the year 2009/10. Most importantly, we have achieved a great deal since setting up of the Vidya Trust Fund for the economically disadvantaged students at Mahamaya College. It took nearly three years of hard work to complete this task of setting up the trust fund and we are finally ready to give out scholarships. There is much work that remains to be done as I look ahead; in particular, fund-raising for the Vidya Trust Fund. We sincerely hope you will support our noble cause to reach our initial goal of \$20,000 to help these students who urgently need our help to stay in school. Let's support them to reach their dreams.

As an organization we must always be looking back, to learn from the past, and looking forward to new projects and make a change in our future. As always, we welcome your input at any and every level. If there is anything you wish to contribute to our cause (be it ideas, time or money), please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

I take this opportunity to invite you all to the forthcoming 6<sup>th</sup> AGM in Valencia, CA. I look forward to meeting new members, catching up with current members, and to have a great time at the upcoming AGM on July 03<sup>rd</sup>.

Lastly, I thank you all, for allowing me to serve you as the President of MGCAANA over the last year. It has been an honor, a joy, and an experience that I will cherish throughout my life. I have met many new interesting colleagues, made many good friends and enjoyed it to the fullest.

With Best Wishes,  
Himashinie Diyalanage.



*You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do .*

*~ Eleanor Roosevelt ~*

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### Great work Chilana !

Thank you for sharing your art work with the Maya family.  
We look forward to publishing your child's creative art  
work, poetry or writing. No submission is too small for us,  
and we welcome all age groups. Send in your "young talent"  
submissions to :

**mahamya\_alumnae@yahoo.com.**



**Artist : Chilana Amaratunga**  
**Age : 6 years**  
**Theme : Coin Presentation**

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Dear readers,

One of our old girls of Mahamaya, Chaminie Prasadini Chandrasekara ( 94 A/L Batch, Peradeniya 95/96Batch) is suffering from leukemia and she needs to have a bone marrow transplant in India soon. The cost of this procedure and medication is said to be Rs. 7-10 million and her friends from Mahamaya and Peradeniya appeal for your contribution in helping to cover this enormous cost.

Thus, we make an urgent request to you: PLEASE JOIN US TO RAISE FUNDS on Chaminie's behalf.

Contact:

Rohan (Husband) - +94714025349  
Champika (Jala/Australia) - +61413254728  
Chandima (Sri Lanka) - +94716903648

Bank details

Name : C.M.C.P Chandrasekara  
A/C No : 8257000272  
Bank : Commercial Bank  
Branch : Kiribathgoda

### JOB OPPORTUNITY:

#### Scholarships/Fellowships

American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) Fellowship Competition. The American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) invites applications from scholars from all disciplines who wish to conduct their research in India. Junior fellowships are given to doctoral candidates to conduct research for their dissertations in India for up to eleven months. Senior long-term (six to nine months) and short-term (four months or less) fellowships are available for scholars who hold the Ph.D. degree. Scholarly/Professional development fellowships are available to scholars and professionals who have not previously worked in India. Eligible applicants include 1) U.S. citizens; and 2) citizens of other countries who are students or faculty members at U.S. colleges and universities (this rule does not apply to U.S. citizens). For applications please contact the American Institute of Indian Studies, 1130 E. 59th Street, Chicago, IL 60637. (773) 702-8638.

Email: [aiis@uchicago.edu](mailto:aiis@uchicago.edu).

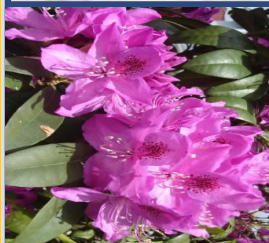
Web site: [www.indiastudies.org](http://www.indiastudies.org).

**Application deadline is July 1, 2010.**

PROGRAM & PUBLICATIONS ASSISTANT, Center for South Asia Studies,  
UC Berkeley  
Assistant II - #11032

#### VIEW AND APPLY FOR THIS JOB AT:

[https://hrw-vip-prod.berkeley.edu/psp/JOBSPROD/EMPLOYEE/HRMS/c/HRS\\_HRAM.HRS\\_CE.GBL?Page=HRS\\_CE\\_JOB\\_DTL&Action=A&JobOpeningId=11032&SiteId=1&PostingSeq=1](https://hrw-vip-prod.berkeley.edu/psp/JOBSPROD/EMPLOYEE/HRMS/c/HRS_HRAM.HRS_CE.GBL?Page=HRS_CE_JOB_DTL&Action=A&JobOpeningId=11032&SiteId=1&PostingSeq=1)



*It's not what you do once in a while, it's what you do day in and day out that makes the difference.*  
~Jenny Craig~

## THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS



*Last July I was privileged to attend our AGM which was held in Des Moines, Iowa. Neranjika akka and Sanjaya ayya hosted the whole event. I went down to Des Moines in the morning to attend the meeting and was glad to see familiar faces after several years. At night we all got together at Neranjika akka's place. After having a delicious and well prepared dinner we sang Sinhala songs. That is what I enjoyed the most. I felt very much at home and it reminded me of the times we sang on the bus when we went on school trips. All the hard work Neranjika akka and Sanjaya ayya put into making it a success and their hospitality are much appreciated and will be remembered.*

*This year the AGM is to be held in Los Angeles, California. I am very sad because I won't be able to attend. If you attend this year's meeting, I can assure you that you will have a great time like I had in Des Moines. I invite all of you to try to make it to the AGM and enjoy.*

~~~Sumudu Leelananda~~~



*I became a member of MGCAANA in the year 2009. In the same year I was also elected as the Secretary of the organization. Since then MGCAANA and its activities had always been a part of my life. The monthly meetings not only gave me a chance to reconnect with my old school mates but also helped to me get to know new friends. The monthly meetings were conducted over the phone; however, hearing the voices of my fellow sisters made me feel at home. Not only did my sisters at MGCAANA help me to overcome my feelings of nostalgia but also gave me the strength and courage during hard times. MGCAANA showed true colors of a Mayan; commitment, dedication, determination and enthusiasm. This made me proud to be a member as well as an Officer since the first year I relocated to the United States.*

*Now that MGCAANA is about to complete its 2009/2010 fiscal year, the organization is planning to have the AGM on the July 3, 2010 in California. Mrs. Geetha Eragoda and her husband will be the host of this event. This will be my first AGM since I joined MGCAANA hence; I was really looking forward to it. Unfortunately due to unavoidable reasons I had to call off my plans of attending this year's AGM. I do regret this, as I am missing a great opportunity of meeting my fellow Mayans. Therefore, I encourage all the members and non members of MGCAANA to make this an opportunity to meet your old friends and make this event a memorable one!*

~~~ Dasmanthie Chin~~~



*MGCAANA was the creation of four determined members: Sujatha Werake, Arushie Nugapitiya, Harshi Waters and Neranjika Dissanayaka. Their vision was to help Mayans here in the United States, and our alma mater. Through the years, MGCAANA has been able to help many Mayans living in the United States by providing scholarships, kind words or a hand to help when away from home. MGCAANA brings a sense of "family" to those of us who are here in the United States, far away from our mother land. MGCAANA gave me the same warm and fuzzy feeling when I joined in 2005 after a dear friend told me about the organization. I have since then been part of the Executive Committee by serving as the secretary, treasurer and also in the newsletter committee. It's been a wonderful experience to serve MGCAANA and to be part of Mahamaya, our dear mother.*

*During the past two years, I have got to know many other MGCAANA members in the committee when we have our monthly meetings. However, I haven't seen any of these members, except in pictures since all our meetings are over the phone. The 6<sup>th</sup> AGM in Valencia will be my very first AGM, and I am looking forward to meeting all the members. I am looking forward to seeing the faces of all those I've got to know over the past years.*

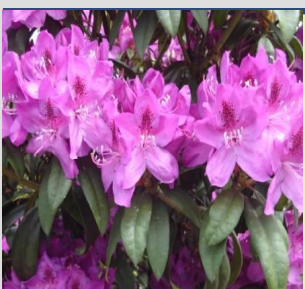
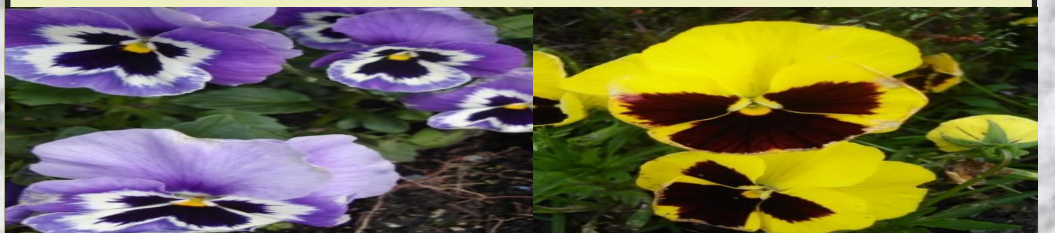
~ ~Pamuditha Mahadiulwewa~~

***Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.  
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.***

***It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.  
We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?***

***Actually, who are you not to be?***

***~ Marianne Williamson~***



***The secret of success is to be in harmony with existence, to be always calm to let each wave of life wash us a little farther up the shore.***

***-- Cyril Connolly***



Although I joined MGCAANA in 2006 I was not able to attend an AGM until 2007. It was held in Las Vegas, Nevada and was hosted by Dharshani Nanayakka and her parents. It was a great experience, because since I came to USA in 1998, I hadn't met any other fellow Mayans. I got to meet Mrs. Werake who taught me Library Science when I was in 5th grade and other Mayans who are Board of Directors and served in the executive committee of MGCAANA. Since I served in the Executive Committee I heard their voices every month but it was really nice to see and meet them in person. The AGM was quite informative. Even though I served in the Executive Committee and knew about all the projects that were being carried out, it was nice to hear about them from another person's point of view and as a member in the audience. I was really proud of our organization. Another highlight of the meeting was the dinner organized by Dharshani and her parents. That was quite a treat! We ate a lot and exchanged many old memories! I made new friends with the hope of being friends for life. Thanks Dharshini and Mr. & Mrs. Nanayakkara for a memorable night!

The 2nd AGM I attended was in Boston, MA in 2008 and it was hosted by Preeni Sandanayaka. Since I was the President that year, I thought it would be quite hectic trying to run around to get things organized. But Preeni Akka did such an amazing job organizing everything to the point where all I had to do was just show up. I have not met Preeni akka before and I was so grateful and thankful that she was willing to do this for the Organization. It was so exciting to see both familiar faces and new faces. We sang the school song with a lot of pride and due to the high participation our lovely voices filled the room. Preeni Sandanayake and Vanoji Balasooriya were members of the Sinhala choir and that helped quite a lot. After the AGM we went to Preeni Akka's residence for a lovely Sri Lankan dinner. The night was filled with smiles, laughter, swapping old stories and of course delicious food. We sang the night away and had a great time. Thank you Preeni Akkad for organizing the event!

The 3rd AGM was held in Des Moines, Iowa in 2009, and was hosted by one of our steering committee members Neranjika Dissanayake. I must give a special thanks to Neranjika Akka at this moment as I wouldn't have joined the Executive Committee of MGCAANA without her encouragement. Due to the high airfare, my husband Ravi and I decided to drive to Des Moines from Dallas, Texas. The drive was 10 hours long and because of the excitement I didn't feel tired at all! Neranjika Akka was gracious enough to offer her house for us to spend the night. The AGM was quite a success and as usual I met old friends who I met through MGCAANA and new Mayans who lived in the surrounding areas. Once the AGM was over, the dinner was served at the Amaratunge residence. The dinner was followed by a session of Baila and a series of laughter that lasted through the wee hours of the night. I must say that I don't think I have ever laughed so hard in my entire life. Now only if I remember why we were laughing that much...hmmmm. Thank you Neranjika Akka for organizing the AGM and a wonderful dinner.

Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the AGM this year in California. However, I must encourage those who have not yet attended an AGM to make an effort to do so. You might be able to meet friends from school days or make friendships that would last a lifetime.

~~~~Erandi Ranaweera~~~~



**Watch your thoughts, for they become words.  
Watch your words, for they become actions.  
Watch your actions, for they become habits.  
Watch your habits, for they become character.  
Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.**

~~~ Author Unknown ~~~



MGCAANA and the Annual General Meeting: Some thoughts

What a wonderful work MGCAANA does in bringing all Mayans together in this vast continent (US and Canada) by taking the advantage of new technology!!! We are so fortunate to have such dedicated members who take the leadership to bring us to where we are today. We are a "family" away from home that celebrates our valued friendships, and shares our lives in many ways. We are a community compared to no other. We rejoice in each other's achievements and happiness, and we support each other in our sorrowful events when reality hits at times. Every alumna is a precious member of our MGCAANA community and they are equally important members no matter how unique they can be. Accepting uniqueness is the most beautiful thing in our Organization. It makes us more colorful, outstanding and valuable.

Once a year we meet at our Annual General Meeting and that is something fun to look forward to. I never missed a single AGM so far since we started in 2005. Every AGM has been so much fun. At these meetings I met some of my old friends, and made new friends who were in school before or after my time. You become a friend of a whole family when you come to know one alumna. It is so much fun to share stories of your school days, such as breaking the rules, or getting punished for silly things you did. We can laugh at them now.

We are planning to have a lot of fun on Saturday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> in Los Angeles. We will have a sing-along, dancing and skits after dinner. I hope you will make an attempt to join us this time. Those of you who can not make it this time, there is a next time in some other city in US or Canada next year in summer. Best wishes to you!

~~Sujatha Werake~~



I joined MGCAANA in 2008 and became a member of the Board of Directors in 2009. I also got to serve as the Webmaster as well as one of the editors to the Maya Puwath Editorial Committee. I have really enjoyed working with our fellow Officers of various committees and MGCAANA members during the past year.

When I first joined MGCAANA I was the youngest member of the Association and I believe that I am the youngest to serve in the Board of Directors. The transition from being a senior at Mahamaya just two years ago and then all of a sudden to be one of the youngest members of the Association has been an interesting experience. It has also made me aware that I will always be a Mayan no matter where I go or what I do, a fact I proudly accept.

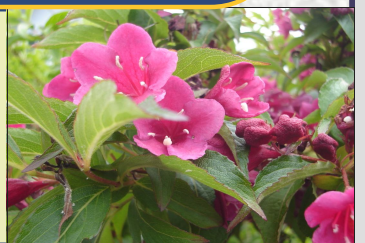
As this 2009/2010 has been my first year serving as a Director, it was also an important learning experience to me. I was inspired by the enthusiasm of our fellow Directors in working toward the success and progress of MGCAANA despite the fact that all of them were very much involved in their careers and studies as well. It was not only the BOD, but also alumnae of other committees, the steering committee, previous office bearers, and fellow MGCAANA members who were always so eager to help out with MGCAANA activities despite their busy schedules. Considering the fact that I live thousands of miles away from home, the past year with MGCAANA has truly been a blessing to me.

Everywhere I go, I always look for Mayans who haven't joined us yet, tell them the wonderful activities/projects we carry out both in and out of North America and try my best to have them join our Association. I think that the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting will be a wonderful event where we can spread the word about all our efforts toward good causes, as there is a lot of Mayans living in and around the Los Angeles area. Therefore I kindly encourage you all to attend the AGM on July 3, 2010 and celebrate MGCAANA's five years of success!

~~~Vihara Dharmaratne~~~

**People take different roads seeking fulfillment and happiness. Just because they're not on your road doesn't mean they've gotten lost.**

~~~ Dalai Lama ~~~



**Thank you!!! We thank each and everyone of you for your leadership, dedication and hard work. We could not have achieved so much without you!**

*Our 2009/2010 Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, and all those Committees that were active deserve a big “thank you” from all of us for their leadership, dedication and hard work during their term. We applaud them for what they have achieved this year amidst their extremely busy lives.*

**About Our 2009/2010 Valuable Board of Directors and the Executive Committee:**  
**(In alphabetical order by the last name)**

**Dasmanthi Chin de Silva, Director and Secretary:**

*She recently received her Masters in Biology from University of Miami and, in the Fall, she will start her Ph.D. program at the same university. Dasmanthie received her Bachelor of Science degree in Molecular Biology with honors from the University of Peradeniya.*

**Vihara dharmaratne, Director and Web-master:**

*She is a senior at the University of Mississippi doing International Studies and Spanish double major at the Croft Institute for International Studies. Her undergraduate studies focus on three areas; international governance and politics, Europe, Spanish language. She is also in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College (SMBHC) at the University of Mississippi. Vihara will continue to serve as the Web-master.*

**Our current President Himashinie Diyabalanage:** *At present Himashinie works at the Harvard University searching for answers for cancer treatment. After receiving the B.Sc. and M.Phil. in Chemistry from the University of Peradeniya, she got her Ph.D. in 2005 from University of Texas, Arlington. Her doctoral research studies were in the area of fundamental science. One outcome of her graduate research was in the discovery of a rare blue phosphorescent complex. She was awarded the Outstanding Graduate Research Student Award and the ACES Dean of Science award and was elected for the "Who's Who among students in American Universities and Colleges" in recognition of outstanding merit and accomplishments as a graduate student in 2003/04. Himashinie worked as a post-doctoral fellow at Los Alamos National Laboratory, New Mexico before joining the Harvard University. Topics of her research work have been published in premier scientific journals and as US and international patents. She will remain in the Board of Directors this coming year.*

**Sumudu Leelananda, Director and Vice President:**

*At present she is a Ph.D. student in Computational Biophysics at Iowa State University. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Peradeniya with honors in Physics. She will continue to serve in the Board of Directors.*

**Pamuditha Mahadiulwewa, Director, Treasurer and former Secretary:**

*She graduated summa cum laude with a degree in Business Administration with an option in Accounting, and also received the "Excellence in Accounting" award from the Cid Craig School of Business, California State University, Fresno. She is working towards becoming a CPA.*

**Erandi Ranaweera, Director and Former President:**

*She pursued her undergraduate education at the University of Texas in Austin and graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering. Currently she works at Boeing Company as a Test Engineer for commercial jet engine controls. Erandi & her husband are part of a team that builds Boeing’s new revolutionary 787 Dreamliner in South Carolina.*

**Gayathri Samarasingha, Director and Former President:**

*She graduated from Utah State University in May 2007 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Management Information Systems with two minors in Mathematics and Computer Science. She is currently a graduate student at the University of Iowa doing her MBA. She is currently researching as a business professional on improvements that can be made to our Organization.*

**Newsletter Committee:**

*Nazrana Caffoor, Vihara Dharmaratne, Priyanka Jayakody, Pamuditha Mayadiulwewa*

**Fundraising Committee**

*Himashinie Diyabalanage, Sumudu Leelananda, Erandi Ranaweera, Gayathri Samarasinghe*

**Membership Drive Committee**

*Vihara Dharmaratne, Neranjika Dissanayake, Iyanka Ponnampereuma, Erandi Ranaweera*

**Website Organizing Committee**

*Vihara Dharmaratne (webmaster), Neranjika Dissanayake, Erandi Ranaweera*

**Host and Travel Club**

*Iyanka Ponnampereuma, Arushie Nugapitiya*

**Endowment Committee**

*Neranjika Dissanayake, Himashinie Diyabalanage, Nilmini Dorabawila, Vajeera Dorabawila, Kishani Martin, Dharshani Nanayakkara (co-chair), Erandi Ranaweera, Gayathri Samarasingha, Mrs. Sujatha Werake (co-chair)*

**Scholarship Committee**

*Vajeera Dorabawila, Dharshani Nanayakkara (chair), Arushie Nugapitiya*

**Advisory Board**

*Neranjika Dissanayake, Dharshani Nanayakkara, Harshi Waters, Mrs. Sujatha Werake.*