



Dhammapada ;

"Cut down the whole forest (of desires), not just a tree. From the forest arises fear. Cut down the forest and its brushwood, O monks, and be emancipated".

~~~~~

***"One should be watchful over his speech, well-restrained in mind, and commit no unwholesome deed with his body. Let him purify this threefold avenue of action (karma), and he will tread the path made known by the sages."***



***"I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge -- myth is more potent than history -- dreams are more powerful than facts -- hope always triumphs over experience -- laughter is the cure for grief -- love is stronger than death".***

***~~ Robert Fulghum ~~***

***" Let go of your attachment to being right, and suddenly your mind is more open. You're able to benefit from the unique viewpoints of others, without being crippled by your own judgment."***

***~~ Ralph Marston ~~***



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***Greetings dear readers,***

***Hope you all are having a rocking summer. MGCAANA members who attended the AGM too have had some great times. Some members have shared their good time with the rest of us, by sending in photographs to be published in this issue of Maya Puwath. Please make sure you take a look and feel free to send in your comments to our newsletter.***

***The Annual General Meeting heralds in the new year for MGCAANA. The members have cast their votes, through email or mail and a Board of Directors of your choice have been elected. We congratulate the elected members and wish them a fruitful & happy year. The new members of the board along with the office they hold are listed elsewhere in this newsletter. We, the editorial committee, welcome the new BOD & will give our fullest support to all future projects.***

***As many of our members are aware, we hosted our former Principal, Mrs.N.K.Pilapitiya, as chief guest at our AGM. Her presence made this AGM extra special and we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to her for gracing this occasion. Madam Principal has been kind enough to pen a few words addressing all our members. You will find her letter on page 2 in this issue.***

***There is a detailed article in this newsletter, sent in by Mrs.Sujatha Werake, explaining the process & the progress of the Vidya Scholarship fund. We ask all our members to take a moment & read this article. It will answer all your questions on how this project has been set up to help students who need some assistance to continue their education. The monies you all contributed have been invested & the first scholarships have been awarded. It is indeed a great victory for a small organization like the MGCAANA to be able to achieve this in a relatively short span of time. We thank all members for their generous contributions and hope you will continue to lend us your support financially. Any amount is welcome. If each of us can send in \$10 a month it would surely add up at the end of the year. And when we reach our goal, this would help many children in the future. This is a project that MGCAANA members should embrace & strive to see it to fruition. We could leave a legacy that would be priceless, the education of our sisters today, tomorrow & way in to the future.***

***~Editor Nazrana Caffoor***





MESSAGES TO MGCAANA MEMBERS



Dear Mayapuwath Members,

I am greatly honored and humbled to be elected to serve MGCAANA in it's 8th year. Thank you for the trust bestowed upon me. I pledge to do my best to strengthen the grassroots of our beloved organization, collaborating with you every step of the way.

MGCAANA has just completed another successful year. Seven years after the birth of our organization, we have tripled in size and our projects span widely.

We also held our 7th AGM at Charleston, South Carolina last month and was honored by the presence of our former Principal, Mrs. N.K. Pilapitiya. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to the outgoing Board of Directors, the Executive Committee members, and other committee members for their diligent dedication and commitment to our cause. I would like to welcome the new Board of Directors, Executive Committee members, and other committee members to another great year.

We believe in leveraging the abilities of our economically challenged students and to help them to be the best that they can. One of our great success last year was initiating the continual distribution of scholarships to economically challenged students. I want to especially show our appreciation to Mrs. S. Werake, Endowment Committee, and the Board of Trustees for fulfilling this challenging goal.

Furthermore, MGCAANA as a whole believes that our members are the key to our success. We strive to work as closely as possible with all of our members. I hope each member will gain insight into our organization and will gain a better understanding of our mission. Ultimately, I hope our members will feel the same eagerness we possess to incessantly improve our organization.

I look forward to hearing your comments, ideas, and suggestions. Thank you for your continuous support.

Sincerely,  
Geetha Eragoda  
President (2011-2012)

Highlights of the AGM at Charleston, SC.

It was a glorious reunion of Mayans at Charleston last 4th of July weekend! Our hosts, Erandi and Ravindra Suriarachchi together with Erandi's parents, Mr. Jayampathi and Lakshmi Ranaweera, took care of us very well. Even though you spend about \$800 on air ticket plus board and lodging it was well worth the experience. You get to hit three birds with one stone. You meet old friends, see and experience a new part of the USA, and also experience Sri Lankan culture. There is no better way to have a break from the old routine.

Having Mrs. Pilapitiya, a former principal of Mahamaya as chief guest at the AGM, and the Dinner party held at the Suriarachchi's residence added even more value to our visit to Charleston. It was quite an honor to be in the presence of such a great person as Mrs. Pilapitiya who also had been the Principal of Museus College.

After the AGM and Dinner, on the following day Mrs. Pilapitiya, Mrs. Werake, and Mrs. Gunasekera had the pleasure of touring the Boone Hall Plantation accompanied by our gracious hosts. Boone Hall is one of America's oldest working plantations. We did a self-guided tour of slave cabins on Slave Street representing different aspects of black history. Highlight of the tour was a live presentation of evolution and development of the Gullah Culture of the low country. Since it was a short week end visit we didn't have enough time to visit all the places of significance in Charleston such as Fort Sumter. However, we were able to set foot on some of the places significance in the Revolutionary War as well as the Civil War such as: Battery Marshall at Sullivan's Island, Shem Creek, and Patriot's Point. Since our hotel was Hampton Inn at Daniel Island we had the pleasure of going through a lot of islands on our way to all these places.

Thank you Erandi and Ravi Suriarachchi for being such great hosts!

~ Pushpa Gunasekera

To all members of MGCAANA

I was happy to be in the United States to be present at the Annual General Meeting of MGCAANA held in Charleston, South Carolina last month. I had the occasion to meet at least a few of the members. The event was conducted with much planning and dignity.

The membership is scattered over US and Canada, which are two vast countries, that it is understandable that everyone cannot be present however much they want to do so. However, it is remarkable the way you good people keep together, despite the many constraints especially the time. When I meet any member or Mayan, see how they have achieved much in the way of education, careers, and generally in life, with good families and children, I feel happy like a mother with her brood.

MGCAANA has lined up so much of activity and service to her membership in the way of assistance financially emotionally and even socially not to mention the grant in aid to present students at Mahamaya Collage. I hope our Alumni too will avail themselves of the opportunities rendered.

I must specially thank the members for making my visit to the States meaningful this year too. I will be seeing the Grand Canyon with the assistance of some of your members.

I must not fail to mention the pioneering efforts of the Founder Members Mrs. Sujatha Werake, Mrs. Arushi Nugapitiya, Mrs. Harshi Waters and Mrs. Neranjika Dissanayake. They have launched a great Project.

The younger members, pick up the Torch and keep the Flamingo to Posterity.

My best wishes for a great future!  
Mrs N. K. Pilapitiya  
Former Principal, Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy  
1980—1990



A heartfelt thank you goes out to...

Erandi and Ravi Suriyaarachchi for hosting MGCAANA's 7th Annual General Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina. A special thank you also goes out to Erandi's parents, Jayampathi and Lakshmi Ranaweera who flew in from Dallas to help with the AGM. Thank you ever so much for prepping for a wonderful meeting and a delightful dinner afterwards. We all enjoyed the day and the great food and company. Thank you so much for making another AGM a memorable one! We are very grateful to all of you for all that you have done for MGCAANA.

We had a wonderful time and it was all thanks to the great hospitality that you all extended to MGCAANA members.



Our hosts, L to R: Jayampathi Ranaweera, Ravi & Erandi Suriyaarachchi, and Lakshmi Ranaweera



“ The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing in the right place but to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment”.

~~ Lady Dorothy Nevill~~

# Report of the Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund

Excerpts from the presentation at the AGM on July 2, 2011  
Link on Youtube to the Scholarship Distribution Ceremony at Mahamaya in May 2011: [http://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=mahamayafriends&aq=f](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=mahamayafriends&aq=f)

**History:**

Chathuri Nugawela-Munasinghe wanted to sponsor a disadvantaged child in memory of her mother Mrs. Nugawela who had been an old girl and a teacher at Mahamaya for many years.

When we talked to the principal Mrs. Indra Withanachchi about our plan, she got interested in it. In May 2006, we received a letter from the Deputy Principal, Mrs. Uthpala Seneviratne, the teacher in charge of the hostel, requesting to help 10 economically disadvantaged students. They had difficulties in paying their hostel fees.

As a solution to this situation, we found individual sponsors, mostly among our members for 21 students and managed to continue for 2-3 years. Some of those alumnae are still continuing their sponsorship. Due to managing issues that arose, we decided to create a permanent solution by starting a scholarship fund.

For this purpose, the Endowment Committee was formed within MGCAANA. This committee had a lot of planning to do. First we agreed on the name, "Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund." We all agree that it should be a trust fund. With the help of our own two alumnae, who are attorneys of law, Harshi Waters and Mahesica Giragama, the Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund was successfully established in Sri Lanka.

**The members of the Endowment Committee (in alphabetical order):**

Neranjika Dissanayake, Himashinie Diyalalanage, Nilmini Dorabawila, Kishani Martin, Dharshani Nanayakkara (Co-Chair), Gayathi Samarasingha, Erandi Suriyaarachchi, Sujatha Werake (Co-Chair)

The inaugural meeting of the first Board of Trustees was held on November 2, 2009.

**Board of Trustees are:**

President: Dr. Samanmala Dorabawila; Vice President: Mrs. Uthpala Seneviratne Secretary: Mrs. Visakha Wickremeratne; Assistant Secretary: Mrs. Indrani Karaluvinne

Treasurer: Mrs. Nilakshi Weragama

Trustees and Liaisons of MGCAANA to the Trust: Mrs. Sujatha Werake and Dharshani Nanayakkara

**Fundraising:**

Fundraising was started from November, 2009. By June 2011, we have been successful in collecting a total of \$8929.61. Donors who contributed to the Fund: 17 alumnae and 17 well-wishers from United States and Canada, and 4 alumnae who live in, New Zealand, Australia, Europe and Middle East.

**What is our aim?**

We would like to reach \$20,000 this year. Therefore, we earnestly ask you to pledge your donation.

Who are the Students Who Receive the Financial Assistance From the Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund?

Most deserving economically disadvantaged students who do well in their studies and extra-curricular activities from grades 6 and up at Mahamaya. The stories of these children are heartbreaking. Most of them have joined Mahamaya, dreaming big after passing the Government Scholarship Exam at Grade 5. We want to help these students to be successful in their lives to become useful citizens. They know that we are interested in knowing their progress in education.

How much money have we sent to the Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund? (rough estimates due to bank charges, paypal charges etc.)

June 2011-----\$1517

October 2011 -----\$4918

The total amount is----- \$6435

**What was Next?**

According to the wishes of MGCAANA and the Endowment Committee, Vidya Scholarship Board of Trustees converted the foreign currency to Sri Lankan Rupees and invested in Bank of Ceylon Fixed Deposits. Being a state bank, both parties agreed that it is the most stable and suitable way to invest the money.

The current fixed deposits of Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund:

- Two hundred and ten thousand rupees (Rs.210,000/00)
- Seven hundred fourteen thousand rupees (Rs.714,000/00)

Other accounts:

- Savings account (roughly about Rs.28,615.40)
- NRFC US\$15.48

**Generating Money for Scholarships:**

By the fixed deposits Rs.30,000 was generated from the interest up to June 2011.

**Final Outcome That We All Waited for, the Scholarship Distribution:**

The most suitable 10 candidates for the year 2011 had been selected from the applicants by the trustees. Each student received Rs.1,500/00 per term. At the Scholarship Distribution Ceremony that was held at Mahamaya College in May, 2011, the scholarship winners were awarded Rs.3,000/00 each. See the link given above.

The ceremony was held in the presence of the Principal, Mrs. Withanachchi, Deputy Principals, Mrs. Uthpala Seneviratne, and Mrs. Vishaka Herath. Dr. Samanmala Dorabawila, Mrs. Nilakshi Weragama, Mrs. Indrani Karaluvinne, and Mrs. Sujatha Werake. That was a wonderful moment for the people who worked hard on this project.

Thank you to our generous donors, Board of Trustees, MGCAANA's Boards of Directors, members of Executive Committees, and Endowment Committee within last five years. Without your support we could not have reached our goal.

On behalf of the Endowment Committee,  
Sujatha Werake and Dharshani Nanayakkara (Co-Chairs)



*We tend to forget that happiness doesn't come as a result of getting something we don't have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have.*

*~~ Fredrick Koeing~~*



Highlights of MGCAANA's 7th Annual General Meeting

A



B



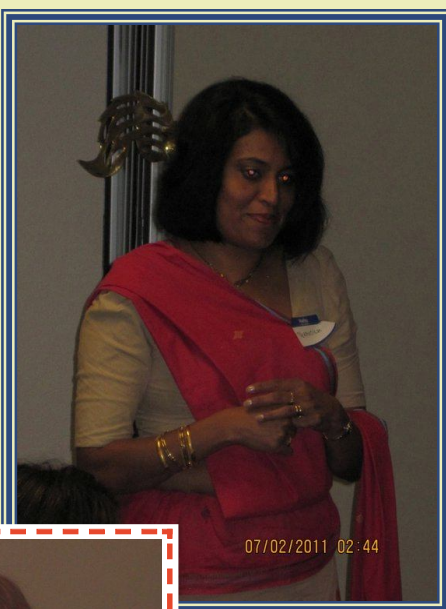
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D



E



Ladies of the Committee Addressing the meeting

- A. Mrs. Sujatha Werake
- B. Mrs. N.K. Pilapitiya
- C. Mrs. Pushpa Gunasekera
- D. Ms. Himashinie Diyabalanage
- E. Mrs. Neranjika Amerathunga
- F. Mrs. Erandi Suriyaarachchi
- G. Mrs. Harshi Waters
- H. Mrs. Maheshini Rajapaksha
- I. Mrs. Geetha Eragoda
- J. Ms. Pamuditha Mahadulwewa

F



H



G



J



I postpone death by living, by suffering, by error, by risking, by giving, by losing.  
~~Anaias Nin~~

All summer flower pictures courtesy of Google pictures





MGCAANA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & DINNER: CAPTIONS & COMMENTS



MGCAANA Members who attended the 7th AGM:

Front row: Sujatha Werake, N.K. Pilapitiya, Pushpa Gunasekera.  
Standing: Harshi Waters, Lakmini Widanapathirana, Geetha Eragoda, Pamuditha Mahadiulwewa, Erandi Suriyaarachchi, Himashinie Diyabalanage, Sriyani Amunugama, Maheshinie Rajapaksha, Neranjika Amaratunga

The honorary members who attended MGCAANA's 7th AGM : Standing L to R: Achila Jayasuriya, Ravi Suriyaarachchi, Sanjaya Amaratunga, Erandi's father Jayampathi Ranaweera , Manjula Rajapaksha & daughter Chatri rajapaksha

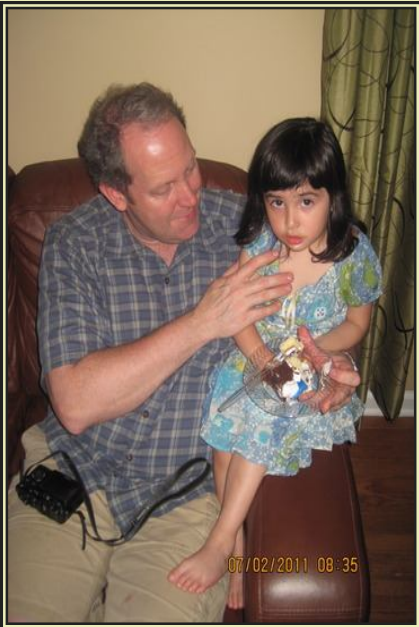
Seated: Sujatha Werake, Former Mahamaya Principal N. K. Pilapitiya, Pushpa Gunasekera and Erandi's mother Lakshmi Ranaweera.



Our hosts: Erandi & Ravi Suriyaarachchi



Our chief guest Mrs. N.K.Pilapitiya cutting the celebratory cake



Curt and Tarika Waters



Getting ready to sing at Erandi' and Ravi's home



All of us Mayans at the dinner



Having a joyful time doing skits: "Something that happened during Mrs. Pilapitiya's time." Actresses: Pamuditha Mahadiulwewa, Sujatha Werake, Neranjika Dissanayake and Geetha Eragoda



Tired and sleepy Amaratunga boys (they traveled more than 800 miles from Iowa to SC)



The incoming and outgoing presidents cutting the cake



The beautiful cake to celebrate MGCAANA's 7th successful year



There are two ways of meeting difficulties. You alter the difficulties or you alter yourself to meet them.

~~ Phyllis Bottome ~~



Memories from the 7<sup>th</sup> AGM

It was Thursday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. I boarded a red-eye out of Fresno heading to Charleston, South Carolina with layovers in Las Vegas and Dallas. I arrived in Charleston on Friday, July 1<sup>st</sup> around 9.30 am. I was greeted by many friendly South Carolinians en route to my hotel. Even though it was humid, South Carolina was beautiful; I saw a lot of greenery and the breathtaking ocean view was most welcome. After a 20 minute drive, I was at the Hampton Inn.

After a shower I was picked up by Erandi akki, and we drove to their beautiful home just five minutes away from the hotel. It was the first time I “met” Er-andi akki, even though we knew each other previously, had talked on several occasions and worked on the BOD with her two years ago. It was wonderful to finally meet her in person. At her home, I was introduced to her parents Jayampathi and Lakshmi Ranaweera. I felt right at home with their warm smiles and most welcoming Singhala way; the first thing that aunty did was offer me lunch. I was too excited to eat by then, and only ate lunch very much later. Erandi akki and I soon started making cutlets; that was our task at hand. Aunty went on preparing dinner for all of us for the night and prepped different items for the next day’s dinner. Uncle kept us all enter-tained with anecdotes of his times at St. Anthony’s College when Mrs. Pilapitiya was his Geography teacher. Around three thirty, Erandi akki left to pick up Mrs. Werake and Mrs. Pilapitiya. Poor Mrs. Werake’s flight from Seattle had got delayed. Around five thirty or so, Erandi akki returned with two dear teachers; Mrs. Pilapitiya our chief guest and Mrs. Werake our first president and advisor. I was seeing Mrs. Pilapitiya after about 25 years. I had first seen her on my first day at school in 1986! I was seeing Mrs. Werake after one year. This year was the first year that Mr. Werake, one of MGCAANA’s greatest supporters and one of our very first honorary members was missing from all the action and thrill of the AGM.

We all enjoyed tea with moong kavum that Lakshmi aunty had made. Then, Ravi aiya joined the crowd. The atmosphere of the entire house changed with his arrival! Even though he was coming after work, he was full of energy and had tons of jokes to keep us all laughing. He shared with us a story about his failed attempt to steal mangoes from a tree at the Mahamaya hostel when he was a kid. The evening flew by with everyone sharing fond memories with Mrs. Pilapitiya. Everyone was gath-ered around her, sharing happy stories and fond memories. The evening went by swiftly and we enjoyed the thosai dinner that Lakshmi aunty had made. After dinner, Mrs. Pilapitiya and Mrs. Werake went to the hotel, and we continued finishing the cutlets and other little tasks. Maybe we made too many cutlets, or we were chatting more than working, but the cutlets took a lot of time!! By evening, Neranjika akki and her family (the Amarathungas) arrived in Charleston. Lakmini Widanapathirana and her husband Achila Jayasuriya also drove with them all the way from Des Moines, Iowa. Also by that time, Geetha Eragoda and Mrs. Pushpa Gunasekara had flown in to Charleston from Los Angeles. Himashinie akki was expected to arrive in Charleston by about 12 midnight!

The next morning, Geetha akka and I went and helped a little more at the Suriyaarachchi residence. One by one, we all got everything ready for the AGM. Then, we came back and started getting ready. After what seemed like too many hours, all the Mayans were finally ready! It was a blessing that we all stayed at the same hotel that the AGM was held. Thankfully, we only had to go down stairs to get to the meeting hall so we didn’t have long drives or traffic jams to make us even more late! Down stairs at the hall, we met Maheshinie Rajapaksha who had come from Savanah Georgia. She was with her husband Manjula and daughter Chatri. There was Harshi Waters, our corporate attorney and advisor who had come from Portland, Oregon. She was accompanied by her husband Curt and three year old daughter Tarika. There was also Sriyani Amunugama Rajapakse from Clemson, South Carolina. She was joined by her husband and daughter. We were all daughters of our dear mother Ma-hamaya and anyone seeing us could tell that we were “one.”Everyone was happy, smiling from ear-to-ear talking with each other. We had to break the chit chatting to start the official meeting. After singing the national anthems and school song, we lit the traditional oil lamp. Then we officially welcomed Mrs. Pilapitiya with a plaque from MGCAANA and a collection of essays written by a few Mayans in the U.S. Then, Mrs. Werake gave a beautiful and heart-warming speech to welcome our chief guest Mrs. Pilapitiya to the podium. Mrs. Pilapitiya entertained us all and brought back dear memories of Mahamaya with her delightful speech. Next, one of our board mem-bers Himashinie Diyabalanage presented the annual report on behalf of our secretary Vihara Dharmaratna who had joined us on Skype. Next, our treasurer Geetha Er-agoda presented the annual financial report. Then we took a short break – everyone feasted on the many appetizers that Erandi akki and Lakshmi aunty had prepared. There were cutlets, sandwiches, samosas, parippu wadai, cookies, cake, moong kavum, and best of all kalu dodol and kokis that Himashinie akki’s mother had sent us from Sri Lanka which were the “hot” items at the tea table. While we were enjoying the snacks and tea, Mrs. Pushpa Gunasekara, our returning officer counted the votes for us. By the end of the tea break, Mrs. Gunasekara announced the results of the votes and we had elected our new Board for 2011/12. Having our main tasks completed, everyone took turns speaking a little about where we had come from, who we came with etc. There were the ever supportive husbands and parents who are our honorary members. Each of them also got their turn to speak a few words. Then, Mrs. Pilapitiya drew the lucky winners of our raffle drawing. After the president’s thank you speech we adjourned the meeting. All of us were thrilled that everything went off well and looked forward to the dinner later that evening.

The dinner was as delightful and memorable as the AGM. The families that were gathered at the dinner enjoyed the great food and the wonderful com-pany. We sang till early in the morning and we laughed like school girls when we were entertained with two skits. The night went on with deep discussions about how to enhance our organization and grow it further. After a great day, we left the Suriyaarachchi residence in the wee hours of the morning.

The next morning, Sunday July 3<sup>rd</sup>: Geetha akka, Himashinie akki and I went sightseeing. Charleston is a historic city that was important in the colonial era, in the American Revolution and Civil War. This city is a must-see. Now, Charleston is gradually becoming more industrialized because of the new Boeing plant that manufactures the commercial Dreamliner 787. Our hosts Erandi akki and her husband Ravi are also part of the engineering team at Boeing. The Amaratunga family and Lakmini and Achila left to Iowa. Mrs. Pilapitiya, Mrs. Werake and Mrs. Gunasekara were sightseeing with Erandi akki and Ravi aiya. We all had our taste of South Caro-lina and concluded that it was a great AGM and a great city with wonderful hosts.

On Monday morning, we all left beautiful South Carolina with hearts filled with great memories and our spirits happy after meeting our dear Mayan sisters and mothers. All of us were already counting days till the next AGM!

~ Pamuditha Mahadiulwewa – President 2010/11

places  
Site-seeing group: Visiting slave farms, the city's historic



Dear Members,  
Please note that more photographs of the AGM can be found on our Yahoo Group page “Mahamayafriends”

Congratulations to our newly elected Board of Directors and officers for 2011/2012

- President - Geetha Eragoda  
Vice President - Nimalka Wathupola  
Treasurer - Lakmini Widanapathirana  
Secretary - Prabodini Samarakoon  
Web Master - Samanthi Abeyratne  
BOD Member - Inoka Amarakoon  
BOD Member - Hashini Mohottala



Winners of the raffle drawing

1st Prize- 8G i-pod  
Dharshana Wijesundara (#1383)

2nd Prize - GPS System  
Tamara Jayasundara (#1785)

3rd Prize - Blown Glass Vase  
Dulshan Kumara (2151)

4th Prize - \$50 Gift Card  
Nelum Dorabawila (#1802)

5th Prize - Batik Wall Hanger  
Neranga Fernando (#1111)

6th Prize:  
Shriyani Herath (#1670)

7th Prize  
Pasindu Samarasekara (#2082)

