

# Monsoon Journal

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**Emil Alphonsus** CA, CPA, CGA

Prime Minister  
Trudeau at Tamil Fest

## Prime Minister Trudeau praises contributions of Canadian Tamils to Canadian Society

“Diversity is not a liability – indeed, it is the source of our greatest strength as Canadians.”

*“Contributions of Canadians of Tamil Origin have been felt for decades since the very first boat of Tamil Refugees arrived in Newfoundland up until today.”*  
 – Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

By Siva Sivapragasam

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau paid a glowing tribute to Canadian Tamils for their contributions to Canadian society in the presence of 200,000 visitors at the recently held Tamil Fest street festival.

Tamil Fest is an annual street festival event sponsored by the Canadian Tamil Congress and draws several thousands of visitors. It is the biggest Tamil diaspora festival that showcases Tamil culture, heritage and cuisine. This year's festival was of special significance since for the first time a sitting Prime Minister was attending a Tamil Canadian event.

The Prime Minister also stated that Canada consistently raised its voice in support of Tamils during the ethnic war in Sri Lanka. Though the conflict has ended, he said, the long-term solution to Tamil grievances is yet to be reached. Mr. Trudeau added that the contributions of Canadians of Tamil Origin have been felt for decades since the very first boat of Tamil Refugees arrived in Newfoundland up until today. The Prime Minister also reminded that although the war is over, long-term peace has yet to be reached on the island. He stressed that Canada has long called for a process of accountability that will have the trust and confidence of the victims of the war in Sri Lanka and



**Prime Minister Trudeau with Mr. Gary Anandasangaree, MP for Scarborough-Rouge Park** that Peace and reconciliation remains an urgent imperative.

The Prime Minister said that the Tamil community has enriched Canadian multicultural society in a short period since its first arrival in large numbers in the 1980s. In recognition of this contribution, Trudeau remarked amidst applause, his government has declared January as Tamil Heritage Month in Canada. The Prime Minister also complimented the MP for Scarborough-Rouge Park Gary Anandasangaree for bringing up this motion in Parliament. Mr. Trudeau called for a big round of applause for Gary for the incredibly hard work he does for the Tamil community and other communities too.

*More pictures on page 3 and Contd. in Page 27...*

## A Leader is a Healer too...



A leader is a healer too among their many other roles. This characteristic is not one often attributed to the office of Canadian Premier but South of the border in the US, yes, where the voters cast their ballots for the person running for the highest office of the land and historically the US presidents have taken on that role in inspiring ways. This nevertheless a common aspect on the South Asian scene as well.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is doing an amazing job as the nation's healer in chief. A selfie with the PM

can be easily ridiculed but the mosaic of Canada and all the social upheavals and natural disasters call the Canadian leader to be an active healer as well. I can tell the elder/mother/grandma in the picture would have known a sea of changes in her lifetime and she could easily represent any newcomer to Canada and in the midst to cope in a land that is not of their birth.

- K. Thirukumaran

Photo by:

Selfie Moment of Event

- via: PranevanThillainathan



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# TamilFest 2017



Prime Minister Trudeau and MP for Scarborough-Rouge Park Gary Anandasangaree enjoying a drink of coconut water



Photo Courtesy: EKuruvi



Sivan Ilangko, Vice-President CTC makes the welcome speech



TamilFest launch event – President CTC Dr. Shanthakumar (3rd from Left), MP for Scarborough Gary Anandasangaree (extreme left), Sivan Ilangko (Vice - President CTC, 2nd from Left) and Chin Lee (Toronto City Councillor)



Toronto Mayor John Tory inaugurates the event by lighting the traditional oil lamp



Program at the event



Dr. Shanthakumar, President CTC making his speech



Dance Program



Crowd greeting the Prime Minister



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# from the publisher's desk

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# Best wishes for a successful school year!

Monsoon Journal wishes all students, teachers and parents a successful school year that commences in earnest this month!

Gary Anandasangaree MP, Member of Parliament for Scarborough-Rouge Park summed up the underlying sentiment on a Facebook post on Tuesday, September 5; "Whether it's their first day of kindergarten or final year at university, let's make sure that everyone going back to school has the support they need today to become the leaders of tomorrow. I wish you all a successful school year!" - Gary Anandasangaree MP said.

The day after the Labour Day with its traditional grand end to the summer break also brings tears to families. Especially in households students departing not only for higher education in distant cities and towns or even other countries, but also those stepping out for the first time as kindergarteners. The time begins in earnest with all the rituals associated with this day in completion, from shopping for school supplies to perusing goals of higher education.

One important concern is safety, and it's not limited to their children being out of home and obeying road rules nowadays. Nevertheless road safety is an important topic.

With its mission to provide a safe city, The City of Toronto on the first day of school unveiled one of the seven proposed new School Safety Zones. A City of Toronto media release states –

"The safety zones have new features aimed at improving the safety of children walking to school and are part of the City's \$80-million Vision Zero Road Safety Plan and overall traffic safety measures.

"The safety of all pedestrians, but particularly children, must be a priority in this city," said Mayor Tory. "Through the School Safety Zone program, we have looked at how children travel to school and have added measures to keep them safe on their



Veena and Maaya all set for first day of school with Grandpa Sathi Velumailum in Piscataway, New Jersey, Sept 6, 2017

journey."

The School Safety Zones feature new school zone safety signs with flashing beacons, school zone pavement stencils, "Watch your speed" driver feedback signs and zebra markings at school crosswalks. In addition, City staff will be extending the coverage of enhanced pavement markings up to 250 metres away from school buildings to help encourage active transportation to school, which includes walking or biking. A prioritized list of schools will be provided to Toronto Police so they can look to increase enforcement in these key school safety zones."

While the road safety matter is for everyone, Health Canada has put colleges and universities on the alert for opioid abuse. In a media release, Health Canada advises parents to talk to their university- or college-aged children about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Health Canada says, "For students entering university and colleges across Canada, orientation week—or frosh week—is an exciting time to get to know your new school, classmates and dorm mates. While orientation week parties are a great way to celebrate the back-to-school season, they can present safety challenges, especially when it comes to the use of alcohol and drugs.

You may already be aware of the risks related to drinking alcohol; however, you may not have heard much about the risks associated with the use of drugs. With the ongoing opioid crisis in Canada, it is important to raise the level of awareness of the dangers associated with drug use and to educate people on how to recognize the signs of an overdose."

There are many challenges to everyone concerned, not just the brunt to the students but to parents and educators as well. All together with a commitment to succeed and towards betterment of our overall future, we shall overcome all the hurdles. The opportunities and privileges that comes with attending schools and post-secondary education institutions last a lifetime. As the new school year commences, once again The Monsoon Journal wishes everyone success! The motivation should be to get out and plot your own course to the best of your abilities and potential, be it in studies, sports and volunteering.

The future yours!  
 Good Luck to all!  
 Contributed by K. Thirukumaran

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Sri Venkateswara Temple, Pittsburgh, PA  
**Navaratri Brahmotsavam Celebrations**  
 Thursday, Sep 21 – Saturday, Sep 30, 2017

Date	Morning Sevas	Evening Sevas
Thursday Sept 21		Ankutatpanam - 6:00 pm
Friday Sept 22	Puja - 10:00 am Dhwaja Arohanam	Homam - 5:30 pm Garuda Vahana seva
Saturday Sept 23	Homam - 10:00 am Hanumath Vahana Seva	Both Sri Venkateswara & Sri Lakshmi Sahasranamas Archanas - 3:00pm Homam - 3:00 pm Brahma Rathotsavam 5:00 pm
Sunday Sept 24	Homam - 10:00 am Kalpavriksha Vahana seva	Homam - 5:30 pm Gaja Vahana seva
Monday Sept 25	Homam - 10:00 am Prakara Utsavam	Homam - 5:30 pm Sarva Bhooopala Vahana seva
Tuesday Sept 26	Homam - 10:00 am Prakara Utsavam	Homam - 5:30 pm Hansa Vahana seva
Wednesday Sept 27	Homam - 10:00 am Surya Prabha Vahana seva	Homam - 5:30 pm Chandra Prabha Vahana seva
Thursday Sept 28	Homam - 10:00 am Prakara Utsavam	Homam - 5:30 pm Simha Vahana seva
Friday Sept 29	Homam - 10:00 am Prakara Utsavam	Homam - 5:30 pm Muthu Pandit Vahana seva
Saturday Sept 30	Homam - 10:00 am Ashwa Vahana Seva	Dhwaja Avarohanam - 6:00pm Sesha Vahana Seva (Saptavaragam)

All days except for Saturday, September 23,  
 Both Sri Venkateswara & Sri Lakshmi Sahasranamas Archanas at 5:00pm



Navaratri  
 Greetings!  
 - Monsoon Journal

"Never be so busy, as not to think of others" - Mother Teresa (August 26, 1910 - September 5, 1997)

Printing the Winds of Change around us All lands home, all men kin.

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# Commemorative tree for Late Mr. Pon Kanagasabapathy

By: Kumar Punithavel

The silence after death is very painful. To overcome this we observe rites and rituals. It is almost three years since Mr. Pon Kanagasabapathy left his mortal being. He was lovingly called by his friends, students and others as Athibar meaning principal, referring to his esteem carrier in Ceylon. Since coming to Canada he had been actively helping those he knew and others who needed his help. Some of his friends planted a tree on fourth of September 2017, at the Malvern Park, just behind the library where he frequented.

Indeed commemorative tree planting is an excellent way of remembering the departed soul. It will be living monument for generations to come. Like Late Mr. Pon Kanagasabapathy the tree will clean the air around it for a long time. Hope many follow this example and plant a tree in memory of their departed loved ones.



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Around the World

Sri Lanka Northern Province amidst farming and drinking water woes

Coping with the worst drought in 40 years:

by Meera Srinivasan

August 20: Sri Lankan rice and curry is a thing of legend. With steamed rice, often of the red variety, served at the centre of their plate, locals serve yellow dal and curries made of vegetables, greens, fish and meat around it, virtually covering the entire colour palette within that small radius. Rice is cultivated locally, mostly from the island's North Western, North Central and Northern Provinces.

This year, though, Sri Lanka is in a spot. From meeting the domestic requirement for rice almost entirely, Sri Lanka is now considering a substantial import of rice to ensure food security, following a drought, the worst the island has seen in 40 years. Clear warning signs emerged in 2016, after monsoons failed. Farmers' worst fears came true when the drought extended well into 2017, affecting their two main harvest seasons, Maha and Yala. Speaking on what he called a "really bad situation", Sri Lanka's Agriculture Minister Duminda Dissanayake told The Hindu: "We hoped to cultivate 8,00,000 hectares of paddy this year, but about 50% of that has been damaged due to the drought."

To cope with this, Sri Lanka is importing over 300,000 tonnes of rice, mostly from India. However, given the country's monthly requirement of 200,000 tonnes of rice, imports are only set to increase. The Central Bank

Tamil-majority Northern Province is the most-affected region, where farmers in all its five districts of Jaffna, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya and Mannar are in a crisis. People here are also facing a serious drinking water problem, a report in The Hindu says:

has said that if the drought persists through the year, Sri Lanka may have to import food and fuel worth an additional \$800 million.

According to Sri Lanka's Disaster Management Centre, almost 1.3 million people have been hit by the drought. Several thousand farmers in 20 of the country's 25 districts are suffering, their land and soil parched for over a year now. Data point to a severe impact in Kurunegala district, less than three hours' drive from Colombo, and Puttalam - both in the North Western Province. While Anuradhapura in the North Central Province has also been badly hit, the Tamil-majority Northern Province is the most-affected region, where farmers in all its five districts of Jaffna, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya and Mannar are in a crisis. People here are also facing a serious drinking water problem.

Speaking of possible underlying causes, experts point to some broader patterns in climate in the island. Buddhi Marambe, professor of Crop Science at the Agriculture Faculty in



University of Peradeniya, said over the last 50 years, Sri Lanka's average temperature had risen by 0.01-0.03 degree Celsius annually. "The impact of such climate change has been that the wet seasons have got wetter, and dry seasons have become drier over the years," he told The Hindu.

The last time the island faced such a severe drought was in 1973-74, and preparing for such a disaster in 2016 was simply off the cards at the policy level. "When two inter-monsoons and two monsoons [southwest and northeast] fail, that severely affects the yield.

The government is in a precarious situation, with no other option but to import," said Prof. Marambe, who chairs the country's National Experts' Committee on Climate Change Adaptation. Following the drought, many

younger farmers are switching to other jobs, Reuters reported. An estimated 1.8 million farm families are engaged in paddy cultivation in Sri Lanka, where agriculture remains a key driver of the rural economy.

There is more to the drought story than climate change, argued Chinthaka Rajapakse, moderator of the Movement for Land and Agricultural Reform. "To start with, the government lacks a long-term strategy to tackle climate change. Moreover, its policies systematically exclude the poor. Where do ordinary people like farmers figure in its grand development agenda?" he asked.

If the drought persists through the year, Sri Lanka may have to import food and fuel worth an additional \$800 million, according to the country's Central Bank

US Assistant Secretary of State and Embassy officials attend vigil in Sri Lanka

US Ambassador in Sri Lanka Atul Keshap and Acting Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice G. Wells joined families searching for answers about their disappeared loved ones in marking the International day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances.

The US officials along with the

families of the disappeared, Tamil National Alliance parliamentarians Rajavarotheyam Sampanthan, M.A.Sumanthiran and Sri Lanka Minister for National Dialogue Manoganesan attended the vigil held on August 30th in Colombo. (photo credit: Sanka Vidanagama - via US Embassy, Sri Lanka)



Feast of Our Lady of Good Health



Celebration with Holy Mass and Procession of Our Lady will take place on

10<sup>th</sup> September 2017

131 Birchmount Road, Scarborough at 4.30 p.m.

All are welcome



## As Rural Sri Lanka Dries Out, Young Farmers Look for Job Options

ADIGAMA, SRI LANKA

Scorched by a 10-month drought that has killed crops and reduced residents to buying trucked-in water, Adigama's young people are voting with their feet.

At least 150 youth have left this agricultural village 170 kilometers northwest of Sri Lanka's capital since the drought began, looking for jobs in the country's cities, or overseas, village officials say.

Few are expected to come back, even when the rains end.

"If they get the lowest-paying job overseas, or in a garment factory, they will not return," Sisira Kumara, the main government administrative officer in the village of 416 families, said as he walked through a dried and long-abandoned maize plot. "They will work at construction sites or as office helpers — anything they can get their hands on."

W.M. Suranga, 23, who left his family's withering rice paddy six months ago for Colombo, said working for low wages in the city is preferable to struggling with no rain at home.

"At least I am sure of a paycheck at the end of the month. This uncertainty of depending on the rains is too much of a risk," he said.

As Sri Lanka struggles with its worst drought in 40 years, farmers in the hardest-hit areas are migrating for work — with some wondering whether farming remains a viable career as climate change brings more frequent extreme weather.

"There is no income here. All the crops have failed in the last four seasons," Kumara said.

Paddy rice and vegetables are usually the main source of income in Adigama. But since the last big rains in July 2016, there has been little to no harvest.

Older villagers like Rajakaruna Amaradasa, 55, say that at their age they don't have the option of looking outside the village for a new life.

After four decades of harvesting rice and herding cattle, he abandoned his paddy fields earlier this year when his harvest failed, and now spends his days moving his cattle around, looking for scarce water.

"It will take us another two to three harvests to recover our losses and pay off any debt. Even then it all depends on the rain," Amaradasa said.

With average rains, Amaradasa said he used to make between 30,000 and 40,000 rupees a month (\$200-\$260). Now his income has fallen to a



third of that, he said.

Sri Lanka's drought, which by mid-August had affected 19 of the island's 25 districts, has particularly devastated arid regions that lie outside the country's wet western plains and mountains.

A joint report by the World Food Program and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, released in mid-June, classified the drought as worst in 40 years.

It predicted rice production this year in Sri Lanka would be almost 40 percent less than last year, and 35 percent lower than the five-year average. That amounts to the lowest harvest since 2004, it said.

It also warned that Sri Lanka "is highly susceptible to climate change, and therefore the frequency of the weather hazards will likely increase as

the earth warms."

The impact on Sri Lanka's economy is also likely to be substantial, with more than a quarter of the country's labor force working in agriculture, a sector that contributes 8 percent of gross domestic product, the report said.

The situation is worst in villages like Adigama that rely almost entirely on rain to grow crops.

Suranga, the Adigama youth now working in Colombo, said he has no plans to return home. Instead he dreams of traveling to the Middle East as a construction worker.

"What is the guarantee there will be no more droughts or floods?" he asked. "When my father was my age, maybe the rains were much more predictable. Now only a fool will bet on the rains."

(Reuters-via: VOA News)

## Nirmala Sitharaman appointed as first full-time Defence Minister of India

Nirmala Sitharaman has been appointed India's first full-time Defence Minister in the Modi government.

Nirmala Sitharaman was born in Madurai, Tamil Nadu State, India to Shri Narayanan Sitharaman and Savitri from a Tamil Iyengar family. She obtained a B.A. degree from Seethalakshmi Ramaswamy College, Tiruchirappalli and an MA degree in economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University in 1980.

She met her husband, Parakala Prabhakar, an Andhraite from Narsapuram, Andhra Pradesh while studying in the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

The journey of Nirmala is quite interesting. Starting from a middle class family in Tiruchirappalli, she rose to the current position on her own. She is a self-made woman. She is also new to the world of politics. Before joining politics, she had worked with BBC and Price Waterhouse Coopers.

She was a member of the National Commission for Women from 2003-05. It was during her stint at NCW



that she came in contact with Sushma Swaraj who sounded Nirmala out for a role in BJP. She spent her childhood in different parts of Tamil Nadu as her father's job was transferable

She is an avid newspaper fan reading nine newspapers every morning starting at 7.00 a.m.

Nirmala and Prabhakar are blessed with a daughter.

## Canada, The United States and Mexico begin NAFTA Negotiations



August 16, 2017 - Today, trilateral negotiations to modernize the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) began in Washington. Over the past two decades NAFTA has served as an engine of job creation and economic growth; it is in our national interest to ensure that it remains intact. With this in mind, our government has assembled a diverse team of negotiators led by our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chrystia Freeland.

These talks represent a great opportunity to refine the agreement to reflect new realities and to integrate progressive, free and fair approaches to trade an investment. Going into these negotiations we have made our priorities clear. They include:

- Strengthening labour and environmental protections in NAFTA;
- Preserving the cultural exemption and supply management;
- Fully integrating gender rights into

the agreement;

-Including Indigenous rights in NAFTA, in keeping with our commitment to improve the relationship with Indigenous Peoples;

-Cutting red tape to make life easier for small and medium sized businesses;

-Making easier the movement of working professionals; and

-Maintaining a fair dispute process, in NAFTA, for Canadians and our businesses.

To ensure that we negotiate a good deal for Canadians we are also inviting Canadians to share their ideas, experience and priorities on the modernization of NAFTA by visiting: [www.international.gc.ca/nafta](http://www.international.gc.ca/nafta)

Our government will always defend our national interest and stand up for Canadian values. We look forward to a better NAFTA emerging at the end of the negotiation process.

(via [international.gc.ca](http://international.gc.ca))



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## US Embassy Official Opens U.S.-funded Refurbished School in Jaffna, Sri Lanka North

Colombo, August 4: Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Hilton inaugurated a newly refurbished building at the Jaffna Hindu Ladies' College on July 31, 2017 that will support reconciliation and stabilization and provide girls in Jaffna with opportunity to study in a modern facility. Coordinating closely with the Sri Lanka Ministry of Education and the Northern Province Ministry of Education, the U.S. government invested 91 million rupees to build the three-story addition that will reach an additional 180 students. Chief Minister of the Northern Province C.V. Wigneswaran joined DCM Hilton and the principal of the College, Ms. M. Vimalanathan, in lighting the traditional oil lamp and cutting the ribbon on the new facilities.

"We believe there is no better investment or higher calling than educating young minds, especially young women" Deputy Chief of Mission Hilton said during the ceremony. "Sri Lanka and the United States are daily deepening our partnership, and this is another demonstration of our continued commitment."

The U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) selected the Hindu Ladies' College for funding in cooperation with the Provincial Ministry of Education. PACOM managed the four-year project, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Magbool Engineering Consultants, and Salasi Lanka Engineering partnered on construction.

*(Media Release – via US Embassy, Colombo, Sri Lanka)*



Opening ceremony for the refurbished building at the Jaffna Hindu Ladies' College.



U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Hilton with Northern Chief Minister C.V. Wigneswaran.



DCM Robert Hilton, Chief Minister Wigneswaran, Jaffna Hindu Ladies' College Principal Ms. M. Vimalanathan, Secretary of Education, Cultural Affairs, Sports and Youth Affairs R. Raveenthiran, and other delegates at the opening

## Myanmar: UN expert urges efforts to break 'worsening cycle of violence' in Rakhine



A Rohingya woman and her child at a makeshift camp outside Sittwe in Myanmar's western Rakhine State. Photo: IRIN

31 August 2017 – A United Nations human rights expert has expressed alarm at the deteriorating situation in Myanmar's Rakhine State, affecting not just the Rakhine Buddhist and Rohingya Muslim populations but also other communities.

"The worsening cycle of violence is of grave concern and must be broken urgently," said the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, Yanghee Lee, in a news release issued today from the Office of UN High Commissioners for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslims are now reported to be fleeing towards Bangladesh.

While the world's Muslim communities celebrated Eid al-Adha, the Rohingya remained in a precarious situation, not knowing their future or the fate of their relatives, she said.

Latest estimates from UN sources suggest more than 27,000 people have crossed into Bangladesh in the area around Cox's Bazar, while 20,000 more remain stranded between the two countries. The number continues to grow.

The Special Rapporteur noted concerns over both extremist attacks and the major security operations undertaken in response to the attacks.

"I am concerned that these events will derail efforts to address the root causes of the systematic discrimination and recurrent violence in Rakhine State," said the Special Rapporteur.

She went on to remind the authorities of their human rights obligations to give equal protection to people from all communities, whether from attacks by extremists or excessive action from the security forces.

"I am saddened to receive reports that, while the authorities are helping Rakhine and other communities living in affected townships evacuate to safer locations, this assistance is not being extended to the Rohingya Muslims," she said.

Echoing findings in the final report by the Rakhine Advisory Commission led by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Ms. Lee said that if human rights concerns are not properly addressed and if people remain politically and economically marginalized, then northern Rakhine may provide fertile ground for radicalization, with people becoming increasingly vulnerable to recruitment by extremists.

This statement has been endorsed by the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed, and the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Fernand de Varennes.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

– UN.org



Jaffna Hindu Ladies' College Principal Ms. M. Vimalanathan presents a plaque to DCM Robert Hilton.



Around the World

**Interview:** Meet the new UN Youth Envoy, Jayathma Wickramanayake

Hailing from Sri Lanka, the second-ever United Nations Youth Envoy is no stranger to rolling up her sleeves to get things done.

Before taking on her role as UN Youth Envoy, 26-year-old Jayathma Wickramanayake worked diligently in her mother country to transform the youth development sector. From 2013 to 2015, she served as a Senator at the Sri Lankan Youth Parliament and from 2016 to 2017 as Secretary to the Secretary-General of the Parliament of Sri Lanka.

Now working at the UN, her dedication to including youth globally comes out in force as she vows to do everything in her capacity to strive towards making the UN an inclusive system in which all youth is welcomed.

Speaking to UN News, she stressed that as Youth Envoy, she wants to ensure that all youth have a home at the United Nations.

UN News: Can you elaborate on your role as UN Youth Envoy?

JW: Since my school days, I have been very active in community work – volunteering both in and outside of school. When I entered university, the Sri Lankan Ministry of Youth Affairs organized the first-ever competition to select emerging young leaders in the country. I became the runner up.

I was then invited by the Youth Ministry and the UN Country Team in Sri Lanka to contribute to different programmes and policies being drafted at that time, such as the National Youth Policy of Sri Lanka, the Youth Employment Action Plan and the World Health Organization's Noncommunicable Disease Prevention Programme.

Little by little I became introduced to the UN, including by becoming part of the UN Volunteer force.

In 2012, when Sri Lanka started the Youth Delegate Programme, I was selected as one of my country's first Youth Delegates to participate in the UN's 69th General Assembly.

In preparation, I travelled around Sri Lanka for a month, speaking with different young people from a variety of communities to formulate a statement on the issues they wanted the UN to hear, which I subsequently delivered to the Third Committee [Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee].

As I was finishing my tenure as Youth Delegate in 2013, Sri Lanka was preparing to host the 2014 World Youth Conference, for which I was appointed to the International Youth Task Force that advised on its programme, proceedings, agenda, and declaration.

At that time, 74 million youth globally were unemployed and there was a huge gap in terms of school-to-work transition, which underscored a need for skills development.

For about one year and a half I worked on the Conference with a team of energetic young people from 10 parts of the world, including 10 Sri Lankans.

I then worked closely with the UN and the Sri Lankan government to adopt the resolution to declare World Skills Day.

Back in Sri Lanka, I started a grass roots youth organization with other Sri Lankan former UN Youth Delegates called Hashtag Generation to build the capacity of young people to participate in



Jayathma Wickramanayake delivers her first public remarks as Youth Envoy at the commemoration of World Youth Skills Day at UN Headquarters. Credit: Jess Walker

politics.

UN News: What inspired you to take on the role of UN Youth Envoy?

JW: I served as Youth Delegate during the formulation process of the SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals]. In the UN, I saw how young people came together with diverse ideas, proposals and plans of action to weigh-in on framing the future development agenda.

I also recognized that there is a need for the UN to engage young people and get their perspective on how the world should look in 2030 because, ultimately, it is the youth who will lead the implementation of this agenda.

I think this is a time in history that we can really make a change because the future will depend on the implementation of the SDGs, and young people will have a crucial role to play.

The new Secretary-General's vision, which is to place youth at the centre of the UN's work, also inspired me to become engaged in the process as the Youth Envoy.

UN News: What are some your goals as UN Youth Envoy?

JW: The terms of reference under the Secretary-General's vision for young people focuses on the meaningful participation of youth across the four pillars of the UN's work, namely development; human rights; peace and security; and humanitarian action.

My goal would be to ensure that young people have a voice in all of these processes at the UN, with a special focus on the participation of girls and young women.

Institutionalizing youth participation in the UN is important because, as a Youth Delegate, I saw young people working hard on the ground – but without access to UN discussions that institutionalize youth participation. Instead, they often participate in very informal ways through their networks, non-governmental organization or during side events at forums that take place at the UN.

There is a need to formally recognize youth as partners in core processes at the UN. For example, when a government brings a delegation to negotiate a declaration on, say, peace and security, we can always include a youth delegate – ensuring that there is space for young people in the meeting room.

UN News: You have been in office for less than a month. Can you tell us about what you have already done in your first weeks here?

JW: It was quite iconic because I started my tenure as the Youth Envoy on 15 July, World Youth Skills Day, for which I had worked to adopt the perti-



Jayathma Wickramanayake speaking at the National Youth Council of Sri Lanka. Credit: Media Unit, National Youth Council of Sri Lanka.



The Youth Envoy addresses a High-Level Luncheon on the demographic dividend – organized by the President of the General Assembly, President of Economic and Social Council and the UN Population Fund. Credit: Eddie Wright

nent resolution.

That and the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), where my office in partnership with other UN actors and Member States organized many events around youth and skills development and the engagement of young people in voluntary national reviews of the SDGs.

So, my first week was full of activities around the HLPF and gave me the opportunity to meet different stakeholders who were in town at that time.

On my fourth day in office, I had a special meeting with all the youth representatives, who were in New York for the forum. I was able to get their ideas of how they see the role of Youth Envoy and what they expect from me. It was a very good experience.

UN News: What has surprised you about the job so far?

JW: Not sure I would call it a surprise, but in this role, every day I meet young people who work tirelessly on the ground, who sometimes sacrifice their lives, compromise so much for causes that they believe are true.

It really inspires me, and on a daily basis. I think that is the best part of this job!

UN News: What do you foresee as your biggest challenge?

JW: There is a growing rhetoric about young people's participation in formal processes. While everyone acknowledges that they should have a seat at the table, when it comes to implementing this, most often we take a step back. We find excuses not to include youth in discussions about investing in young people, or to find avenues for young people from different backgrounds to participate.

I see the challenge is actually converting this talk to work.

UN News: What changes do you think the UN needs to make in order to reach and be more relevant in young people's

lives?

JW: There are two approaches that we can adopt. Firstly, I think the UN has a responsibility to go to young people and meet them where they are. We cannot expect all youth from different communities, religions and ethnic backgrounds to come to the UN.

For example, this International Youth Day, 12 August, I am celebrating with young people in Iraq, where the theme of "Youth Building Peace" is very relevant in their national context. I come from a region that is constantly affected by conflict, and have personally seen the effects it has had on young people. In Iraq, I will meet with close to 1,000 youth, discussing the problems they are facing.

There, I will also convene meetings with the Government and other stakeholders to see how we can resource youth development in Iraq and devise methods to constantly and substantively engage young people in preventing conflicts as well as in post-conflict reconciliation activities.

There is a need to see young people not as a liability but as an opportunity

Most often the UN jargon is not very familiar to the young people doing good work in advancing the lives of youth in their villages and communities. By taking the UN closer to young people I do not necessarily mean physically, but through new technologies, such as social media, to connect with youth in a language they can understand.

The second approach is to have the UN system look at young people. Today they comprise more than half of the world's population – the largest youth population in the history of the world. There is a need to see young people not as a liability but as an opportunity, and to see how we can proactively engage them in all discussions, at all levels.

(UN.org)

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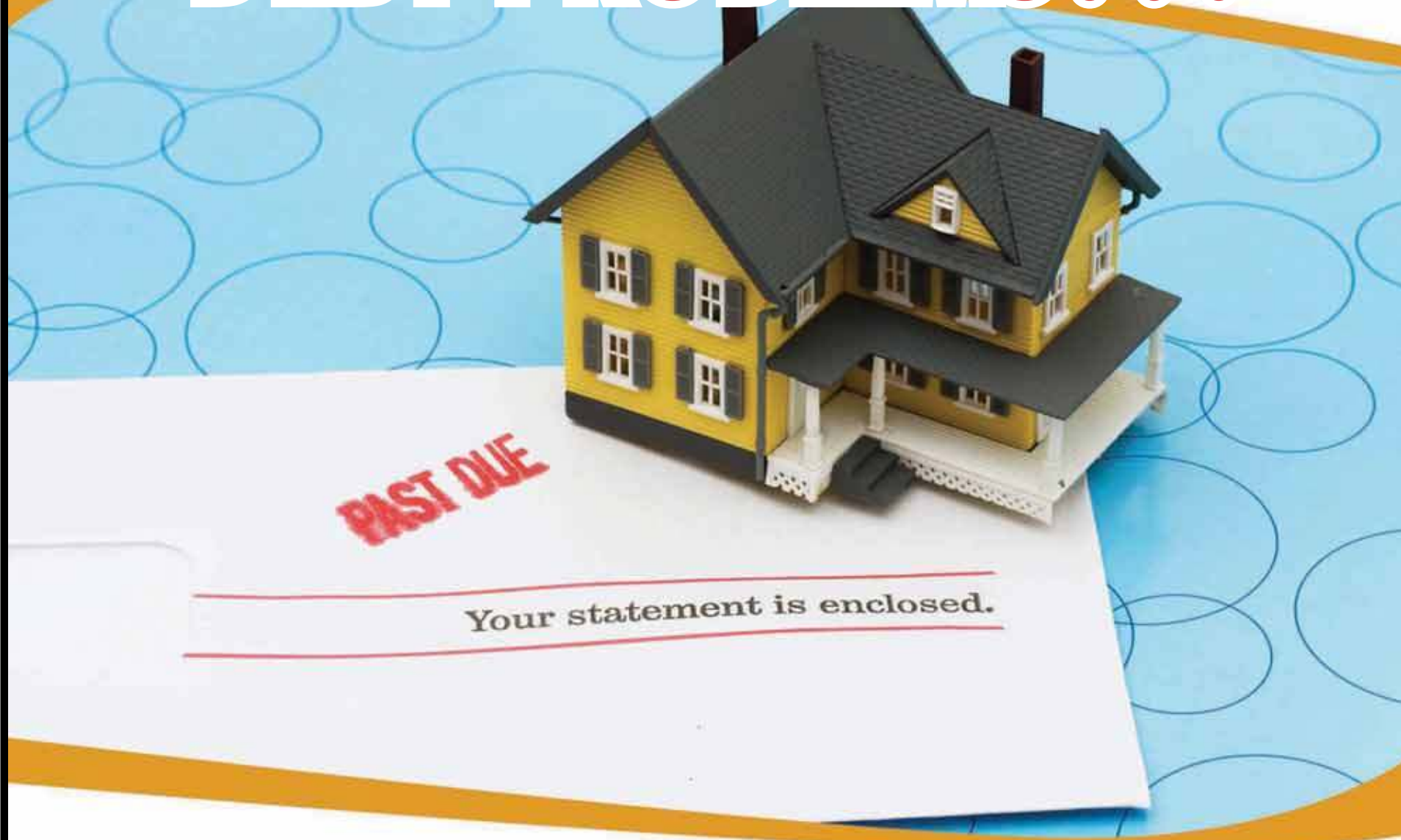
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# Singapore Foreign Minister Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan visits Sri Lanka and touches base in Jaffna

“Some of Singapore’s pioneer leaders in politics, education and medicine hailed from Jaffna.”, says Balakrishnan

By Siva Sivapragasam

Singapore’s Foreign Minister Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan who made a state visit to Sri Lanka has praised Jaffna for the special cultural and people to people significance that Jaffna has with Singapore.

Dr. Balakrishnan pointed out that this relationship had evolved from the early days of government administrators to present day institutions such as the Singapore Ceylon Tamils’ Association. “Some of our pioneer leaders in politics, education and medicine had hailed from Jaffna”, he tweeted later.

During his stay in Sri Lanka, Dr. Balakrishnan met with President Maithripala Sirisena, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and Opposition Leader R. Sampanthan. He later visited Jaffna where he met Chief Minister Wigneswaran.

During his stay in Jaffna, Dr. Balakrishnan presented 500 books on behalf of the Singapore National Library Board to the Jaffna Public Library. The two libraries share a longstanding partnership in capacity-

building and education initiatives. The latest tranche of books will add to the 11,500 books Singapore had earlier donated. He mentioned that Singapore hopes to support Jaffna’s development through the gift of education and knowledge.

The Foreign Minister also visited the Jaffna Teaching Hospital and the University of Jaffna Medical Faculty to launch the Orthopedic Development Programme spearheaded by Sing Health and the Lee Foundation. He remarked that this was personally meaningful for him as he has had the privilege of learning from outstanding doctors of Jaffna origin during his days as a medical student. He stated that he was glad to see Singaporean entities giving back and contributing to improving the healthcare of Jaffna.

Dr. Balakrishnan was anxious to visit the village of Singapore’s former Foreign Minister Sinnathamby Rajaratnam who was of Jaffna origin. He was taken to the village of Sithankerni and showed the ancestral home of Rajaratnam where he met Rajaratnam’s relatives.



Dr. Balakrishnan with some relatives of Mr. S. Rajaratnam, former Foreign Minister of Singapore



Dr. Balakrishnan with Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe



Dr. Balakrishnan with Northern Province Chief Minister Wigneswaran

## Start Right with Scotiabank: Four Tips for New Canadians

TORONTO – Starting a new life in Canada can be an overwhelming experience. You’re often filled with uncertainty and questions – from legal, to financial and beyond. To help get you started on the path to achieving your hopes and dreams in Canada, Munsif Sheraly, Director of Multicultural Banking at Scotiabank, has four important tips:

1. Connect with resources that can help your family get settled: There can be so much to do when you arrive in Canada – find a home, a job, schools, a bank – it can be hard to know where to start. Scotiabank’s Newcomer Handbook gives you quick and easy access to things like: Government Information and assistance, jobs and careers, health, safety and your rights, education and training, Embassies in Canada and more.

2. Open a Canadian bank account and build a good credit history: Whether it’s your first month, or your first year in Canada – your credit history is very important. It is a record of how well you have paid off past debts or loans. It starts from your first credit card purchase, loan or line of credit from a bank. Building a good credit rating will go a long way to help you meet your future financial goals, like securing a mortgage when buying a home. A variety of Scotiabank credit

cards are available to let you earn rewards or

cash back with low interest while building your Canadian credit history.

3. Enrol your children in school: Public education is paid through your taxes and therefore is free and available to every child in Canada. Parents must pre-register their children (usually ages 4-17) as soon as you arrive at the school or school board office in your area. The Government of Canada website is a helpful resource.

4. Plan for your future: You’ll soon find that you and your family have settled into a new routine in Canada and will start to think about long term goals - purchasing a home, putting money aside for your child’s education and investing in your retirement. Having a financial plan is an important element to take control of your finances. Scotiabank offers a Mapping Tomorrow tool that will see you meet with an advisor to create a customized plan for your future. The advisors offer practical advice and smart solutions to help you have the life you want in Canada.

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across Canada, Scotiabank is committed to helping newcomers make Canada feel like home. To learn more about Scotiabank’s StartRight program for newcomers, visit [Scotiabank.com/newto-canada](http://Scotiabank.com/newto-canada).

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Scarborough and Rouge Hospital



Health & Care

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There are five different race waves and participants can sign up as an individual or as a team and closer to race day will be notified of their race start time. If you sign up as a team – you are guaranteed to race with your friends and family.

By participating in Canadian Tire Brave T.O., you will be doing your part to ensure the Scarborough community continues to receive the health care it deserves.

This event is in support of and organized by Scarborough and Rouge Hospital Foundation, with proceeds going towards the purchase of new medical equipment and capital projects.

Learn all about the event, find tips for signing up, fundraising and training by visiting [www.brave.to](http://www.brave.to)

## STAFF GOES “ABOVE AND BEYOND” IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE



Clockwise from top left: Dr. Stephen Barsky, Etsa Papalazarou, Joanne Villaflor, Auryse Papadimos, and Janany Jayanthikumar.

Auryse Papadimos holds a special place in her heart for the staff and physicians providing care in the Mental Health department at Scarborough and Rouge Hospital's Birchmount site. “They consistently go above and beyond in their care,” she said.

Auryse has been seeing Dr. Stephen Barsky regularly to treat a sleeping disorder, that she has become familiar with the secretaries at the front desk.

“Everyone in the clinic has such warm eyes,” she describes. “You're greeted with the impression that they truly want to help.”

Auryse recalls one par-

ticular instance when she mistakenly left her glasses behind. She had already made it more than two blocks away toward where she parked her car when she heard someone calling out her name.

“It was very cold and extremely windy outside, Joanne [Villaflor] had come running after me from the third floor, without a coat on, to bring me my glasses. I was so appreciative.”

But the accolades don't stop there.

Most recently, Auryse has been receiving internet-assisted mindfulness therapy, which reduces mood and anxiety symptoms, with

support from social workers Etsa Papalazarou and Janany Jayanthikumar.

Auryse confesses that she needed a little help getting the program setup on her computer, so Etsa and Janany were kind enough to visit Auryse at home to facilitate care. With their support, she is now receiving treatment in the comfort of her own home by following online mindfulness and breathing modules.

Together, Auryse's care team has made a tremendous impact that she is no longer nervous about visiting the doctor; instead, she describes it as if she's “visiting friends.”

## SRH expands patient demographic data collection initiative

Every day at SRH staff focus on delivering exceptional care to patients and their families. As SRH grows together as one hospital, it is important to learn more about who the hospital serves to ensure that patients unique health care needs are being met.

The hospital asks SRH patients to share their demographic information to help staff deliver more personalized and equitable care for patients in Scarborough's diverse community. Over time, this information will help staff develop programs and services to better serve patients and their families.

Last September, the hospital launched the patient demographic data collection initiative at patient reg-

istration areas of the Birchmount and General sites.

Staff currently ask SRH patients who are in-patients or same-day surgery patients to voluntarily share the following information with the hospital:

- ethnicity
- ability status
- length of time in Canada
- family income

On August 16, SRH expanded the patient demographic data collection initiative to new areas of the hospital. Patients will now be asked for demographic information at patient registration and:

- pre-admitting;
- emergency departments; and
- mental health satellite sites.

As SRH grows together as one hospital, staff will continue to work towards harmonizing and standardizing our systems and processes. This is an important hospital-wide initiative, and will be expanded to all three SRH sites as part of the ongoing integration process. The hospital appreciates our patients' and their families' support with this initiative, and look forward to collaborating with our community to deliver exceptional care that meets the unique needs of every patient.





Scarborough and Rouge Hospital



Health & Care

## SRH SUMMER PATHFINDER VOLUNTEERS ARE HERE TO HELP

Need directions or assistance at the hospital?

Pathfinder volunteers will be on hand at the main entrances of all three SRH sites to help patients and visitors get to where they need to be.

Sporting distinctive “Can I help you?” tee shirts, Syntheya Leslie, 17, Khalesah Alli, 15, Faizah Sayyid, 15, mingle with the flow of people coming through the hospital’s rotating main door.

“I’ve always been interested in health care, and I thought that volunteering at a hospital would be helpful,” Syntheya smiles. “And I really like the one-on-one interactions that I have with patients.”

Guiding families to patient rooms, walking people to the right elevators, and being friendly and helpful greeters are just a few of the pathfinders’ jobs.

“The most interesting part is the people you meet,” Khalesah points out. “And we’re getting really good at pushing wheelchairs.”

The pathfinder program is part of SRH’s commitment to exceptional patient and family centered care – from the moment they walk in the door.

“Navigating our sites can be challenging for newcomers,” explains Florence, Edebiri, Volunteer Services Manager at SRH. “Help from the pathfinders takes the stress off many patients, families and visitors. And it is a delight to see how excited our pathfinders are to greet and lead people in the right direction.”

The pathfinders, many of whom are high school students from our Scarborough community, are here to help from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday – Friday.

The program started as a summer-only initiative, but has been so popular that it will be expanding to become a permanent, year-round program within SRH’s Volunteer Services.

People who wish to become Pathfinder volunteers are invited to call 416-495-2700 for more information.

For patients and family members who need a bit of extra help at the hospital, Florence encourages people to use the Call Ahead program. “When you call ahead for volunteer assistance, you can reserve a volunteer who will meet you as you arrive – with a wheelchair if you need one – and will not leave your side until you are where you need to be,” says Florence.

To reserve a volunteer, please call 416-438-2911 ext. 6846 or email [cava@tsh.to](mailto:cava@tsh.to).



Summer pathfinder volunteers Faizah Sayyid, Syntheya Leslie, and Khalesah Alli are ready to assist at SRH’s General Site.



Tioshae Mason helps Debbie Philips with directions at SRH’s Birchmount site.

## Scarborough World Cup of Golf raises more than \$100,000 for Diagnostic Imaging

Joe Tilley of CTV brought the laughs to the course and the podium for the evening ceremony at the 9th Annual Scarborough World Cup of Golf, August 17 at Angus Glen Golf and Country Club.

Joe and a full course of golfers enjoyed the day despite being cut short by rain. Yet the weather didn’t dampen the spirits of anyone involved as more than \$100,000 was raised towards the Scarborough and Rouge Hospital Diagnostic Imaging (DI) department.

The DI department works collaboratively with all clinical programs at the hospital and plays a vital role in providing timely and accurate information to assist physicians in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases and injuries.

Support from sponsors and participants will help thousands of patients treated at Scarborough and Rouge Hospital each year.

On behalf of Scarborough and Rouge Hospital Foundation, thank you to all involved for your generous support of this popular annual event and we look forward to doing it all over again next year!



Joe Tilley of CTV Sports, was the centre of attention for his foursome as they got sent to tee off on one of the holes in the Scarborough World Cup of Golf.



Liz Buller, SRH President and CEO, shares a laugh with Charlie Cutts, centre, and playing partners Mark Michasiw and Jason Aylsworth

# THERAPEUTIC RECREATION IS BRINGING BACK THAT JOY

A group of patients are in A149, a shared therapy space beside Providence’s cafeteria, the Seasons Café. Lining the wall by the windows are stationary bikes that physiotherapists use with their patients. But today, the bikes stand idle. The group is centralized in the middle of the room, lining both sides of two long tables adorned with cups of brushes, tubes of colourful paint and blank white canvases. Therapeutic Recreationists (TRs) Tracy Martin, Katie Fairweather and Caitlyn Costello have turned the room into Providence’s version of a paint lounge.

Members of the interprofessional team, they take a holistic approach to working with a patient, helping individuals restore their confidence and sense of being as they integrate back into the community.

“When TRs see a patient, something has changed,” explains Cindy Martin, the TR Professional Practice Lead. “For example, a golfer who has had a stroke. The TR works with the person to figure out a way to work within the patient’s limits to still be able to golf. We had one patient who liked being in a boat. The TR coordinated with a marina and the patient was lowered into a boat with his wheelchair.”

Every patient is at a different place in their recovery. While in hospital, they’re focused on those crucial things they need to do. Secondary are often their hobbies. TRs find out about a person’s passion in terms of leisure, connecting with and helping them adapt to his/her new normal.

Mary agrees, adding, “Patients go home from hospital with a stack of papers and equipment. Leisure is not their priority at that time. Two weeks later, once they’ve settled in, they wonder, ‘Now what do I do?’ We’re here to help, assessing patients to see what their leisure needs are

Each of the TRs see between 15-25 patients weekly, broken down by group activities and one-to-one. The group meets collectively to catch up on the first Thursday of each month. At this particular meeting, they discuss plans for their Providence’s 160th anniversary painting event, share learnings from a recent conference and talk over potential external TR site visits as well as other programming.

“It’s the therapy component. Our tools are our leisure, artwork, golf, bead work, flower arranging – we’re still working on the same functional goals as other professions,” explains Stephanie. “When patients need help brushing their teeth, we get them to paint to help improve their grip strength.” Mary adds, “Getting them to paint, getting them to scan the work they’re doing is seen as an enjoyable task, so they are engaged longer. They’re not thinking of it as home work.”

Resourceful, adaptable, creative, the value of these skillsets is seeing the person as a whole and advocating on their behalf. Mary says, “It’s a rewarding job, seeing someone who thinks their life is over and bringing back that joy.”

When asked why they chose this profession, there is a thoughtful pause before sharing some of their ‘ah ha’ moments.



“For me, it’s the feeling of community,” says Katie. “People that have been in our programs have become mentors. We had one guy who ran a radio station, so we gave him an opportunity to do something similar. He organized a play list and we brought patients for the show.”

Says Mary, “Depression is a reality for our patients. Being able to see them thrive after working with them makes this all worthwhile.”

Stephanie nods in agreement, “It’s like working your way out of a job. Watching as your patients improve then flourish in the community.”

The group of patients are putting the final touches on their works of art. Smiles abound as they show each other their creations. The afternoon has offered them a new perspective, a breath of fresh air in their care journey. “This makes it all worthwhile, offering them up a new perspective,” says Tracy. “When you connect with a patient – and it doesn’t happen all the time, but when it does... it’s amazing! I go home and think this was the best day ever. I felt like I made a difference in this patient’s day. This is why I love what I do.”



# 160 REASONS TO CELEBRATE GRANDPARENTS



**Providence Healthcare** has been a leader in providing rehabilitation, palliative care, long-term care and community programs in Toronto, trailblazing care since 1857. Last year saw 2,758 patients come through our doors for rehab after strokes, orthopaedic surgery, lower limb amputations and other complex medical conditions generally associated with aging. We offer robust community programs and outpatient care that promotes ongoing recovery, healthy living and sustained well-being to people in the GTA and beyond. We offer a Palliative Care program that fosters a unique “celebration of life” in a dignified and supportive environment for patients and their loved ones. We also have a long-term care home for 288 residents.

Whether a person resides here or not, Providence is considered home to many and is welcoming of everyone, regardless of race, religion or creed.

2017 marks our 160th anniversary, a milestone achievement that celebrates a long history of delivering compassion, hope and healing to all who come through our doors. With a long standing track record as a leader in the sensitive delivery of care for seniors (with 76 being the average age of our patients), we are committed to helping our patients return home as soon as possible to flourish and thrive by providing them with the resources and attention they so richly deserve.

## BECAUSE WE LOVE GRANDPARENTS...

In staying true to our innovative and nurturing spirit, we are adopting a new tradition in honour of the elderly patients we serve. It seems most fitting that we embark on an awareness initiative

reflecting on the most treasured demographic in every culture around the world – grandparents!

On Sunday, September 10, 2017 and then on the second Sunday in September each year thereafter, we will pay tribute to grandparents everywhere. We will be hosting an Open House party at Providence on that Sunday, complete with family activities, an opportunity to liaise with some NHL legends and share refreshments and fun in a community that simply loves grandparents. All are welcome to attend this public event.

As part of this momentous occasion, Providence Healthcare Foundation has partnered with Rexall, a brand in alignment with our Mission and this day of celebrations. Our goal – to raise \$75,000 to create a greater awareness about the importance of a grandparent in sharing their legacies and passing the torch of knowledge and wisdom to those who surround them. Rexall is generously matching every dollar fundraised (up to \$25,000) each year for the next four years.

## HOW YOU CAN TAKE PART

We are asking people all over the GTA and beyond to share what their grandparent means to them by sending us videos, uploading photos, sharing stories, and making an online donation in honour of your grandparent. This day is about celebrating one of the most cherished and largest demographic in our country! It is our vision to grow this celebration and expand partnerships with those who also have a soft spot for grandparents.

To learn more about how Providence Healthcare is celebrating Grandparents Day, to get involved in the festivities, to make a donation, or to

simply share a story about how your grandparent inspires you, please visit [www.WeLoveGrandparents.com](http://www.WeLoveGrandparents.com).

Let's come together and celebrate Grandparents!





WORDS OF PEACE



# No Interpretation Required

“Know thyself.” Socrates’ famous advice has been repeated in many ways through the ages, and yet there seems little agreement about what it means or how to go about it.

“For many people,” says Prem Rawat, “this idea of the true self is very alien. Because we see what we see, we perceive what we perceive—and we think this is it. ‘This is who I am. This is what I look like. This is my name. This is my job. This is my family.’ We think the sum of all those things constitutes who we are. But there has always been a different thought: that all this you see, all this that you are surrounded by, is not you.”

Mr. Rawat has spent most of his life traveling around the world to introduce people to a definition of the self that is usually overlooked. Without knowing that deeper self, he says, we are not in touch with reality. “What is reality?” he asks. “Is it all this, or something else?”

Shelf after shelf in libraries and bookstores are filled with books in-

terpreting what sages like Socrates really meant.

“In this world, people sit there and interpret,” Mr. Rawat says. “They say, ‘Let me explain to you what this means. Let me explain to you what liberation is. Let me explain to you what salvation is. Let me explain to you what enlightenment is. Let me explain all these things to you.’”

“Imagine that somebody comes up to you and says, ‘Let me explain to you what water is.’ What would you do? What should you do? Should you say, ‘Okay, explain to me what water is?’ Or, ‘I don’t need an explanation—I know what water is, I’ve drunk it before.’”

I think most people would say, ‘I know what water is. I’ve had it.’ Not because somebody already gave you a definition of what it is. You don’t need a definition. ‘I know what water is. I have tasted it, I have drunk it. I’ve bathed in it, I’ve jumped in it.’”

Giving a human being a definition of water, Mr. Rawat says, would be like trying to teach a fish how to

swim. “Do you need to teach a fish how to swim? Why not? Because this the fish knows by its very nature. It’s not necessary.”

“There are aquariums where they keep whales, and they have to teach them to do tricks. Fetch the ball, fly out on command, jump back down—this, they have to teach them. But swimming, they do not. This, the whales already know.”

It’s the same, he says, with human beings wanting to know our true nature. This is something we are already fully equipped to understand. If we haven’t found it, it’s because we’re looking in the wrong place. It’s a feeling, waiting to be uncovered in the heart of every human being.

“There are millions of explanations about God, about salvation, about heaven,” Mr. Rawat says, “and they only exist for one reason. The reason is that people haven’t felt it. Once you feel it, do you need an explanation? You don’t.”

“When you have the possibility of

going inside, when you have the possibility of understanding, when you have the possibility of feeling, then knowing who you really are is simple by its very nature, complete by its very nature, real by its very nature, infinite by its very nature—and by its very nature it brings joy. No interpretation is required.

“Knowledge of the self is not about explanation. It simply is. Feel it. Go inside and feel it. Whenever you turn within—good times, bad times, whatever—it fills you with joy. It fills you with clarity. It fills you with simplicity.”

“Simple? Of course. This is its very nature. And that’s all you need to do.”

To learn more about Prem Rawat visit: 1 877 707 3221  
416 431 5000 Tamil  
416 264 7700 Hindi  
www.wopg.org  
www.tprf.org  
www.premrawat.com



# STEM, STEAM and STREAM



**By: Janani Srikantha**

As students go back to school to begin a new academic year, it's important consider how we can make learning meaningful. Children need to make authentic connections in relevant contexts in order to successfully learn. In addition to this, we are at a point in time, where we don't know what the future holds. Currently, some of the most-in-demand jobs didn't exist ten years ago. Rapid growth and development in innovation means that we need to prepare our children, not with content, but with skills - the skills of problem solving - asking questions, finding data, forming conclusions, and communicating their understanding. They will also need to take the problem they see and find a practical solution that can be applied.

It is this that leads curriculum to focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. When students engage in STEM, they are not just learning these four disciplines separately, but understanding how they are used together in practical application. It is this integration that makes STEM dif-

ferent to traditional math and science classes. In STEM programs, students are in blended learning environments, where the scientific method is applied to everyday life, and students engage in computational thinking with a focus on problem solving for real world applications. With time, an 'A' has been added to create STEAM or Science Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math. Why is art an important component? Both sides of the brain need to be considered in learning. The practical and logical side of the brain is developed with STEM, and it is just as important to develop the creative side. Many jobs place importance on creative thinking and it is essential for Arts to be central as it allows students to look at design principals and art elements, while being innovative in their problem solving.

Being "dual-brained" or strong at both logical and creative thinking allows for whole brain decision making, which is shown to lead to more effective outcomes. Dual-brainers such as Steve Jobs, Marissa Mayer, and Albert Einstein demonstrate that both imagination and being able to connect complex ideas leads to success.

Now that students had the "tools and resources for thinking" through the Arts and Sciences, Reading and Writing was added to create STREAM. Students need to be able to communicate their ideas as well as understand the communication of others. In order to be prepared for the uncertain, but high-tech future, students need to be able to read fluently. They need to be able to comprehend vast amounts of information and decipher key ideas. They need to be able to use context cues to understand the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. They need to be able to inference and "read in-between the lines" to see patterns and make meaningful connections. If we want to develop innovative and successful children, we need to also teach them how to write about their conclusions. They need to be able to take their rudimentary ideas and communicate their thought process to enable further investigation. In order to move their ideas and innovation forward, they need to be able to translate their feelings and passion into words that the general public can relate to.

We are in a unique position as the

jobs of tomorrow are unknown. We can't just rely on content which students have access to at their fingertips. However, we can prepare them to be curious and imaginative. They can learn to problem solve and communicate their understandings. This means that today's students need to be fluent in all of the core subjects - the Sciences, the Maths, the Arts, and Languages.

Janani Srikantha is a certified teacher who is experienced with the Ontario curriculum and the International Baccalaureate. She provides tutoring using personalized learning plans based on students' needs. She is knowledgeable on integrating technology to



**thinkshif.edu**

to redefine learning that is inclusive of all students. Janani has led workshops for educators and parents on topics that address different facets of education. For more information or queries on how to help your child with learning, please email [info@thinkshif.edu](mailto:info@thinkshif.edu) or visit Thinkshift Edu on Facebook.



Special Feature

The Untold Truth

# The emotional life story of a Tamil Canadian teen



by Raymond Rajabalan

Albina Nimalraj – A name that was known only to just a few until last week but has now become a household name among the Sri Lankan Tamil community in Toronto.

Abina – The life story and unique experiences of this 16 Year old high school student of Sri Lankan origin came to light after this courageous teen staged a contemporary dance program on Aug 31st at the Chinese cultural centre in Scarborough.

What was so special and unique about this event?

It was like no other dance program. It was in fact an emotional thought provoking presentation that represented the agony and untold sufferings faced by an innocent child who was forced to undergo treatment for cancer at a tender age.

This dance program presented by Abina was really an act of gratitude. Abina wanted to stage this event to raise funds in support of the Sick Kids hospital to thank the devoted medical personnel who treated her with great care and compassion. She also felt the funds raised at this event might help the hospital at least in some way to treat the children who seek its services.

This unique event attended by hundreds who packed the venue was a great success and there were no dry eyes right throughout this moving event. This event was actually a journey in search of the minds who love humanity and it was a huge unparalleled success for Abina. The constant sobbing and muffled cries from the audience were mute testimony to their feelings.

This program brought to light the raw emotional feelings of a teenager who was once floating around like a butterfly with great dreams about her future. When this dreaded disease struck her all of a sudden her dreams were shattered and her ambitions dashed. However, Abina with the support of her family members fought hard and was able to recover from the effects of this dreadful disease. It was no easy task but she was able to overcome the painful situation with divine guidance. No wonder that there are thousands in this world who still believe in the say-

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you”



ing of Alfred Tennyson “More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.”

It is a bitter fact that the truths we fail to share with others and the life experiences we forgot to reveal to those around us will obviously end up being permanently buried deep within ourselves and later on will disappear without a trace during the course of time. Thus it is necessary to share these experiences so that they could serve to guide others. This is exactly what Abina was determined to do after she miraculously recovered from her illness. She desired to bring awareness of this disease and also wanted to encourage those around her the need to face any situation with great confidence and will power. Abina continues to insist that we all should always be aware that the truths we fail to reveal to the outside world may cause very harmful effects in our society and this is the very reason that such information has to be brought to light to help brighten the lives of those around us. This is why a few years ago as a 13-year old teen, Abina developed

the courage to reveal the painful details of agony, anxiety and pain she experienced at her tender age. It is her hope that many will genuinely understand her deep seated sufferings and learn useful lessons.

Only a few in our community are aware that Abina learned Bharatha Nattiyam dance since the age of 5 and had already staged over 150 programs under the guidance of her guru Nirothini Pararajasingham, a leading dance teacher in Toronto with years of experience. While Abina is very grateful to her teacher, she also points out that it was during one of her performances that she became aware of her sickness. She recalls her dreadful experience in 2013 when she suddenly felt a piercing pain in her shoulder while trying to lift a fellow dancer up to her shoulder during the rehearsal for a cultural event. When she approached a specialist doctor for diagnosis it was a rude shock for her to learn that she was a victim of the dreadful disease of Cancer. For this innocent teenager, it was like a bolt from the blue. Very soon many visible signs

of the disease began to develop during her subsequent training sessions and this was how the doctors were able to detect her sickness at an early stage and treat her successfully.

While Abina is grateful to her parents and family members for providing her continued support and help build self-confidence, her mother echoes her feelings and says that it was the strong faith of Abina that helped her to recover from the effect of her illness.

Abina continues her mission with great passion and sincere great dedication. She deserves the support of each and every one who wishes to help her in her worthy cause.

During her recent interview at Tamil Entertainment Television hosted by Sylvia Francis in the presence of social activist Reagan Paramsothy, Abina provided additional information including a hair donation program. She explained that in response to her appeal more than 20 of her friends have already donated a portion of their hair to the Cancer Society and said she would welcome many more to do the same.

Those who wish to support her cause and donate to Sick Kids Hospital may contact Abina at 647-678-1128.

Her email address is abinanimalraj@gmail.com

**Photo courtesy:**  
Ninaivukal & Ravi Atchuthan  
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# Nava Law Professional Corporation celebrates second Anniversary

*Lawyer Mallika Wilson joins Nava Law Office as Partner*

*Company re-named as Nava Wilson Law Professional Corporation from October 1<sup>st</sup>*

*Nava Law sponsors over 100 Tamil events during the two year period*

**By Siva Sivapragasam**

Nava Law Professional Corporation, a well-known name in Toronto among the legal services, celebrated its second year anniversary at the Scarborough Convention Centre at a well-attended event recently.

Nava Law specializes in Real Estate Law and Business Law. The company has now added Litigation to their profile. Nava Law is a growing leader in real estate law in East Toronto and their collaborative, interdisciplinary approach enables the Company to develop innovative solutions for their clients. The Company helps build strong relationships with their clients and ensures that the clients are satisfied by providing expert, high quality and efficient services in a timely manner. Nava Law team brings decades of experience advising clients on complex real estate affairs, including working on multi-million-dollar real estate development deals.

Partner Kubes Navaratnam traced the achievements of the Com-

pany during the two-year period during his welcome speech and listed the different fields of legal services offered by the Professional Corporation. He also remarked that the Company is getting ready to receive a new Partner Mallika Wilson from October 1st and that the Company will be re-named as **Nava Wilson Law Professional Corporation**.

Mallika Wilson is a lawyer by profession and has valuable experience in the field of litigation which will be a new field added to the Company's legal services. She is the daughter of Professor A.J. Wilson, a former Professor of Political Science in the University of Sri Lanka and the Grand Daughter of Mr.S.J.V.Chelvanayagam, the founder of the Federal Party in Sri Lanka.

Mr.Navaratnam also stated in his speech that the company had sponsored over one hundred Tamil events during the two year period.

Seen here are pictures taken at the event.

**Pic. Courtesy: Charles Deva**



Principal partner Kubes Nava addresses the guests



Gary Anandasangaree MP for Scarborough-Rouge Park makes a speech at the event



Principal partner Kubes Nava with company's new partner Mallika Wilson



Kubes Nava with his wife Karthika



Mallika Wilson addresses the guests



MC for the event Prasana Balachandran



Parthi Kandavel, Trustee, Ward 18, TDSB



Vathanan Jegatheesan, Executive Director, Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce



Kubes Nava and Mallika Wilson with Siva Sivapragasam, Executive Editor "Monsoon Journal"



Nava Law Team



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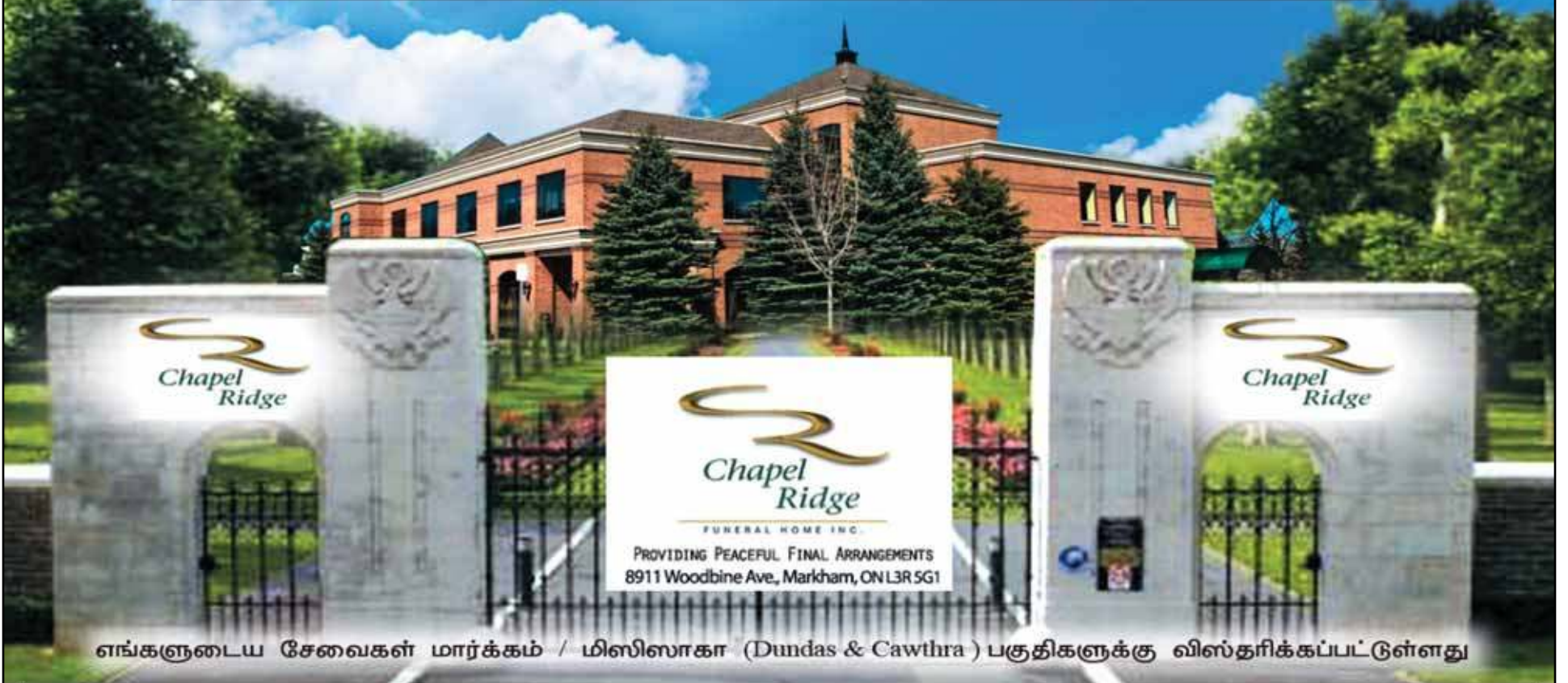


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# August Birthdays & Money Transfers

Around the world, more people are celebrating their birthdays this month (August) than any other months of the year. In fact, 19.5% of the population in India and 11.6% of China have their birthdays in August! To those who grew up in Canada, this is the time of the year where cake & candy comes to mind. However, in other parts of the world, many countries have their own long standing birthday traditions that don't involve a sugar rush.

For the Chinese, many customs often involve auspicious symbols, from the colour red to the lucky number 8; and birthdays are no exception. In China, a bowl of longevity noodles is a staple dish for this special occasion. The longer the noodle, the longer the life-span. It is said the noodle strands should be eaten bit by bit - without biting into it, to ensure a long & fruitful life.

In India, young men celebrate their friend's birthdays by taking him by the arms and legs, and "bumping" him up into the air with gentle kicks. Similar to birthday punches, The number of "bumps" given equals the age of the person in years plus one "for luck".

Jamaicans celebrate their loved ones' birthdays with a tradition known as "flouring" Instead of baking a birthday cake with flour, the flour is thrown in the face of the birthday boy or girl.

For those who live abroad, it's often difficult knowing that you're missing out on the celebration back home. As an alternative, many immigrants opt for sending home birthday money as their way of joining in the festivity. In fact, money transfers sent during special occasions make up a large portion of Canada's global remittance. In 2015 alone, Canadians have sent approximately \$24 billion abroad (source: cidpnsi.ca/remittances-explorer).

The challenge for senders, however, is deciding which service provider to trust when sending the funds. The associated costs are of different types - fees, exchange rates, etc., and ease and speed of transfers also vary by banks/financial institutions. It's important to do a little bit of the homework upfront and know the right questions to ask before choosing who to go with.

Six Things to Consider When You Want to Send Money Home

## 1. Is there a transfer fee?

Certain companies charge separate transfer fees, which can make up a large percentage of the money you are sending, depending on the amount you are sending.

## 2. What's the most convenient method of sending money home?

Some companies make transferring money a challenging & unpleasant process. You may be required to be physically present, and also be asked to fill in plenty of paperwork every time you try to make a transaction. Then there are others that offer the convenience of

making international transfers straight from your smartphones.

## 3. What is the foreign exchange rate being utilized to calculate how much your intended recipient is going to be receiving?

Watch out for the fine print. Is the exchange rate being calculated at the time when you are sending or when it arrives there? Sometimes a day or two can make a big difference.

## 4. How long is it going to take for your remittance to get to your intended recipient?

Much like a courier service, you can pay for next day or it can take a number of days. A premium should be attributed to companies that get your money within a day.

## 5. What are the limits on how much you can send?

Sometimes the amount you need to get to your family can be larger than the supplier limit.

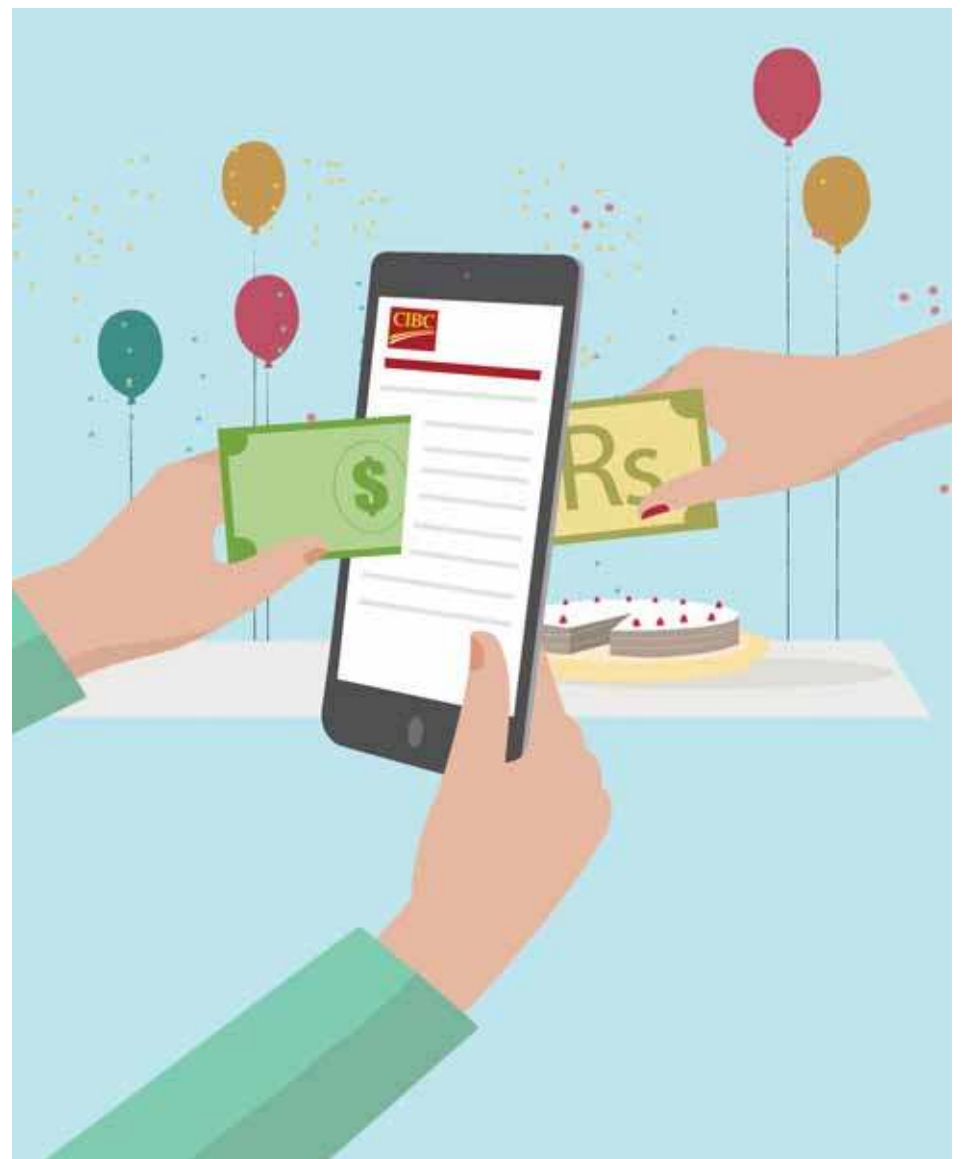
## 6. Can you trust the company that you are sending the money with?

Check the financial viability of the transfer service provider - is it a stable organization that you are relying on? After all, it is money that you are sending.

The CIBC Global Money Transfer Advantage

These are the questions that CIBC hoped to address when it created the Global Money Transfer Program for their customers. With the changing face of Canada, the bank repeatedly kept getting requests from customers for an affordable and safe way to send money to their native countries. In response to the request and understanding the customer pain points, CIBC decided there would be zero transfer fee for CIBC customers, while offering competitive exchange rates. Between these two factors alone, customers are often saving a significant amount of money. In all cases, the foreign exchange rate is calculated at the time the money is sent. In most cases, money arrives within a day of transmission. No premium is charged for this quick service. Also in response to customer needs, CIBC has one of the highest daily transfer amounts available, i.e., \$9,999.99 to India and over other 40 countries (\$6000 to China). CIBC takes pride in the convenience our customers enjoy when making a transfer. Whether it is through a branch, online or through your phone, sending money is intuitive & simple. As for trust, CIBC is CIBC. It is one of Canada's top banks, providing you with the assurance of 150 years of banking expertise.

No matter how you celebrate it, birthdays are great ways to shower your loved ones with gifts & blessings. This month, let CIBC Global Money Transfer help you deliver your best wishes to them.



## Prime Minister Trudeau at Tamil Fest

Contd. from Page 1...

The crowds present responded with loud bursts of applause for the MP.

The Prime Minister congratulated the Canadian Tamil Congress for the hard work the organization does for the Tamil community. He stated that the organization would grow in the years ahead under the leadership of Dr. Shanthakumar, the President.

The MP for Scarborough-Rouge Park Gary Anandasangaree thanked the Prime Minister for attending the event and stated that Mr. Trudeau has broken new ground as the first sitting Canadian Prime Minister to attend a Tamil-Canadian event. He further thanked the Prime Minister for asserting the need for Sri Lanka to fulfill its commitments to the international community and for personally engaging on issues relating to Tamil-Canadians. He mentioned that the Prime Minister had stood in solidarity with the Tamil community, in good times and bad, to ensure that its voice is projected in Canada and around the world.

Please see page 3 for more pictures of Tamil Fest 2017



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau addresses the crowds assembled at the festival



Valluvar's Views

By: JJ Atputharajah



Special Feature

## Thankfulness



- ptt2010.com

**Thankfulness** is a very desirable human quality that has to be nurtured and cultivated for the development of human welfare and civilization.

Valluvar asserts emphatically,

*'ennanri konrarkum uyvundam,  
uyvillay cheynanri konra maharkku'*

There may be forgiveness for any kind of negligence but not for the one who forgets the good deeds done for her or him.

Valluvar enumerates the virtues of gratefulness in his chapter on gratitude. Nothing on earth or heaven can measure up to the value of spontaneous help given

to a person who is in need of it and to whom he is not in any way obliged. Timely help, though small is of great value than all the earth. Value of help rendered by one who has not counted the cost or the recompense when assessed, is greater than the magnitude of the oceans. Even if the value of the help is may be infinitesimal, the worthy recipient will consider it as big as a palm tree. The value of the help rendered is not limited by the physical dimension of the help. It is measured by the character and the quality of mind of the recipient. Do not forget the kinship of pure souls and do not forsake friends who helped you in time of need.

Throughout the seven births, the wise will remember the help rendered to them in time of sorrow or deprivation. To forget a good deed is not just done. Whereas an ill turn is best forgotten. Even a deadly hurt is soon effaced, if one recollects a past good turn. There may be salvation for those who have killed all other virtues, but not for the one who has killed gratitude.

Shakespeare gives the same thought through Julius Caesar, when he makes him utter with remorse when he saw the betrayal of Brutus in 'As you like it: 'Blow, blow thou winter wind, Thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude'



Driving back home alone from a Bharatha Natiya debut by a beautiful young lady, my thoughts reflected on the event and its effects. It was a wonderful performance and one could see she was looking forward to a great future. Like a person's life I could noticed the sequences were well choreographed to come to an end after climex on a sequence called Mangalam.

The great English poet and playwright William Shakespeare proclaims the world as a stage and people as actors going through seven ages. After the viewing the enchanting performance I felt that world is like a Bharatha Natiya stage and we are all dancers. A person's appearance in this world happens with Pushpanjali (flower offering). This was followed by different dance sequences like Alarippu, Jatheeswaram, Shabdham, Keerthanam, Varnam, Padham, Thillana and finally Mangalam, a word that has a connotation of Auspicious/splendor. I realized that I am performing the sequence Thillana, of life's dance remaining is the final sequence Mangalam. Every one's dance of life begins with Pushpanjali and ends with Mangalam.

It is difficult to fathom the speed with which the time moves. Like the cart rolling behind the horse, year runs behind the days. It is like yesterday I was playing marbles under the Tamarind tree, and played Rounder's under the Maragos tree, roaming the village to draw attentions of beautiful damsels on a two wheeler. But when I reflect back I realize that eons have passed through. I am wondering how time fooled me and disappeared. I do realize I did come through those years. It is written in my heart with indelible ink the dreams and aspirations I had, like that young lass, about my future in those days past.

But now I realize am doing the Thillana of the life's dance, sequence before the last. When I was performing Jatheeswaram watching those performing Thillana I felt they are far away and it will take thousands of years for me to do Thillana. In those days I could not even envisage the thoughts of those elders doing the Thillana sequence. But, here I am performing that very same Thillana! When performing Varnam a word which literally means colour, the

# Thillana



Movie actress Padmini

colour of my hair near the ears started changing from black to white and now my head has become like a rain cloud! Yes, some of my friends who cannot accept the irony of change used to dye the hair black.

But they too have done the sequences like me. They find it difficult to be active like before. When I look at them I realize the years have vanished to thin air. When young I failed to realize that soon I too will become like this. Had I realized, I would have taken time to enjoy Sabtham, Keerthanam, Varnam and Padam more.

These days, from the morning chores to going to bed in the evening has become strenuous task. Not only as the great saint Yogar Swami of Jaffna said I would like to 'Just be', at times I get into trance of wakeful sleep.

I had not prepared myself for onslaught of aches and pains of performing Thillana! There are times I start to do something and stop half way returning to my couch, like King Ravana returning sans all his weapons and valour, to Lanka from the battlefield after losing to Rama. Very soon the last sequence Mangalam too will be

over. When Mangalam is over the stage called world will also be over for me. After that, why worry whether there is lime light on the stage or not? I will have a new stage for me waiting to unfold a new Bharatha Natiya sequences with a Pushpanjali.

I did have disappointments in my dance performance. Sometimes I do regret I did not do certain things, and at other times I do regret for the things I have done.

If you are not performing the Thillana sequence, based on my experience I would like to give you an advice. Thillana will come faster than you think. If you do want to do something, do it now. Do not procrastinate to do it tomorrow or latter. Further I want to point out some of my close friends were taken away from the stage while performing much earlier sequences. There is no guaranty you will be given the opportunity to participate in all the sequences of the life's dance. What you can do today do it today! If you love someone say it now. Even if you are not there tomorrow, your memory will make that person happy.

The dance of life is a gift to you.

How you live it, is the gift you give to those who will come after you and thereby to yourself. Try to make it a great performance. Live great! Enjoy each day! Do things that will make you happy. Do not forget happiness is a journey and not a destination. One thing that you should never forget is the most valuable thing in this world is your body and its health. If you are asked whether you want Kohinoor diamond or this body which one will you chose. Diamond is there for your body and not other way around.

For your dance to be the great, music must be great too. Like the western world use the seven naming convention Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La and Si, in Tamil too likewise we have the following seven naming convention called Suram. Let us see how these naming conventions effects our Life's dance.

The first Suram: Sa – your children will be like you not so perfect, but your grand children are faultless diamonds.

Second Suram: Re – It is nice to go out of the house, but nicer to return to your house.

Third Suram: Ga – You may sometimes forget names. It is O.K. There will be others who would forget you.

Fourth Suram: Ma – It is O.K to learn something new. After all isn't life is about learning new things?

Fifth Suram: Pa – You may lose interest on something you were interested earlier. You may not sweat over that.

Sixth Suram: Tha – You will sleep more on your couch than on your bed. You can call this fore sleep!

Seventh Suram: you will be using more words starting with the letter 'W' like when, where, who, what.

These are seven Surams of Thillana.

You may discard old food, old clothes, old furniture even old shoes and slippers. But you can't discard everything that is old. Old movies old songs and more particularly old friends are great. Keep in touch with your old friends.

Today is the oldest day in your life, but it is youngest Day of your future. Forget about the Mangalam and dance with all your might. Let your Thillana last and grow for a long time. .

**By: Grand Dancer  
Kumar Punithavel**



MANAGING YOUR MONEY

# RESP facts

A Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) is a great way to save for a child's postsecondary education. Here are some basic facts so you'll be sure to get the most from an RESP.

- Investments that are RESP-eligible allow savings to grow tax-free until your child enrolls in a qualifying post-secondary education program.

- There are three types of RESPs:
  - \* A Family Plan allows you to name multiple beneficiaries, each of whom must be related to you. This includes siblings, half-siblings and step-siblings.

- \* An Individual Plan allows you to name one beneficiary, who does not have to be related to you.

- \* A Group Plan pools the earnings on your savings with those of other people, and the amount your child receives to pursue post-secondary educa-

**- know your options**

You're finally ready to start tapping into the investments you've been building in that Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) you've nurtured over the years. Here are some ideas on how to get the most from it.

**Know your options** Once your child is enrolled in an eligible program you can withdraw plan contributions tax-free and use them any way you wish – to support your child or even for your personal purchases. (If your RESP is a "group RESP", then there may be further restrictions on contribution withdrawals.)

**Know your limits** Educational Assistance Payments (EAPs) consist of the Canada Education Savings Grant (CESG), the Canada Learning Bond (CLB), and the income you've earned



tion is based on how much money is in the pool and on the total number of students in that pooled age group.

- The Canadian Education Savings Grant (CESG) is a federal program that provides a matching grant for each RESP contribution made for an eligible child. It is generally worth 20% of the first \$2,500 of annual contributions (\$500/year), but depending on family income and prior contribution history, could be worth up to \$1,100/year.

- The Canada Learning Bond (CLB) is a federal program that provides \$500 bond to an RESP for a child whose family receives the National Child Benefit Supplement and \$100/year for up to 15 subsequent years.

**RESP spending**

on the investments within the RESP. In most cases, the government restricts the withdrawal of EAPs to a maximum of \$5,000 in the first 13 weeks of your child's educational program. In some cases, the limit may be \$2,500 per 13-week period. EAPs must be used to 'further' your child's post-secondary education, and thus can be used to pay for numerous things including tuition, school/student fees, textbooks and even 'reasonable' costs for moving, rent, food, and transportation.

You can request the permission of the Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada to exceed the \$5,000 or \$2,500 limits on EAP withdrawals. Make your request in writing through your RESP promoter, and send

David Joseph, M.A.(Economics), CFP®, CLU, RRC.

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it in as early as possible.

**Avoid paybacks** If there is any money remaining in your plan after your child's post-secondary program has been completed, you may be required to refund some of the CESG monies your plan had received. To avoid any potential CESG paybacks, be sure to deplete your plan's earnings first by withdrawing EAPs before contributions.


**Take advantage of left-overs** Any contributions remaining in the plan after your student finishes college or university are yours to use as you wish – transfer them to another child's plan or withdraw them for personal use.

**Be tax-savvy** Remember that EAPs will be taxed as part of your child's income -- a tax


advantage if your child's income is low. An RESP is a great way to help offset the cost of a post secondary education – and there are other steps you can take to ensure your financial stability and achieve a debt-free education for your children. Talk to your professional advisor about the best financial steps for your situation.

**Disclaimer:**

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# HOW DANGEROUS IS SOLAR ECLIPSE 2017?

## WHY IS IT UNSAFE TO LOOK AT THE SOLAR ECLIPSE DIRECTLY AT THAT INSTANT?

By: *Uthayan Thurairajah*

Solar eclipse 2017 is a greatly rare occasion. There was a Great American Eclipse in the United States in 1979. The solar eclipse had occurred on August 21, 2017. According to Time Magazine, the total solar eclipse is unique, and it will be visible all across the United States.

We can safely look at a total solar eclipse while the moon entirely blocks the sun. The moon has a bright white atmosphere, and it is one of the more dramatic things to see. In general, we have been told not to stare at the sun. The sun directly outputs more energy than our eye is designed to manage, and opening our eye to that sort of power can burn the retina.

The moon completely blocked the sun in some parts of 14 states at various times during the day which includes parts of Idaho, Wyoming, Oregon, Montana, Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Illinois, Tennessee, North and South Carolina, Kentucky, and Georgia. The solar eclipse can be dangerous to the eyesight – so it's important to use proper safety precautions or you could end up with retinal damage. There is also what's being called "solar eclipse selfie danger."

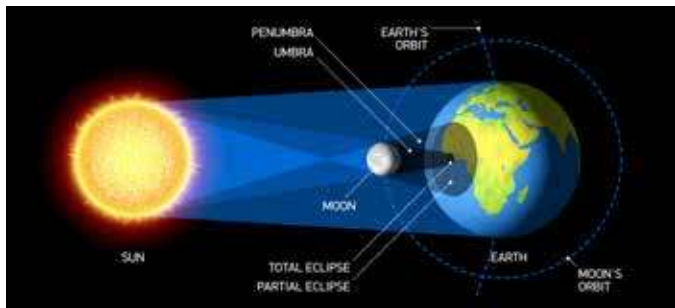
As per NASA, a solar eclipse occurs when the Moon blocks any part of the Sun. A solar eclipse was visible beyond the North America. The whole continent experienced a partial eclipse around 2 to 4 hours. A roughly 100km wide path from South Carolina to Oregon experienced a short total eclipse. When the Moon completely blocks the Sun's bright face and turning day into night and making visible the hidden solar corona – the Sun's outer atmosphere. Some schools were closed because of the potential dangers if the students look up.

### Eye Damage:

On a day, we do not look at the sun, but we would like to look at the solar eclipse. According to NASA, it is risky to look straight at a solar eclipse. The only safe way to look directly at the partially obscured Sun is with special eclipse glasses or hand-held solar viewers.

Ordinary sunglasses and homemade filters are not safe for viewing at the Sun. It is important that the solar eclipse glasses are certified. It is also risky to look through a camera, binoculars, telescope or any other optical devices without a filter.

NASA says it is a misunderstanding that

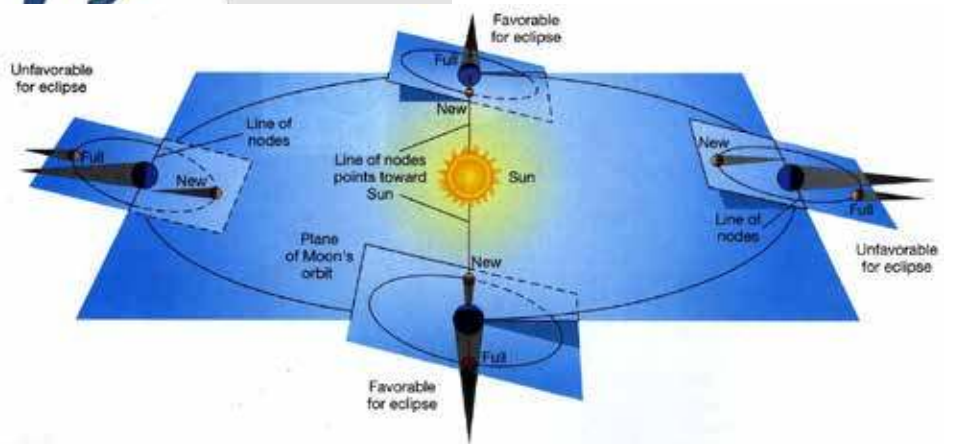


you go blind by seeing a solar eclipse, but there is the danger of retinal damage. The moon correctly hides the sun during a total solar eclipse; the brilliant corona emits only electromagnetic radiation; this does not produce blindness. If you watched the sun before totality, you would catch a glimpse of the bright solar exterior, and this cause retinal destruction.

The only time we can see the sun with your naked eye is if we are on the path of unity, where the sun hidden by the moon. Science says: "Exposing your naked eye to sunlight produces solar retinopathy or retinitis." This involves two types of damage to the retina, particularly the fovea: burns and photochemical toxicity. According to Ars Technica report, the photochemical toxicity is a frequent cause of vision loss in solar retinopathy. The most of the damage was not permanent.

### Selfie Danger:

It is risky to take selfies during a solar eclipse with an iPhone or other cell phones.



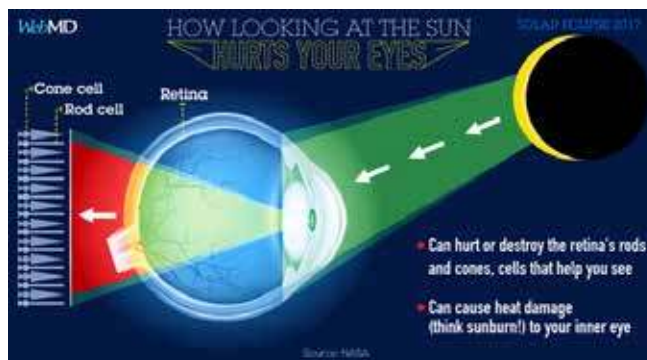
The danger comes when people look directly at the Sun as they position themselves for selfies or other shots. "Accidentally glancing at the Sun can lead to burns at the back of the eye," BBC reports.

We shouldn't look directly at the sun or eclipse, including into an iPhone or other phones. Daniel McCartney, a clinical adviser at the College of Optometrists, to BBC: "This could probably be very risky because people tempted to look at the Sun as they try to get the perfect shot or clip and people might end up unexpectedly staring at the Sunlight for minutes."

Many people think it is harmless to take a selfie with the solar eclipse in the background because they are not looking directly at the sun. What they may not realize is that the screen of our phone reflects the ultraviolet rays emitted during an eclipse directly toward your eye, which can result in a solar burn.

### Driving Danger:

It's not an excellent idea to drive during a solar eclipse. It is a human behavior, not science. Distracted drivers may cause accidents, and pedestrians may be wandering around. Traffic congestion can increase dangers. We can expect a major traffic jam on the roads during the eclipse. It is also in the days before and after the eclipse as many travelers head to the totality zone. It is better not to drive while wearing solar eclipse glasses and put the visor down if you must drive.



This is a moment when the motion of the astronomical figures is shown to us. We live on a spinning globe rotating around a supportive star. If Earth didn't have the moon, and if relative sizes of the sun and moon were not just right, we wouldn't experience eclipses at all. So wonder at it. Enjoy in it. Be glad that, of all the billions of planets in the universe, this is the one you get to call home.



**Uthayan Thurairajah**, PhD, RSE, LC, P.Eng., is a Senior Engineer at WSP|MMM Group with over twenty years of experience in Electrical Engineering and Lighting field, and he also holds a Lecturer position in the Department of Communication and Design at Ryerson University. Uthayan is a member of several Canadian and international professional association including Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO), Academy of Integrative Health and Medicine (AIHM) and Association for Prevention Teaching and Research (APTR). He has worked on multi-disciplinary lighting and electrical projects for the Ministry of Transportation, several Towns, Municipalities, Regions and others. He carries out research on the subject of light and lighting and taken part in several projects. He also has extensive research experience in the value of lighting design in the mental, emotional, and social well-being of a person. He is a frequent presenter and author on lighting design & health. He is passionate about integrating science and health into the lighting design.



## Tribute to Appammah

## Mrs. Ulaganayagam Sivapragasam



.....  
**Feb 12, 1929 – Aug 7, 2017**  
 .....

Appammah was a big gem in our family. Like her name, Ulaganayakee, she meant the world to many of us. Appammah played a major role in my life as a mother figure, as a teacher and even as a sister. From the day I was born, she was always with me. She taught, played and cooked for me on a daily basis. I was able to learn many things from her. She always had a keen eye on my education and wanted me to strive for the best. She continued to ask me every day to come and study. From that moment onwards, she has helped me to gain new knowledge which has led and shaped me to become the person I am today.

From the past stories Appammah has told me, I was able to understand how successful she was and how much she achieved in her life. I also learned that she was a strong-willed and intelligent woman by her actions as she took care of me and everyone else. Appammah knew that education is key in life and would always send me to school whole-heartedly, making sure I had a smile on my face before I left. Even when I come home from school late, she would not only stand at the door waiting for me but she would come outside even if it was cold and wait for me to trudge through the door safely.

This showed how much of a caring person she truly was and how eager she was to listen about how my day went at school. No matter how old I got, Appammah always treated me as her "Chella Kutty". She would always tell me to come and sit on her lap, asking how my day had been. When I stayed at home alone with her, she was like the sister I never had. She always played games with me and even said I was cheating as we played. We fought many times together but as an older sibling, Appammah would always come and say sorry to me. She would always

ask me to come and sleep with her during the day and when I did, I would hold my Barbie doll in one hand and with the other hand, I wrapped myself around her.

I would wrap myself tightly around Appammah knowing that I would receive great warmth and comfort from her every time. Appammah has done many things for me and my family that I could never forget and from when I was young, I knew it would be my duty to take care of her. As she slowly became sick, I began to do my duties as her grand-daughter such as brushing her hair, helping her wash her clothes, helping her to take a wash, serving her food and helping her to walk.

Over the last four years it has been very difficult for everyone. Appammah stayed at the hospital for some months and after was sent to a nursing home where she received great care and was treated very well. Appammah would always have a smile on her face when she saw that someone was there to see her. Whenever I visited, I tended to hold Appammah's hand, and she would take it and kiss it. Knowing that she was kissing my hand, it felt like a blessing I was receiving from her. Sometimes when I was with her as she ate, I would play music and I would see how happy she was, enjoying the music when she tapped her feet to follow the rhythm.

I tried to make Appammah happy over the last few years by the contributions Appa and Amma made. Amma would always cook and prepare food ahead before Appa arrives from work. Appa spent as much time as he could with Appammah visiting her twice a day whenever he could. He put countless effort into making sure that Appammah was well-fed, dressed and healthy. Seeing how much effort Appa

took in order to take care of Appammah was a big eye-opener to me to see how much a son truly cares for his mother. This made me realize how much of a huge impact Appammah had on others and how much he wanted to give back to her.

During Appammah's last few days, she showed and proved to us that she was truly a strong fighter. When the doctor told us that she only has five minutes to live, she overcame those five minutes and lived till the next day. It was heart breaking to hear such news about Appammah only having five minutes to live but even through the pain she had suffered, she fought extremely hard until her very last breath.

Appammah loved life; she loved her family, she loved her friends, she loved nature and she loved god. No matter what situation that was presented to her, no matter how challenging it was, she was able to overcome it. Appammah always taught me that no matter what happens in life, if you remain calm and positive you can overcome it. It was lessons like that, which I will remember for the rest of my life. It is incredible what her smile and kind heart can do.

Appammah, thank you so much for what you have done for me; you have put in so much effort to help me become a better person. I will never forget what you have done for me in order to become successful. I will cherish all the memories I had with you forever in my heart. I know you will still be with me, guiding me throughout my journey in life from up above us. Once again, thank you so much my dearest Appammah, from the bottom of my heart. I know you are in a better place now and will continue to watch over us from up there

**- Ayshwinie Sivakumar**  
 Granddaughter





# IN LOVING MEMORY OF MY FATHER, MY FRIEND, MY GUIDE

10th Anniversary of the demise of  
**Mr. K.C. Kamalabayson PC, former Attorney General**



**By Vidhya Kandeban**

.....  
It has been 10 years since the demise of Mr. K.C. Kamalabayson PC. A decade is definitely not what it feels like - the final memory of him seems not so long ago, when I desperately yearned for his life. And nothing has changed.

Looking back ten years ago, I lost my father when I was a law student. I remember when my first year results were released in August 2006, we were in Chennai for his first course of treatment. He was extremely anxious all day until we got the call that I had got through, and at that moment I saw in him a very excited child, jumping around the hospital room and announcing to the medical staff 'my daughter is now a diplomat!'. I remember sitting at the edge of his hospital bed while he was walking around the room informing family and friends of the first of my achievements. It was a very happy and fulfilling sight for me. Not once did it occur to me that this could possibly be the only achievement he was to witness in person.

In May 2007 I had my second year final exams and I remember how he used to walk me to the entrance of the exam hall for each paper - I remember turning around before the doors of the hall closed behind me only to see my dad standing there waving to me and giving me a thumbs up. He left a week later for his stem-cell transplant in Chennai and just three months later, he left me with the challenge of wading through society by myself. One of the last things he said to me in hospital was 'please make sure you study. Being qualified is very important. Never ever give up'. I can only take solace in the fact that I lived up to his wishes. My father was a simple man with a fabulous sense of humor. He loved pranking people, ranging from me to his private secretary. He used to change his voice over the phone and trick me so frequently, that on one occasion when the then Presi-

dent actually called home to speak to him when he was away at a function, I thought it was him pulling my leg as usual! When he got home and I told him I had spoken to the President thinking it was him, and was slightly panicking that the then President might have thought my tone had been obnoxious, he was doubled over laughing.

Another memory is one of Santa Clause. I was a believer, as are many children. I used to write letters of request to the 'man in red' and my father very graciously undertook the task of posting them. When I was around 9 years old (embarrassingly, still a believer at the time) I had asked for a scrabble board for Christmas. One fine day my father returned from work holding a bag looking rather dubious. I noticed him hiding this bag (he was totally oblivious to the fact that I was peeking) and later found out that it was the very scrabble board which I had asked Santa to deliver. I was heartbroken - mainly because I was upset that I had ruined my father's age old secret - that he was the household man in red! So I decided to play along and I did so for another couple of years. We were both pretending so that we could give each other this simple joy. Such was our relationship - innocent and beautiful. He was truly my friend, and I absolutely adored him...I still do and I always will.

He always encouraged me and my mother to pursue our interests. My mother is an artist whose talent she herself had shadowed out for the sake of the family commitments. He encouraged her to paint again - I remember how he would return from work every day and the first thing he would do would be to check on the progress of the on-going piece of art. The visual of him looking at the canvass with his signature grin and his hands on his waist is still vivid in my mind. He was my biggest fan when it came to my venture in Bharatha Natyam - all I needed was to see him in the audience with a proud look of approval on his face. We were extremely lucky to have had a hands-on and

encouraging husband and father - we are strong and independent women mainly because of his role in our lives. A gift he left behind for a lifetime.

I had the most wonderful relationship with my father. He may have held high office, but he never compromised on family time. It was never about him making an effort to 'make time' - it was his priority and his 'work-life balance' came most naturally to him. This is a quality which is exceedingly rare in today's context, with the hustle and bustle in the rat race to succeed at the workplace, in the struggle to prove oneself worthy as a successful professional, many of us tend to struggle in attaining the ideal way of life. My father left behind a very prudent lesson - that this is not impossible, neither is it a Himalayan task.

Ten years ago when I lost my father I was very young, distraught and confused, unsure of what was to come, with my mother taking upon herself the arduous task of running the house and educating me. These ten years have taught me many lessons by way of struggles, disappointments, success and hard work. It has taught me the strength of a mother singlehandedly molding her daughter into a person fit to survive in society, while grieving the loss of the man who was her all. Ten years later I have earned myself a small place in the legal world, I am a mother, a wife and I stand by my own mother as her companion and daughter. It would have been perfect, if not for the biggest and most painful vacuum - the absence of my father. Yet I do believe that he continues to guide me and I will forever exist in his shadow.

There was a saying which my father used frequently in his speeches and life in general - 'Rising to eminence by merit, we may live respected and die regretted'.

His life and demise have most certainly been testament to this. We miss you Appa. And we love you more with each passing day.

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Siva Nilayam – Their abode at Tellipalai

**C. Kamalaharan**

I was thoroughly shaken on receiving the sad news of the demise of my Guru and friend Ramalingam Kanthiah whose amiable obliging accessible and friendly disposition had lured people from all walks of life. He also had a strong influence on his students by his unique method of teaching, personal care love and compassion. I first met him in 1975 and sought his help while preparing for the G.A.Q exam of the University of Peradeniya as an external candidate. I needed his help in certain sections in English Literature mainly poetry and fiction. He readily consented to help me during weekends.

In teaching he was in a class by himself having the ability to elucidate the subject matter clearly and precisely. He dealt in detail and cleared all my doubts in poetry and fiction. I was able to observe his strong passion for teaching literature when he took time and taught me in detail Joseph's Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' for four hours continuously from 4.00 p.m till 8.00 p.m without feeling tired or bored. It was so absorbing that I too didn't feel tired or bored. After clearing all my doubts and explaining in detail important sections I offered him cash as a token of gratitude for his extremely useful help but he politely refused to accept it. Later I came to know that he had never accepted anything in return from anyone he had helped. His forte being literature he was ever willing to help students but never expected anything in return.

For the Bachelor's degree I was fortunate to follow the private classes in English conducted by the late Prof. Chelva Canaganayagam who was the lecturer in English at the University of Jaffna and later became professor in English at the University of Toronto. Mr. Kanthiah was very much pleased when I passed the Bachelor of Arts degree while being a science teacher. He had mentioned this in his forward in my book 'Reflections'.

I continued to have contacts with Mr. Kanthiah who was a well informed person, able to discuss on any subject. But our discussion centred mainly on spirituality, education and local politics. I remember showing him the first short story I wrote. He went through it and expressed his satisfaction. That story appeared in the Sunday observer. It was

the stepping stone for my rise as a journalist. Mr. Kanthiah did his Bachelor of Arts degree in the University of Calcutta and later did his Masters degree in English in the University of London. He began his teaching career as a teacher of English at Puthur Somaskanda College and after serving there he went on transfer to Tellipalai Mahajana College. Later he was appointed as lecturer in English at the Palaly Teachers' College, Vasavilan. After retirement too his interest in teaching English continued. He took classes in English for the London A/L students at Jaffna College and later assumed duty as visiting lecturer in English at the University of Jaffna.

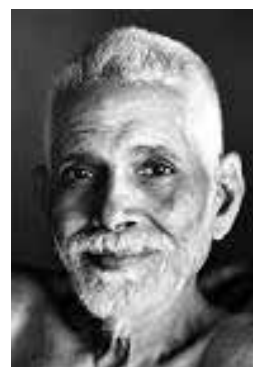
Besides teaching Mr. Kanthiah's interest was in spirituality. Being a Saivite he was greatly influenced by the Teachings of Saint Ramana Maha Rishi of Thiruvannamalai. He had visited the saint's ashram many times and did an in-depth study of the saint and his teachings. On his request I purchased a book on the saint at Mylapore: 'The Teachings of Ramana Maha Rishi in His own words' and sent it to him by post. Having done a comprehensive study of the life and teaching of the saint he had published a book, 'Ramana Maha Rishi – His Life and His Teachings of Oneness' By Ram Kanthiah. He had also published a book, 'Simplified version of Sivapuramam – English Translation' By Ram Kanthiah.

In his quest for seeking philosophical knowledge he became a keen follower of the Indian Philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti. He had read several books published on the saint and had also listened to his discourses in the radio. When J. Krishnamurti delivered a series of discourses at Veerasingam Hall in Jaffna Mr. Kanthiah was one among the fully packed audience. He had even taken flights to India to listen to his discourses.

Mrs. Sagidevi Kanthiah was also a lady of letters. She passed her Bachelor of Arts Hons degree in Tamil at the University of London as an external candidate and also did her Diploma in Education in the University of Peradeniya. She was inducted as a teacher at Ramanathan College which was also her Alma Mater. While in service she devoted her free time in writing short stories which were later published in 'Eelakesari' and 'Uthayan.' Some of the stories won prizes. She had also written

religious articles which were published in 'Saiva Neethi' and 'Anbhuneri.' She had to retire early to take care of the family. But even after retirement her creative literary and religious pursuits continued. She and her family had been the followers of sage Yogar Swamy and had the grace and blessings of him for more than two decades. Continuing in their quest for spiritual knowledge Mr. & Mrs. Kanthiah had read books on Sathya Sai Baba and had visited His ashram at White Field, Bangalore. When Swamy visited Chennai and stayed in His abode Sundaram at Chen-

extremely delighted to see us and invited us for lunch. That was the last we saw them. Since then our communication was only through the mail and telephone. As he was more concerned about the happenings in our country I had briefed him everything in detail. One day while I was browsing my laptop I received the most distressing news from Mr. Kanthiah about the demise of his wife. With her demise his enthusiasm and quest for knowledge was completely shattered and his activities too had slowed down. She had been a great source of inspiration to him and had



Ramana Maha Rishi



Jiddu Krishnamurti



Mrs. Sagidevi Kanthiah

nai Mr. Kanthiah had attended the special Dharsan held early in the morning.

Mr. & Mrs. Kanthiah's fluency in both English and Tamil with an in-depth study of Saiva religion enabled them to publish the book 'Abirami Andhathe' with English translation By Ram and Sagi Kanthiah.

Like many others to be away from the problems and upheaval in the country both Mr. & Mrs. Kanthiah flew to Chennai and settled at Sastri Nagar. It was a pleasant surprise for us to see them settled much closer to us. It was walking distance between our residences. And so once again the bond of friendship between us was strengthened. We frequently met and discussed matters mainly pertaining to our country. From there they migrated to California and settled under the care of their children Dr. Skandakumar and Yogakumar. With their exit from Chennai our communication was restricted only to the e-mail. Later on they migrated to UK and settled permanently with their son Sakthikumar. During our visit to UK in 2009 we visited them; they were

been his companion throughout till she breathed her last. When I spoke to him a couple of days after her demise his voice faltered. Feeling extremely sad for him I expressed my deepest sympathy consoled him and put down the receiver. Since then our communication was limited to a few calls and whenever I spoke to him he seemed sickly and weak and his health too was gradual failing. It was a rude shock for us when we got the heartbreaking news that Mr. Kanthiah too had left us. It was a terrible loss for me. I have not come across such a nice gentleman in my life. He was my Guru, adviser and friend who had been a great source of inspiration and guidance for me. Never can a person to replace him.

Whenever I pass their palacious house 'Siva Nilayam' along K.K.S road opposite to Dhurga Amman temple at Tellipalai, my memory unfurls bringing nostalgic memories of our association with the two noble souls who had influenced us. May both the souls rest in peace at the Holy Feet of Lord Siva.



## GENIE SISTERS SAMAYAL SANTHAI

**W**elcome to our recipe corner! We sisters will entice you with recipes that we have fallen in love with and teach you a little Tamil along the way, as all the ingredients will have their Tamil names. Both of us love to cook and we have developed very different styles. Niranjini has a very refined palate and cooks more contemporary world cuisine with an Asian touch. Rajini is a seasoned homemaker who loves making traditional dishes for her friends and family. Follow us on Instagram: @ninjaeatsfood and @tamil\_food

*Eat more, learn more!*

## KUZHI PANIYAARAM (SWEET)

People like us who spend most of their time either in the kitchen or making/eating/thinking/talking about food are almost completely obsessed with kitchenware. In this edition, we are not only going to give you a fab recipe that will make your little back-to-schoolers smile, but will also prove to be a kitchen essential. Yes, we are talking about the kuzhi paniyaaram satti. It can be used to make the most delectable savory and sweet items with very little oil/butter. Available in Toronto for \$15, it is definitely a worthwhile investment.

The kuzhi paniyaaram satti can be used to make gundu dosai from left over idly/dosai batter (which tastes even better when tempered with spices) or nutritious sweet dishes your family will love.

### Ingredients:

- 2 bananas, mashed (vaazhaippazham)
- 1 cup of plain flour (maida maavu)
- ½ tsp cinnamon (kari pattai thool)
- Add 1 tsp if maple syrup if the bananas are not sweet/ripe
- 1 tbsp of oil

### Method:

Mix the bananas, flour, cinnamon and maple syrup (if using) together into a thick batter. Heat the kuzhi paniyaaram satti and add a single drop of oil into each well. Spoon in the batter and let it cook until the batter can be turned around with the small wooden stick that comes with the pan (or you can use a small teaspoon). Cook for another minute and it's done!

Super simple, super easy to make and it makes a great snack box filler. Parents, relax - they're finally back at school!

Try making this recipe this month and do hashtag #monsoonjournal on Instagram and send us your pics, comments and feedback. Spread the love (and recipe!)



Kuzhi paniyaaram



Kuzhi paniyaaram pan

Sisters Niranjini Thirunesan and Rajini Nathan are both food enthusiasts from England. Niranjini, who lives in London, has a degree in Human Biology and is a trained chef. She makes it her business to know everything about what she eats, from nutritional value to source producers. Follow her food obsession on Instagram @ninjaeatsfood. Rajini, lives in Toronto and has a background in psychology. Her speciality is in Tamil food from around the world, catch up on her meal ideas on Instagram @tamil\_food.



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# Bharathanatyam Arangetram Ms. Harini Kandavel

(Disciple of Guru Vasu Sinnarasa)

Bharatha Natyam has always been considered as one of the traditional dance forms depicting Tamil culture. Arangetram is the culmination of the training of the student and becomes the first performance before a public audience.

Harini Kandavel's arangetram performance was held recently at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts before a well-attended audience. She is a disciple of Guru Vasu Sinnarasa. Vocal music was provided by Mohan Thiruchelvam accompanied by violinist Mithuran Manogaran and miruthangam by Rathiruban Paramsothy. Veena was played by Prabha Thayalan while flute was by Dr. Thayaparan Selvanayagam. The Master of Ceremony was Professor Sudharshan Duraiyappah.

The performance was presented by Sathangai Narthanalayam. The Chief Guest at the arangetram was Dr. Mailvaganam Mahendran, Consultant at Membrane Technology while Mr. Thampiah Sripathy was the Guest of Honour.

Addressing the guests, Chief Guest Dr. Mahendran stated that Bharathanatyam was one of the oldest and traditional forms of classical dance which originated in Tamil Nadu but has now spread around the world. He remarked that Harini's first public performance should give her confidence of a successful Bharathanatyam dancer in the future. He wished that Harini should continue her dance journey in the future too. Harini enters the University of Waterloo this year for an Honours Life Science program including Co-op, and has been a student of Bharathanatyam for eleven years. She is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Kandavel.

(Seen here are some pictures taken at the Arangetram)





# Miruthanga Arangetram (Debut) of Mr. Arun Thurairajah

**By: Kumar Punithavel**

Debut performance Arun Thurairajah disciple of Sangeetha Choodamani Sri Thiruvaarur Bakthavathsalam and Miruthanga Vadhiya Sironmani Sri Gowrisangar Balachandran at Armenian Youth Centre Theatre on 27th August was applauded by a full house of audience.

The vocal music for the programme was none other than Sri Thiruvavarur Girish a well known vocalist from India. Violin accompaniment was provided by Sri A. Jayadevan who is well known to the Toronto audience by his previous great performances. On Ghatam was Sri Tripunithura N. Radhakrishnan and Morsing accompaniment was done by senior student of Sri Gowrishankar, Sri Kaja-jeyan Parasasegaram. Kanjira accompaniment was provided by experienced Sri Karthik Venkataraman. Thampura was played by talented musician Selvi Vaaraki Wijayaraj.

Sri Thiruvaarur Bakthavathsalam Guru of Arun and Miruthanga maestro was the chief guest of the debut performance of Master Arun Thurairajah. President of Bharathi Kala Mandram Sri S. Thangarajan was the Guest of Honor at the performance.

Sri Arun Thurairajah proved to the audience he was able to keep up with other experienced artists in performance. In his solo performance he mesmerized the audience and gained the well earned applause.

Arun enters the University this year to pursue academic carrier. As a keen student and able performer while we wish him successful academic carrier, we would also hope he pursue this divine art in the future.

(Seen here are some of the pictures taken at the debut performance)

**Photo Courtesy: Tamil Mirror**





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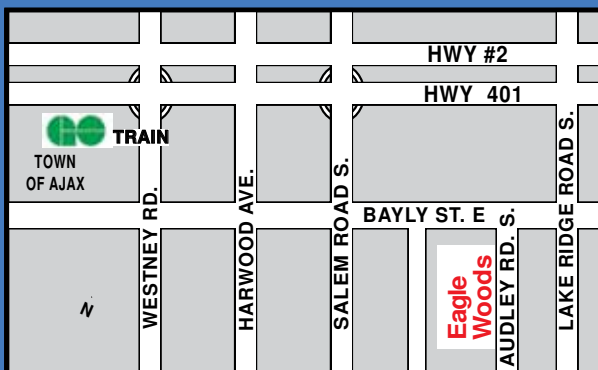
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## 22ND ANNUAL GET TOGETHER CELEBRATION OF OF **VELANAI CENTRAL COLLEGE** OLD STUDENTS ASSOCIATION-CANADA



Aug 6th 2017 was a bright and sunny summer day and was ideally suitable for a get together celebration of the past students of this reputed educational institution of north Sri Lanka located in the island of Kayts. Nearly 500 people of Velanai area including the past students and well-wishers gathered together on the spacious lawn of Milliken Park in Scarborough to ensure the success of this great function.

S. Elancheliyan, the energetic President of Velanai Central College Old Students Association – Canada for the past six years was obviously in very effective control and once again presided at this well attended gathering. While Dr. V. Panchalingam a distinguished old student was the chief guest for this uncton, there were also a number of special guests, including two former teachers of this college Mrs. P. Sinniah and Mr. Kanaganayagam. In addition, Mr. Kugapalan, Emeritus Professor of Geography of University of Jaffna and Kanthappu Iraivan, an Executive member of Velanai Central College past students Association -Colombo also graced the occasion.

The day's events began with the college anthem being recited by past students Mrs. Kala Chelvam, Thaya Ponnampalam and Kavitha Kanthan. The next event was the hoisting of the college flag by Mr.

Raymond Rajabalan, a retired Science teacher and son of late Mr. Stanislaus who served the college for nearly 15 years.

Immediately after this a variety of sports events efficiently co-ordinated by Mrs. Thaya Thanapathasunderam, Sulo Kandavel, Auna Vijitharan, Messrs. Balasuntheram, Vijitharan and Jeevan were begun. The dozens of children gathered at the occasion joyfully participated in the various activities adding fun and pleasure.

Numerous volunteers together with the executive committee members of the association got themselves actively involved in the various activities ensuring that everything proceeded according to schedule. The organisers also served to the participants a variety of sumptuous meals including rice and curry with goat meat. In addition they also served the all-time favourite sea food kool and Tandoori Chicken. Apart from these, the children served with roast corn and ice cream also had a great time.

By early afternoon dark clouds began to gather and the President felt he need to speed up the rest of the events and soon the prize giving for the winners of the sports activities began. He then addressed the gathering pointing out that a hand out is being distributed providing the details of the various activities of the past students association. He also

mentioned about the immediate needs of the Alma Mater and provided details of the plans designed to meet the future needs of the students.

Mr. Kugapalan, Emeritus Professor of Geography then spoke about the needs of the schools in the various islands and provided details regarding the gradually falling standard of education in that region. He however expressed the hope that the standard of education is bound to improve in the near future because of the dedicated activities of the past students Association in Canada.

Mr. Kanthappu Iraivan of Colombo branch of the past students association of this great institution then spoke about the various activities of their association. Mr. Kanaganayagam, a retired teacher then spoke of his days of serving this institution and stressed the need for hard work and dedication for anyone wishing to improve his standard of his or her life. Mrs. Sinniah, another teacher who served this college many years back recalled her pleasant memories of her experience and appreciated the sincere efforts of the past students association.

Finally the chief guest Dr. Panchalingam speaking at the occasion praised the various activities of this association and requested he organisers to move forward with greater efficiency and put in greater efforts to help the progress of their old school.



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BY THULASI MUTTULINGAM

The face Book Community page “Humans of Northern Sri Lanka” is a pictorial page by Thulasi Muttulingam. Thulasi Muttulingam is a journalist based in the North of Sri Lanka. Having grown up away from her hometown of Jaffna, it is currently her mission to research and document as much of her culture and heritage as she can. If you are similarly interested, check out more of her work at the facebook page ~ Humans of Northern Sri Lanka: To follow the updates, “Like” the page at: [www.facebook.com/pages/Humans-of-Northern-Sri-Lanka](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Humans-of-Northern-Sri-Lanka)



# Polishing Diamonds in the Rough



Gethsie Shanmugam and young colleague



Ever since it was announced a few weeks ago that Gethsie Shanmugam (82) is a recipient of this year’s Ramon Magsaysay Award – Asia’s equivalent of the Nobel Prize – visitors and journalists have been flooding her home. The sprightly silver haired lady is taking it in her stride with good humour and grace, although the constant influx is not easy on her elderly husband (89).

The chaos currently in her home is nothing compared to what she had to undergo not too long ago. She was voluntarily, constantly in and out of the war zone in the North and East, juxtaposing Colombo’s relative stability with the constant aerial bombardments of bombs and shells in the war zones she was traveling in, in order to counsel the war-affected and heal their trauma – even as they unfolded before her eyes. She was by then already in her 60s, but did not consider her age, gender or ethnicity as frailties.

How did she do it? Was there ever a time she feared for her life?

“No, I never thought about it. I just did what I had to do.”

Was she traumatised herself or suffer compassion fatigue?

“Yes, sometimes I would almost quit. Then I would get back up and go on.”

She recalls scenes of devastation in the aftermath of frequent battles. Army and LTTE fighters alike flailing in pain, along with civilians. Of civilians even then showing humanity by tending to both factions regardless of whether they were Sinhala Army soldiers or Tamil LTTE cadres. At great personal risk to themselves she takes care to reiterate, as both factions took revenge on those who gave succour to the other. That was what led her on. The fact that even if she saw inhumanity in some cases,

she also saw great humanity in other instances, cutting across the lines of ethnicity and war.

“I never took sides in the war, it was not my place. As an Estate Tamil brought up by a Sinhala lady and eventually married to a Jaffna Tamil, I have been from childhood beyond the narrow definitions of ethnicity and regional affiliations. The same goes for religion. I am a christian married to a hindu, then turned to buddhism and vegetarianism among other paths in my search for truth. I keep an open mind, whether its ideologies or people.” says Gethsie.

As such, as a Tamil lady who speaks all three languages, Tamil, Sinhala and English, she had no trouble gaining permission to move frequently into the war zone, keeping on neutral terms with both the Army and the

LTTE in order to go about her work to serve the war-affected people directly.

It is for this work that she has now been awarded the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award. For nearly four decades she has been engaged in psycho-social healing, especially of women and children in conflict settings in various areas of Sri Lanka, but particularly the war zone.

Yet she says she had no sense of this mega destiny early in life. She was born in a tea estate in Nawalapitya to parents of Indian origin. “My father was the chief clerk on the estate and we had an idyllic childhood there, growing up in a bungalow with well-endowed facilities. Tragedy hit a little later. My mother passed away when I was 15, and my father nine years later, at which time I was the only earning member of our family. With

an elder brother still in University and two younger sisters, I had just begun to earn as a teacher after completing my education at teachers’ training college.”

Her career started placidly enough as an English teacher. She took a break of some years to get married and raise her young family before joining St. Joseph’s College, Colombo in 1967, where her capacity to be a counselor was identified by the rector there. “I noticed some of the boys had psycho-social issues which impacted their behaviour and concentration in class, so I often stayed behind after school hours to talk to them and see what I could do for them. The rector Fr. Joseph Benedict who saw this recommended me to Rev Dr. Mervin Fernando who was then pioneering psycho-social services in Sri Lanka. I studied Basic Counselling from him at the Family Studies Services Institute in 1982 and from thereon became his protegee.”

She reels off a list of her educational qualifications in psychotherapy and work experience in diverse areas of Sri Lanka as well as abroad in several countries from then on. Suffice it to say it is a very impressive list but beyond the scope of this article to encompass because it would take several pages to capture. She has lived a full and varied life ever since finding her vocation as a counselor nearly four decades ago. She has also written and published many of her findings in the psycho-social sphere in Sri Lanka, in order to share her knowledge, as well as to induct other therapists into her field.

A regular complaint in Sri Lanka, made by those working in psychotherapy, is the lack of qualified and skilled personnel in magnitudes necessary to deal with the nationwide trauma the decades long conflict has caused. Gethsie however is not



Facilitating training in Vavuniya







Facilitating training in Vavuniya

a complainer. She works instead to find creative solutions to overcome the lack of manpower in Sri Lankan psychotherapy – especially in areas that needs them the most.

“I had returned from Batticaloa to Colombo just before the tsunami of 2004. I got a call the day after the tsunami to come back. A large number of people were freshly traumatized by the massive natural disaster on top of the conflict they had been coping with. When I went back, the magnitude of the sheer scales of the number of people affected overwhelmed me.”

She didn't have the cadre of therapists necessary to counsel all the affected people, but their trauma was massive. What was she to do? “I thought for a while about what could be done to scale the numbers, and overcome our lack of trained personnel. I then came up with the idea of ‘tea groups.’ Everyone drinks tea in Sri Lanka and the act of preparing it as well as sitting around drinking it in groups is itself a healing process. I told the counselors to get the community to make tea for these group settings every evening, along with kolukattais – a steamed sweet snack encased in dough. I asked for the Kolukattais specifically because kneading the dough to make it in batches necessary for the group would also be a healing process for the community. There is stress relief in doing routine things that you will later enjoy together, like Kolukattais and tea. Later, while they enjoyed the

fruits of their labour, they could sit in a circle in each camp talking about what they had undergone, learning and healing from each other, listening and talking to each other. That was the first stage of their healing process, that I set in motion, in the absence of more sophisticated mechanisms at my disposal.”

Her experience in psychosocial care has been varied and diverse, beginning with counseling children in Colombo Schools, to mainstreaming street children, and engaging with war-affected children along with their parents. Her language as she explains all this, is one of humility and simplicity. She does not talk of healing the people as a one way process but a process which enriched her in a two-way system whereby she learned and grew as a person too.

“I always learn in these experiences but I especially learned from the Street children. The whole nation could learn from the Street children. They were children of broken homes who ran away because they could not take it anymore. They bonded together on the streets and were fiercely loyal to each other. They all spoke Sinhala and Tamil simultaneously and when facilitated into schools by NGOs, demanded to learn English as a priority. The boys helped the girls to wear trousers and cut their hair – to prevent them from being sexually abused. Even as they slept on the streets, they would take care to have the girls safely in the middle while

the boys slept on the perimeter. Their loyalty, integrity and hard work in the face of the continuous abuse they faced is unparalleled.”

Asked for one anecdote of a street child who influenced her, she tells the story of a young leader of a group of street children. He was 17, and as the eldest among them was a father figure to the others, working hard to ensure their food and sustainability.

“He had a Sinhalese name I recall, so I spoke to him in my halting Sinhala. After a while he switched to Tamil seeing that I was struggling. Amazed at his native fluency in Tamil, I asked him where he was from. Turned out he was from Mannar. He had woken up one day to see his village on fire. He had no idea what had happened to cause it but remembered his mother wailing. He simply walked away from the village in a daze, and then came upon a train. He got into the train, still in a daze, and ended up in Colombo. Aged just eight or nine, he had to live by his wits. Yet, with all the trauma he had undergone at his young age, he was extremely intelligent and industrious. He took great care of the band of street children he ended up with. He eventually married and settled down.”

She remembers a booklet she published on her work with street children titled ‘What's inside?’

“I titled it thus, because the children functioning as outsiders from an early age were deeply curious of what was inside other people's homes. What was inside the shops and buildings they were not welcome in? They were always trying to peep in. They had

been thrown outside the system but still had zest for life. I learned so much from working with them.”

She quotes a poem that directly speaks to her of such children she has regularly worked with, beginning from those at St. Joseph's College to the street children and the children in the war zone:

*A Diamond In The Rough  
A diamond in the rough,  
is a diamond sure enough:  
And before it ever sparkles,  
it is made of diamond stuff;  
But someone has to find it,  
or it never will be found:  
And someone has to grind it,  
or it never will be ground;  
In the hands of the master,  
it is cut and burnished bright:  
Then that diamond's everlasting,  
shinning out its purest light.*

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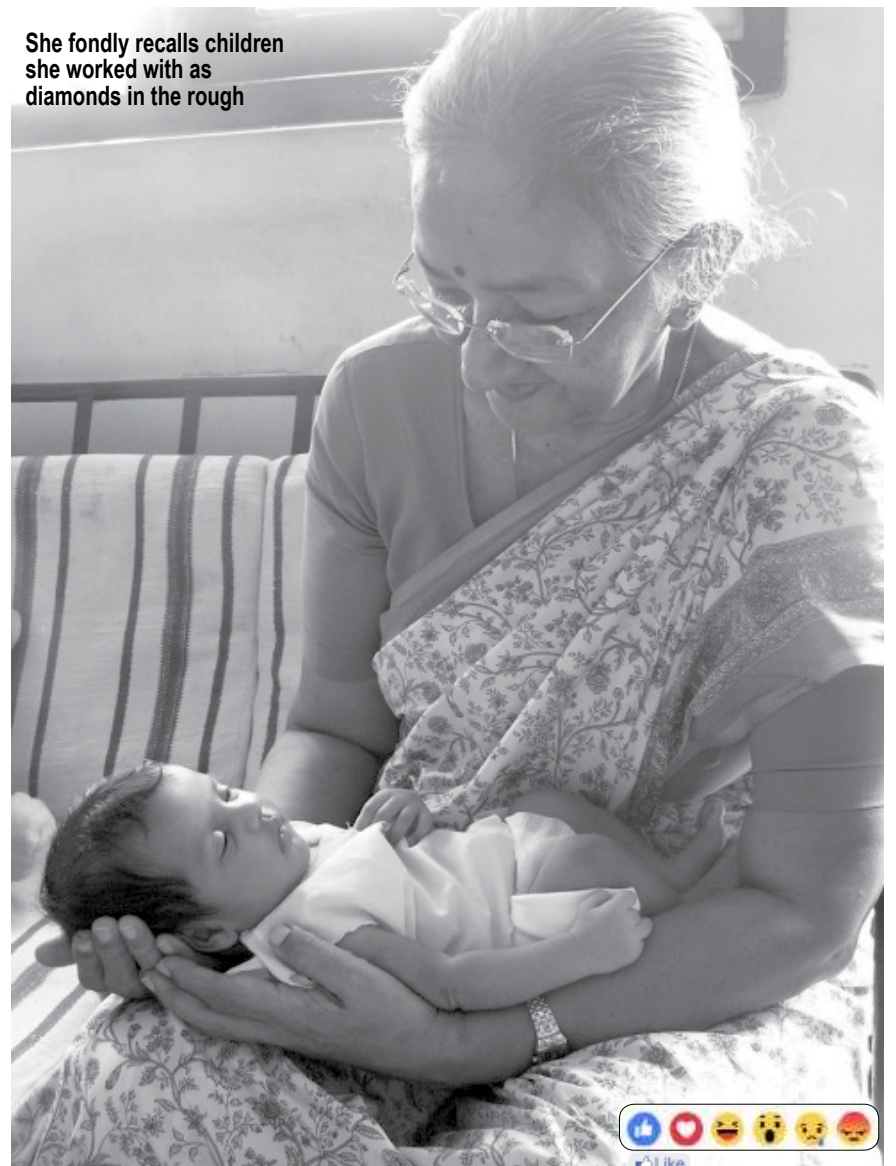
— 1972 Bradley Ray Wardle —

She fondly recalls children she worked with as ‘diamonds in the rough’ some of whom were eventually burnished bright – but as she is too well aware, she too was a diamond in the rough and was burnished by them in turn.

“Humans are valuable,” she says softly in parting. “This reconciliation process – it is taking too long. But we all have to do our part. We have to recognize the humanity in ourselves and in each other as something valuable, which needs to be healed; needs to be cherished. We were all affected. We all have to heal.”

(Photos are all of Gethsie in the field, courtesy Sabrina Cader, Suriya Women's Development Center and Ananda Galappatti)

She fondly recalls children she worked with as diamonds in the rough





Anitha. S

# Protests over student suicide on denial of medical school admission in Tamil Nadu

Protests have continued through the first week of September in Chennai, Tamil Nadu over the death of a student aspiring to become a medical doctor; she was a petitioner in the Supreme Court against the National Entrance-cum-Eligibility Test (NEET). The protesters raised slogans against the Central and state governments over the suicide of 17-year-old Anitha. S from Ariyalur, daughter of a daily wage earner who allegedly hanged herself at her house in Ariyalur district on Sept 1. Anitha was upset after it became known that Tamil Nadu will not be exempted from the ambit of National Entrance-cum-Eligibility Test (NEET).

The Supreme Court had on August 22 ordered the Tamil Nadu government to begin medical admissions based on NEET. The SC verdict came after the Centre refused to endorse Tamil Nadu's draft ordinance seeking one-year exemption

from NEET. The Centre, which had on August 13 said that it was willing to exempt Tamil Nadu from NEET for one year, reversed its stand with Attorney General of India KK Venugopal informing officials that the ordinance would not stand legal scrutiny. The Centre's reversal in stand dashed the hopes of thousands of medical aspirants in the state, who had hoped that medical admissions would be based on the results of the State board examinations.

The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test or NEET-UG is an entrance examination in India, for students who wish to study any graduate medical course (MBBS/ dental course (BDS) or postgraduate course (MD / MS) in government or private medical colleges in India. For a decade, Tamil Nadu had abolished entrance exams and medical admissions had been offered on the basis of Class 12 marks so that rural students in

state board schools don't find themselves at a disadvantage as they can't afford private coaching for the NEET entrance test.

Anita scored 1176 marks out of 1200 in her 12th board exams, and was determined to be a doctor. If her board exam marks were considered for medical entrance, she had every likelihood of making it, as she had 196.75 out of 200. For engineering, she had scored 199.76 out of 200. However, her NEET scores did not make the cut: Anitha had scored only 86 out of 700 in the newly introduced entrance examination.

Opposition DMK also targeted BJP and the ruling AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, faulting both for failing to ensure at least one year exemption for the state from NEET.

DMK Working President M K Stalin on September 2nd paid tributes to Anitha at her native village shortly ahead of the

cremation, said his party had donated Rs 10 lakh to her family. NEET had affected social justice in Tamil Nadu, Stalin, Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly, claimed and assured his party will take the fight against NEET forward.

"DMK will align with like-minded forces to uphold the key Dravidian policy of social justice, retrieve the rights of the state, bring Education under the State List and ensure nobody else suffers Anitha's fate in Tamil Nadu," he said in a letter addressed to the members of his party.

The BJP lashed out against those doing "brutal politics" over the teen's suicide. BJP state President Tamilisai Sounderrajan also took objection to the "insult" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the issue. "Insulting Prime Minister Modi cannot be accepted," she said in a brief statement. (Compiled with news reports via The News Minute and PTI)

## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOUR CREDIT RATING

When you go to a creditor in order to get a loan, the first thing they want to know is your credit rating. A credit score is something that summarizes your credit history including your present financial condition. This is basic credit scoring, but there are certain areas of credit ratings that most people are unaware of. Following are some of them:

Something as simple as paying your bills on time is something that could actually enhance your credit score.

It is not only your financial history, but also a bad public record that can lower your score by a good margin.

A bad credit score can even cause hindrance in getting the desired job. Many employers judge professionalism on the basis of how you manage your life – most importantly, your finances!

If you have a good credit limit, you don't have to use all of it. It is

recommended to keep within thirty percent of your credit limit to keep your credit score in a good condition.

Clearing your mortgage does not help in improving your credit score. Instead, when you're not paying mortgage (even due to the fact that you have cleared the full payment on it), your credit points get reduced.

Those old accounts that you no longer use might still be of use. The main reason for this is because your new creditors will feel safer when they get to see your long, healthy credit history. Unlike common belief, shorter (even though clean) credit history is not as good as a longer (and fair) one.

Opting for a secured credit card is a better option for starters as compared to choosing an unsecured one, right away. In most cases, taking an unsecured credit card is not an option for people having no credit history.

Don't focus all your credit on a

single loan instrument. Try to keep a mixture of different products like a credit card, a car loan, and a home mortgage etc. Focusing all your credit at one instrument is not considered very healthy.

Looking to rent a place? Even landlords take a look over your credit ratings before renting the place, just to make sure that you don't default on the rent payments.

A credit score above 650 is considered a good score.

In Canada, Equifax and TransUnion are the only agencies for credit reporting.

Even staying at a single place for a longer period of time can improve your credit ratings.

Try sticking to one or two credit accounts at most. This will help you manage your finances in a better way as opposed to having a lot of accounts. Furthermore, make sure your accounts have very little to no balance. This will help you in



maintaining or even improving your credit score.

There are a lot of things that affect your credit scores. Therefore, to maintain a good one, you should be aware of most, if not all, of the factors that help in building a good credit rating. Damaged your credit rating already?

Contact GTA Credit Solutions Services Ltd // 416-650-1100 // [www.gtacredit.com](http://www.gtacredit.com) // page # 23 to help you in getting your credit scores back on track.



# RAJAGOPURA MAHA KUMBABHISHEKHAM

Aug. 23 – Aug. 27, 2017 BY KIDAMBI RAJ, MEMBER, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## What is Kumbabhishekham ?

Kumbabhishekham refers to the Hindu ceremony that is performed to consecrate (sanctify) a temple. *Abhishekham* means sprinkling with the sacred water from the *Kumbham*, a metal pot. This ceremony is normally done to inaugurate a temple after it is fully built or to re-consecrate it few years thereafter. But it has to be done at the appropriate time and on an auspicious day following the rituals as per the Agama Sastras.

## Rajagopura Maha Kumbabhishekham:

Gopuram, a prominent feature of a Hindu temple architecture and is the gateway into the temple complex. In Tamil, the word *ko* meant King or ruler and *puram* meant space or settlement. It was also known as *Onggu nilai vaayil* or towering or imperishable gateway. The word also has its Sanskrit root in *Gopura* which means town entry or gateway. Symbolically, Rajagopuram represents the feet of the deity. A devotee bows at the feet of Lord at the entrance as he steps into the temple and proceeds towards the sanctum sanctorum, leaving behind the world of worries. On a cosmic level, the temple tower acted as a lightning conductor in the olden days, as it was the highest structure in the area.

In South Indian and Sri Lankan temples, the main entrance (from just one or all four sides) usually has a giant structure called **Rajagopuram**. It is said to represent the majesty and the authority of the society, standing tall and displaying pride and prosperity. With its mighty doors and huge sturdy walls, it even functioned as a fort to protect the entire town in the ancient days. In con-

cept, the crest of the Rajagopuram has the same significance of representing the central zone in a building which is the energy field area of the building. This energy field in three dimension is taken to the top level of the gopuram and this confers spiritual benefits to the visitors of the temple.

**Kalasams** are assembled set of concentric cone, cylinder and globe shaped metallic structures which are installed on top of the Gopurams. There are strategic connotations to these Kalasams:

- ✓ The Kalasams are usually made of an alloy of five metallic elements, such as Copper, Gold, Silver, Brass and Lead. They are filled with seeds of essential grains and pulses, such as rice, millets, corn etc., and completely sealed with special compounds. These seeds are very well preserved for years, through natural irradiation from Sun, against infestation (from within the grains) and decaying. In case of a natural calamity such as floods (deluge or fire), the seeds from the Kalasams are to be used for re-germination and development. Traditionally, the Kalasams are refurbished and refilled with the new grains, about once in 12 years.

- ✓ In olden days, Kings were known to store precious stones, gold and silver in the Kalasams so that in times of financial distress, they could use them to revive their kingdom. In the recent fire that engulfed the Rajagopuram in Sri Kalahasti temple in Andhra Pradesh, India, it revealed lots of precious stones stored in the Kalasams.

- ✓ Since the towers had been the tallest structure traditionally in any old town or village, and the Kalasams had high cop-



per content, they were believed to act as lightning conductors (as they had innate grounding system). It was rare for the Kalasams to blow up due to a lightning strike.

We have at our temple Three new Rajagopurams, one each for the three principal deities, Ganesha, Muruga and Perumal. The two Rajagopurams for Muruga and Perumal each are 5 levels high and have 7 Kalasams at the top. The Rajagopuram for Ganesha is 3 levels high and has 5 Kalasams.

## Benefits of Kumbabhishekham:

The Kumbabhishekham ceremony has everlasting effect on the entire society and not just the devotees. The Agama Sastras (Hindu scriptures) says:

*It is conducted with the sole purpose of eradicating all illnesses, obtaining good benefits from various Yagas (special religious rituals), deriving rich benefits for the wellbeing and for the propagation of the progeny.*

The Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism) postulates: *Vasudhaiva kutumbakam* – the whole world is one family. The Tamil Treasure Puranaanooru, resonates with: *Yaadhum oorae Yaavarum Kelir* – to us, all towns are one, all men our kin. The Rig Veda (one of Hindu Scriptures) resolutely says: **ekam sad vipraa bahudhaa vadanti** – Wise men call the ONE (Supreme) by many names and forms.

Indeed, the Kumbabhishekham brings all-round prosperity not only to any particular group or devotees, but also to the society as a whole.

## Wednesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>

All the preparatory Poojas and religious rituals as per Agama Sastras for the Vinayaka Chaturthi, with 1008 Kalasams and 1008 Sangus (Conches) for the following day (Aug. 24<sup>th</sup>) were done. The festivities were very well attended by close to 2,000 people.

## Thursday, August 24<sup>th</sup> – Vinayaka Chaturthi :

The day started at 6:30 Am with Special Abhishekams at all the Altars simultaneously. Since this year's annual Vinayaka Chaturthi festival came around the Rajagopura Maha Kumbabhishekham festival and also as this happened to be Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> year, it was decided to do the Abhishekham with 1,008 Kalasams and 1,008 Sangus, in a wonderful way. It was so well attended that there was hardly any space left inside the temple. In the evening following a special Abhishekham for Lord Vinayaka a special Vasantaman-

dapa Pooja, was performed. Then the exquisitely decorated and adored with lots of jewels Lord Vinayaka's idol was carried by the devotees outside and around the temple.

## Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup> –

### Special event for Lord Muruga :

The day started with abhishekams at all Altars simultaneously at 6:30 AM, like the previous day. This day was dedicated to Lord Muruga, an abhishekham with 108 Kalasams was performed. In the evening Sri Rudra Mahanyasa Paaraayanam took place by lots of devotees under the tutorship of Sri Balakrishna Sastri.

## Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup> – Special event for Lord Srinivasa :

Like the previous days, starting at 6:30 AM simultaneous abhishekams at all the Altars took place. This followed by abhishekham for Lord Srinivasa with 108 Kalasams. Around noon the Stapati was recognized felicitated.

## Sunday, August 27<sup>th</sup> – The Rajagopura Maha Kumbabhishekham Festival :

Unlike the previous three days, the simultaneous abhishekams at all Altars started at 5:00 AM. This was followed by elaborate Yaga Poojas. Then the Main Kalasams to be taken to the top of the Rajagopurams were taken around the temple in a typical traditional manner accompanied by the temple orchestra of several Nadaswarams and Mridangams.

Then at precise time of 10:00 AM, the consecration of the Ganesha Rajagopuram. This was followed by the consecration of Murugan Rajagopuram at 10:20 AM, and the consecration of Srinivasa Rajagopuram at 10:40 AM. These timings were very carefully chosen based on astrological significances.

This was attended by representatives from all three levels of Govt. Needless to say that there were close to or over 2,000 people attending each and every one of these festival days.

There were variety of cultural events, chanting of vedas, Pasurams etc., which made the whole festival amazingly great.

I hasten to add that this would not have been possible for an elaborate and meticulous planning every little item. This couldn't have been possible for the great number of dedicated volunteers, not only just during the festival days but for several weeks before.





# Tamil Cultural and Academic Society conducts Walkathon

## \$ 2,500 donated to Prostate Canada



Tamil Cultural and Academic Society conducted a Walkathon recently along with Prostate Cancer Canada. TCASD will be donating \$ 2,500 to Prostate Canada. Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham appreciated all the sponsors and participants for their generous support. *Seen here are some pictures of the event*



# Sports Meet by CTHA in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

By: Shana Thuray

Four preschools came together for an event filled with excitement and competition held on Friday, July 21, 2017 organized by Canadian Tamils' Humanitarian Association (CTHA).

1. Palarsenai (30-35 children, 2 teachers)
2. Marapalam (20-22 children, 2 teachers)
3. Kithul (30-32 children, 2 teachers)
4. Elupadisennai (45 children, 2 teachers)

I was surely very excited to get a chance to see all the kids and teachers together, as well as see parents and get an understanding of the culture. I can't say that I figured it all out during that one day event, but I did notice a few things that I think the teachers, parents and students can work on.

As I was arriving at the event, I saw at the distance that there were so many excited students, parents, and teachers running about making sure the event preparation was all going well as planned. As soon I approached the event, the kids grew quieter, I tried saying hello to a few of them as I walked along, but didn't get much of a response. The students were shy. Some teachers quickly said a hello and rushed away. I am not sure if it was shyness or whether they had things to do. They didn't speak much throughout the event either leading me to conclude that they were just shy.

To start, each school had prepared an exercise routine which was primarily led by the students with a few pointers from their teachers. It was very cute, and the students were mostly smiling throughout their performance. The students were doing some of exercises on the floor by kneeling or lying on the bare ground with discomfort. This hurt me a bit especially to see them afterwards, rubbing off their knees dusting off the dust, dirt and easing it off its pain.

Afterwards, various obstacle races were organized for the children according to different age groups. These races were well prepared, and there were volunteers who were helping to set up. However, during the races and the obstacles courses, parents were getting really competitive and coming into the races, and shouting at the children to go faster, and even trying to help them win.

This brought chaos. Parents from different schools were fighting with each other. Parents were adamant that their child was the winner.

Teachers were fighting with each other. Teachers were thinking that a particular school was being favoured. Teachers were not able to control the parents.

I also noticed that during these races and obstacles courses, after the 1st, 2nd, 3rd child completed the race, all other children just stopped, some children were crying that they were not able to win, some children just gave up and didn't know what to do, parents got disappointed and showed it towards their children. I was trying to get the children to complete the race, but no one else seemed bothered.

Teachers were busy trying to get the names of the winner and completely ignored all other participants. This was a huge disappointment. The students should have been encouraged to finish, that is how the students learn the skills, learn to not give up, learn to better their skills for next time.

Winning alone doesn't get a student anywhere, students need to learn to try, try and not give up. These young students, aged 3-5, are so small with such pure hearts. I felt so sad that the parents were hurting them by not encouraging them and not being patient with their children. This perspective/ attitude should change.

All 4 preschool communities should support each, not fight! Building a community of love and support is the only way they will be able to stand together and build the country so they can recover from the scars made during the civil war. Teachers, Students and Parents should build a triple partnership so that they can all work towards the betterment of the students and their education. The young students are the ones who can bring change to their communities.

**Shana Thuray**

Shana Thuray, having completed her B.A. in Social Development Studies from University of Waterloo and M.A. in Child Study and Education from University of Toronto, also completed many international assignments; and her last appointment was a Teaching position at Sai School in Toronto.

She is currently in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, volunteering for one year from Aug 2017 with Canadian Tamils' Humanitarian Association and working with children in the district.



# Young Men's Christian Association - Jaffna

## Best Performance Award to the Candidates of GCE A/ L 2016 - Northern Province

The Best Performance Awarding Ceremony was conducted on Monday 31st July 2017 at 4.00 pm sponsored by the DFFSC an NGO headed by Mr. M.C. Francis of Canada.

First and second rank achievers in the field of mathematics, Biology, Bio Science, Commerce, Arts, Bio Technology and Engineering Technology from Jaffna, kilinochchi and Vavuniya Districts were in attendance with their Parents and Relatives. Arumuganavar Award Presented to for a teacher who worked long year in a difficult area. This Year the Inter School Debate was started between Jaffna Chundikuli Girls' College and St.John's College. The

Chundikuli Girls' College won the coveted Poobalasingam Shield. Each Participant received a cash voucher of Rs. 5,000/=.

A sum of Rs. 35,000, Cash Prize, a Shield, a Certificate presented to the first rank performers and a sum of Rs.25,000 Cash Prize, a Shield and a Certificate presented to the second rank achievers. Arumuganavar Award consisted of a certificate and a Cash prize of Rs 50,000/= to a Teacher who had served long Years in Vanni Area.

Professor R. Vigneswaran, Vice Chancellor, University of Jaffna was the Chief Guest, Mr.M.C. Francis, president, DFFS - Canada was the Guest of

Honor. Mr. Nirmal De Fonseka, The President, The National Council of the YMCAs of Sri Lanka Dr.T. Sathiyamoorthy, The Director, Teaching Hospital, Jaffna, and Mr.S. Amirthalingam, The President, National College of Education, Jaffna were the Special Guests.

The event was attended by the Clergy, Principals, Respective of NGO's, Government officials, members and Well-wishers that encouraged the students very much. The presence of the DFFSC president Mr. M.C. Francis made the event very significant.





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