

# Mahamaya Girls’ College Alumnae Association of North America

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## Eleventh Annual General Meeting:

## Welcome Speech by the President

Welcome Speech by Sriyani Dissanayake.

2014-2015 President of MGCAANA

## Good Afternoon! Welcome to the 11th Annual General Meeting of Mahamaya Girls’ College Alumnae Association of North America. On behalf of the Board Of Directors, the executive committee of 2014-2015 and the Canadian Charter of MGCAANA, I am pleased and privileged to welcome you all to our Annual General Meeting in Ottawa Canada. This was a dream come true, as we wanted to have our AGM one day on Canadian soil. Where there’s a will there’s a way! Collectively with the advice of our honorable Lawyer and our dear member Mrs. Harshi Waters, and the enthusiastic alumnae in Canada, we were able to find a solution to make this dream come true. We are gathered here today to celebrate our strong bond as Mayans and the accomplishments of our wonderful organization of MGCAANA.

Looking back since I became the president of this dynamic organization in 2014 May and to date, I must say how thankful I am to my dearest BOD members, the executive Committee members, members of the active committees and other MGCAANA active members. You are the reason why I can say it was a memorable year for MGCAANA and we were able to stay on our path for another successful year. I truly admire your hard work, dedication and passion to work together as a team.

**Work accomplished during 2014-2015**

**Maya Puwath:**

In brief, Maya Puwath came to you in time once in two months with wonderful articles to read. Please support this team by sending your articles and your children’s writing and pictures to be published.

**Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (VSTF):**

Our VSTF committee, with the leadership of Dr. Ms. Himashinie Diyabalanage, and Ms. Vihara Dharmaratne, with the help of the endowment committee and our Board of Trustees in Kandy, Sri Lanka, donated 13 scholarships to our brilliant, economically disadvantaged kids at our Alma Mater. Our goal is to reach US $ 20,000. So far, we are short of about $6,000. Using our donations we have sent money to open another fixed deposit with BOC this year. The Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund report will be presented here and you will learn more details about its activities. I must mention Mrs. Geetha Eragoda for her years of dedication and hard work building this VSTF funds.

**Establishing the Welfare Committee:**

This year establishing the Welfare Committee for our own Maya community in USA and in Canada was something important to mention. This is important because we need to be compassionate about each other in our community, be there in happiness and in sorrow. To respond to community needs, and help each other when needed, is important to us. It is not only a birth or a death in the community, it can be a student who needs a legal help or to spend the summer without any cost, or find employment after graduation, or finding a motherly figure to listen to their problems in a challenging situation, to give emotional support to students who are new to the country. The list goes on. We have established a contact email through a welfare committee for those who want to write to us privately to protect their privacy and it is on our “contact us” web page.

We have also celebrated the life of Mrs. N.K. Pilapitiya in various cities in the USA.

**Nanda Pusssegoda Leula Memorial Fund:**

After our oldest alumna, Nanda Leula passed away, her daughter Mrs. Kanthi Leula wanted to give scholarship to economically disadvantaged children at Mahamaya in memory of her mother. Dr. Dharshani Nanayakkara and Mrs. Werake worked together tirelessly creating the Mrs. Nanda Pussegoda Leula Memorial Scholarship Fund for disadvantaged children at Mahamaya and gave 6 full scholarships this year worth Rs: 48,000 per student per year. Details of this fund will be presented here separately. If any of our members would like to open a fund like this, we can work together to establish that.

**Local Charity Donation this year:**

As our local charity donation we gave $ 100 to The National Diabetes Research and Action Foundation.

**Graduate and Undergraduate Scholarship Program:**

We have been able to increase our graduate and undergraduate scholarship dollar amount from $ 250 a piece to $ 375. By the same token, it was unfortunate that this year no applicants came forward to accept these two scholarships. Then again we may have to think of a different strategy to approach candidates more effectively this year. Also, this year there will be more money to give out and collectively we must work together to promote these scholarships. We are open to discuss any new ideas in this regard.

**Fundraising:**

**5 K Run:** We have raised funds through a 5K run and crotched scarf project initiated by Mrs. Sriyani Dissanayake. Our 5K run was done on the same day in spring, in Florida, Seattle, Portland and in Windsor Ontario, Canada to raise funds for MGCAANA. They were successful events and I thank all those who have participated. We hope there will be more participants next year.

**Crochet Scarf Project:**

Mrs. Sriyani Dissanayake made 34 scarfs that sold for $ 10 each. It is still open if you wish to order one. Those who have contributed towards these are greatly appreciated by MGCAANA.

**Renewing your membership:**

Dear MGCAANA members; I would like to thank all the members for renewing your membership. This is so important since you are the backbone of MGCAANA. Our major part of funds comes from membership money.

**Honorary Membership:**

Family members and friends, I invite you to be honorary members of MGCAANA and support our Organization. You pay nothing to become an honorary member. Just fill out the form. We have added three new honorary memberships to the MGCAANA member list.

**The Principal and Deputy Principles of Mahamaya College:**

I would like to thank our Principal Mrs. Indra Witanachchi for her support in keeping our cause alive in the school and encouraging children to apply for the scholarships. I must say thank you for the tremendous hard work that Mrs. Uthpala Seneviratne, Mrs. Vishaka Herath and Mrs. Indra Karaluwinne, along with others, put together to give a clear vision to our mission. They carry on the task in school on behalf of Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund and Nanda Pussella Leula Memorial Scholarship Committee and kept all the account transparent.

**MGCAANA and the Membership:**

In MGCAANA, we treat each other with dignity, respect, love, and fair. We are united as Mayans, yet we are a unique and diverse group of individuals. Hence, our potential to succeed is unlimited. Together, we have accomplished a lot, and I am certain that you will continue to support our goals in our future endeavors. As members, let’s develop MGCAANA into one of the best alumnae associations. Please read the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee; so that you will be better informed of our activities and plans, visit our website regularly, e-mail us your ideas and comments, be a frequent contributor to Maya Puwath, and participate in our activities – in short, be an active member of MGCAANA. Your support will only enable us to do better and better. As we embark on a new year, we hope that you will become fully involved in shaping MGCAANA’s future.

**My Experience as the President:**

Last year, I accepted the challenge of serving as President of MGCAANA. The accomplishments of our organization have provided me with a great sense of satisfaction and pride at being involved with such a committed group of individuals. I got the opportunity to develop lifelong friendships, learn so much from those who are much more experienced and wiser than I, and relive the wonderful time spent at Mahamaya. MGCAANA has made a huge difference in my life; I will forever cherish this experience. I will be serving as the President of MGCAANA for another year. Thank you very much for bestowing your trust upon me. Let us continue to serve our Alma Mater, fellow alumnae, and society with high spirits in the year ahead.

**Future of MGCAANA:**

I would love to see young blood taking up the positions and leading this wonderful community. You have new ideas and new ways of seeing things. You are fresh and young with so much energy and new knowledge to share.

**My Request:**

In the coming year, please get more involved in MGCAANA activities. Your support is very essential to us.

**Volunteer Hours to your children by working from home for MGCAANA:**

As you know, MGCAANA is a non-profit organization registered in the United States. I would like to bring an idea of how to give a chance for your kids to collect “Volunteer Hours,” towards Middle School and High School graduation through our MGCAANA. This is an idea that came to my mind and it still needs lots of brainstorming before launching. We can let your kids benefit from this opportunity.

**MGCAANA members, Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, and all other active committees:**

You have enthusiastically dedicated your time to make the 2014-2015 year an extraordinary one. All of us worked together with love, perseverance, compassion, and in unity while serving our alumnae Alma Mater and society. Without the support of all of you, the work we did would not have been possible.

I must thank you, Harshi Waters, Mrs. Werake and the Advisory Board for helping me. I must thank Mrs. Deepani Waidyaratne and Dr. Mrs. Samudrika Amarakone for their unconditional support towards this. Thank you, Mr. Amarokone and Dr. Mrs. Amarakone for your warm hospitality in your lovely home to have our AGM meeting and dinner get together and great food. I must give a big thank you to Mr. Amarakone and Mr. Waidyaratne for your support to your beloved wives and through them to MGCAANA. Without your support this would not be possible. Furthermore, I must thank Vihara Dharmaratne for her creativity in making all the invitations, places of interest to see, and putting up all these together in a timely manner so that it is shared in time, with our members. Deepani, your excellent knowledge of technology has made it easier this time for all of us to go 100% eco friendly in our election and online voting system. I thank you for this.

Finally, I must thank all the members and their families who came to Ottawa from all over United States and Cananda.

**Ottawa Chapter members and their families:**

You have done an excellent job in organization our 11th AGM and Dinner. We feel that we are lovingly welcomed. We feel your love, affection and caring ways. We are so happy to meet your wonderful families and to be in your beautiful city in spring. We know that many times you all have had multiple meetings to meet challenges. This 11th AGM goes down in history as the first one held in Canada. You have done an awesome job! I would like to thank you on behalf of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee for a job well done. This is not an easy task. Words are not enough to say thank you. I am deeply grateful from the bottom of my heart.

Lastly, to those of you who are involved in this process and I forgot to mention, please know that I apologize humbly. You must know how much I appreciate your help on behalf of MGCAANA.

On behalf of MGCAANA, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee, I thank you all!

Mrs. Sriyani Dissanayake

President- 2014-2015