

Maya Puwath - මායා පුවත්

Quarterly Newsletter of Mahamaya Girls' College
Alumnae Association of North America (MGCAANA)
Volume 20– Issue 3 - July 2024



Message from the Editors

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AGM 2024

20th Annual General Meeting

Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae

Association of North America

*Congratulations to
MGCAANA celebrating
the completion of
19 years!*

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- Spotlight on a past scholarship winner
- Art corner
- MGCAANA news and more

Dear valued readers,

This year MGCAANA celebrates a significant milestone. the remarkable 20th AGM, a testament to the dedication, perseverance, and unwavering commitment of MGCAANA's members and officer bearers throughout the years. Over the years we have faced numerous challenges, embraced countless opportunities, and achieved many goals.

Reflecting on the past 19 years, since MGCAANA's inauguration in August 2005, it is amazing to consider the many accomplishments, the lessons learned, and the relationships built along the way which has shaped MGCAANA into the great organization we have today.

This is the third issue of Maya Puwath of the year 2024 and the first issue done for the term 2024/2025 with the election of a **New Board of Directors**. Read all about the 20th Annual General meeting and Reception which was held in Cincinnati, Ohio on July 6th 2024.

The Newsletter Committee greatly appreciated the valuable contributions made by the outgoing Board of Directors 2023-2024. Their dedication and hard work have been instrumental in achieving MGCAANA goals. At the same time, we warmly welcome the newly elected BOD and Executive committee for the year 2024-2025. We are excited about the new perspectives and innovative ideas they will bring to our organization.

May the coming year bring MGCAANA even greater success in achieving our goals while having fun and fostering connections between Mayan alumnae.

Enjoy reading!

Newsletter committee

*Suddasam sunipunam
yathakamanipatinam
cittam rakketha medhavi
cittam guttam sukhavaham.*

*The mind is very difficult to
see, very delicate and subtle;
it moves and lands wherever
it pleases. The wise one
should guard his mind, for a
guarded mind brings
happiness.*

*Dhammapada
Verse 36
Ukkanthitabhikkhu Vatthu*

20th Annual General Meeting

The 20th Annual General Meeting of MGCAANA was successfully conducted on July 6th, 2024. The event was a hybrid of in-person attendance and a virtual Zoom meeting, featuring participation from the 2023-2024 Board of Directors (BOD), the executive committee, honorary members, and guest members.

Following the conclusion of the voting process, which had both online and paper ballots, the new Board of Directors and Executive Committee members for the 2024-2025 term were elected.

New Executive Committee for 2024-2025;

President – Asantha U Attanayake (Barborich)

Secretary – Wijesinghe “Bobbie” Purasinghe (Pradeepa Jayawardena)

Vice President -Dasmanthie Chin

Treasurer – Ayanthi Fernando

Director (Programs) - Anoma Mudannayake

Director (Newsletter Editor) - Veroni Nadeesha Jayawardana

Director (Webmaster) - Anuththara Lokubandara

MGCAANA BOD 2024/2025



Asantha U Attanayake
(Barborich)



Anoma Mudannayake



Pradeepa Jayawardena



Dasmanthie Chin



Anuththara Lokubandara



Ayanthi Fernando



Nadeesha Jayawardana

*Congratulations and a warm
welcome to the new BOD members and
Executive committee*

20th Annual General Meeting

The 20th AGM was held at MGCAANA member Dakshika Bandaranayake's residence in Union, Kentucky. It started at 2pm EDT, followed by the reception at the Anderson Center, Anderson Township, Cincinnati, Ohio.

This year's AGM was hosted by Dr. Dakshika Bandaranayake and Mr. Sanjeewa Herath while the reception was hosted by Ms. Arundathi Pilapitiya and Dr. Suresh Marapana. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our hosts for their exceptional leadership and dedication in making this 20th AGM a success.

We would like to express our special appreciation to the outgoing BOD members and Executive Committee for their invaluable service throughout the past year. Your contributions have been greatly appreciated and have significantly impacted our organization.

Outgoing 2023/2024 Board of Directors and Executive committee,

President : Wijesinghe "Bobbie" Purasinghe (Pradeepa Jayawardena),

Secretary: Nadeeka Ranasinghe,

Treasurer: Ayanthi Fernando,

Directors :

Ruvini Dissanayake (Newsletter Committee) and

Pavithra Wijayapala (Webmaster)



Pradeepa Jayawardena



Nadeeka Ranasinghe



Ayanthi Fernando



Ruvini Dissanayake



Pavithra Wijayapala

Highlights of the 20th AGM



Lighting of the
Traditional Oil Lamp.



Welcome speech by MGCAANA 2023/2024
President Pradeepa Jayawardena.



Singing the school song and the National
Anthems of USA, CANADA and Sri Lanka.



Presentation of the Vidya Scholarship Trust
Fund (VSTF) report by Himashinie
Diyabalanage.

*Thank you Dr. Dakshika
Bandaranayake and Mr. Sanjeewa
Herath for all the preparation and hard
work to make this AGM a success!*

Highlights of the 20th AGM



Members and Honorary members introducing themselves..



Ms. Geethanjalie Selvendran, Ms. Pushpalatha Gunasekera and Mrs. Sujatha Werake.



Ms. Asantha U Attanayake (New President MGCAANA 2024/2025) introducing herself.



MGCAANA 2023/2024 Secretary Nadeeka Ranasinghe delivering the 'Vote of Thanks'.



Highlights of the 20th AGM



Seated L-R: Ms. Asantha U Attanayake, Ms. Pushpalatha Gunasekera, Ms. Geethanjalie Selvendran, and Mrs. Sujatha Werake, **Standing** L-R: Ms. Pradeepa Jayawardena, Ms. Iresha Wiyayapala, Ms. Dasmanthie Chin, AGM Hostess Dr. Dakshika Bandaranayake, Ms. Nadeeka Ranasinghe, Ms. Harshi Waters, and Ms. Himashinie Diyabalanage.



Ms. Himashinie Diyabalanage, Mrs. Sujatha Werake, Ms. Nadeeka Ranasinghe, Ms. Pradeepa Jayawardena.

Report

Highlights of the 20th AGM

VIRTUAL AGM ATTENDEES



Ms. Ayanthi Fernando and
Ms. Tharoshani Kasthuriarachchi
joining the meeting.

Ms. Amali Alawatta,
Ms. Ayanthi Fernando and
Ms. Anuththara Lokubandara
joining the meeting online.



Ms. Ayanthi Fernando,
Ms. Anuththara Lokubandara
and Ms. Nadeesha Jayawardena

Thank you note from the Past President



Wijesinghe “Bobbie” Purasinghe 2023-2024 MGCAANA President.

On behalf of the MGCAANA 2023/2024 Board of Directors (BOD), I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in making this year's AGM a success.

I deeply appreciate the outgoing Board of Directors and Executive Committee for their dedication and commitment throughout the year. Highlights from the past year include the member-led free discussion webinars and three successful fundraising events. Their dedication and ability to balance multiple roles in their personal lives have been instrumental in guiding our organization toward its goals. I am profoundly grateful and commend the board for their enthusiasm and excellent teamwork, which made this year fruitful.

A special thanks to Dr. Dakshika Bandaranayake for her outstanding hosting and pivotal role in making the 20th AGM of MGCAANA memorable. Our deepest gratitude also goes to Ms. Arundhathi Marapana for hosting the AGM reception with a splendid dinner and entertainment.

MGCAANA would not be where it is today without the vision and efforts of the four steering committee members who initiated this non-profit organization: Ms. Sujatha Werake, Ms. Harshi Waters, Ms. Arushie Nugapitiya, and Ms. NERANJICA DISSANAYAKE. We deeply value your dedication to establishing and maintaining this organization for the Mayan community of North America.

I also extend my thanks to our outgoing advisors, Ms. Sriyani Dissanayake and Ms. Devi Gunasekera, for their invaluable guidance and support throughout their tenure. Whether it was a fundraiser, scholarship program, or any other MGCAANA-related matter, they were always supportive and encouraging. We congratulate the newly appointed advisors, Ms. Deepani Waidyaratne and Ms. Subhashinie Kariyawasam, and look forward to their wisdom and expertise in shaping the future of MGCAANA.

A special thank you to Ms. Ruvani Dissanayake, an outgoing BOD member, for her exceptional leadership in ensuring the timely completion of the Newsletter. Her dedication and hard work have been commendable, and we are grateful for her contributions. We also extend our gratitude to the other committees affiliated with MGCAANA, including Ms. Himashinie Diyabalanage with the Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund and Ms. Deepa Nanayakkara with the Namda Pussegoda Leule Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Thank you to everyone who contributed directly or indirectly to our successful year. Through the collective efforts of our volunteers, we have made our organization thrive. Finally, I want to thank the heart of our organization—our members—who continually support us by donating and renewing memberships. Your continuous support enables us to make an impact on many Mayans and communities, achievements that we could not have accomplished individually.

Congratulations to the new committee, and I wish them all the best for a successful year ahead.

Sincerely,
President
MGCAANA 2023/2024

20th AGM Reception and Dinner Dance



Ms. Harshi Waters and
Ms. Nadeeka Ranasinghe



L-R: Ms. Pradeepa Jayawardena, Ms. Geethanjalie Selvendran, AGM reception Hostess Ms. Arundathi Pilapitiya and Ms. Nadeeka Ranasinghe.

Thank you Ms. Arundathi Pilapitiya and Dr. Suresh Marapana for hosting this AGM Reception making the event a memorable experience for all attendees.



Seated L-R: Ms. Harshi Waters and Mrs. Sujatha Werake,
Standing L-R: Ms. Himashinie Diyabalanage, Ms. Pradeepa Jayawardena, Ms. Nadeeka Ranasinghe, AGM Hostess Dr. Dakshika Bandaranayake, .Ms. Iresha Wiyayapala, Ms. Asantha U Attanayake.



Ms. Pradeepa
Jayawardena and Ms.
Nadeeka Ranasinghe

20th AGM Reception and Dinner Dance



L-R: Mrs. Sujatha Werake addressing the guests and presenting a brief history of Mahamaya Girl's College.

Ms. Asantha U Attanayake and Ms. Arundathi Pilapitiya delivering their speeches honoring the late Principal of Mahamaya Girls' College, Mrs. N.K. Pilapitiya. They reminisced about her significant contributions to the school, her dedication to education, and her impactful leadership that shaped the lives of many students.



Cutting the MGCAANA
20th AGM cake



Guests enjoyed a delicious spread of food while catching up with fellow Mayans and other attendees.

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20th AGM Reception and Dinner Dance



Ms. Asantha U Attanayake and Ms. Harshi Waters performed a delightful skit, “**Dikthala-Kalagola**”. Their performance was incredibly enjoyable and added a wonderful touch of entertainment to the evening together with singing performances by the hosts and attendees.



Singing and dancing created a joyful atmosphere that everyone thoroughly enjoyed.

Letter from the incoming President

Dr. Asantha U. Attanayake (Barborich)

2024-2025 MGCAANA President



Dr. Asantha Attanayake lives in Pennsylvania, is an accomplished academic and professional with extensive experience in English language teaching and applied linguistics. She is currently an Adjunct Lecturer at Penn State University, USA.

She received her BA from the University of Peradeniya, her MA from the University of Kelaniya and a PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She was a Fulbright Advanced Teaching and Research Scholar at Pennsylvania State University, USA. She is a HKSEE alumna at Harvard University, USA. .

Asantha is also an award winning creative writer publishing novel translations, poetry collections, short stories and autobiographies.

Dear All,

It is with pleasure I am penning this down as the new President of MGCAANA, 2024/2025. I consider it as a great privilege to work with MGCAANA community for the benefit of our society together.

We are now in July 2024, already into the 2nd half of this year. We have a number of projects lined up for the upcoming year to work on. I am certain that you will agree with me when I say, despite living far away from Sri Lanka, the values with which we were raised during our schooling have a major impact on our personal and professional lives we lead in North America.

A few months ago, I had the good fortune to address a gathering on the International Women's Day. The topic I chose was "How do Standards Define Us as Women?" I must tell you, more than 2/3rd of the examples I brought to the table were about the standards I learned during my schooling at Mahamaya Girls' College. And these standards were set by none other than our Principals, teachers, prefects as well as our senior sisters at the time. And they were our role models.

I take a moment to thank all the role models we had during our time at Mahamaya. We were so fortunate to have role models par excellence. And we, the MGCAANA, attempt our best to maintain the standards they set in all our endeavors and be role models for our next generations. I take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Board of Directors (BOD) of MGCAANA for their excellent service to our community. And I look forward to working with the new BOD. I am reaching out to our entire membership to come forward, make suggestions, contribute through ideas and views to make MGCAANA an effective Association in society.

Thank you.

Asantha U Attanayake

July 29, 2024



The MGCAANA Scholarship Program has empowered numerous students to achieve their academic and professional aspirations. To celebrate their journeys and understand the impact of our support, we have reached out to past scholarship recipients to learn about their current endeavors and the role the scholarship played in their success.

Tharuki De Silva 2022-2023 Scholarship winner

I am Tharuki Rangana De Silva, a former student of Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy (class of 2013). Currently, I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Manitoba, Canada, where I also serve as a teaching assistant.

While at Mahamaya, I was a girl guide, earning the President's Girl Guide Award in 2011, and a member of the English debate team. I pursued my B.Sc. degree in electrical and electronic engineering at the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, where I held the position of president of the Institute of Engineers Sri Lanka (IESL) student chapter in 2018. I graduated with first-class honors in 2019.

Following my graduation, I joined the faculty as a teaching assistant and worked as a research assistant at the Centre for Biomedical Innovation at the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. In 2020, I was admitted to the M.Sc. program at the Price Faculty of Engineering, University of Manitoba. I completed my M.Sc. in electrical and computer engineering in 2022 and joined the Ph.D. program. My academic excellence and research potential have been recognized with the Edward R. Toporeck Fellowship Award and the University of Manitoba Graduate Fellowship for the years 2021, 2023, and 2024. My current research focuses on developing a scalable video compression architecture to optimize video quality based on network bandwidth for video streaming applications.

In the fall of 2023, I had to complete the final course module of my Ph.D. program. To manage the costs of tuition and necessary supplies, I applied for the scholarship offered by the Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae Association of North America (MGCAANA). This scholarship helped cover the costs of stationery and academic subscriptions essential for keeping up with the latest developments in my field. The scholarship provided by MGCAANA was instrumental in enabling me to successfully complete my course module and achieve the University of Manitoba Graduate Fellowship in 2023.

Additionally, I published my research paper titled "An Investigation of Latency-Accuracy Trade-Off in Inter-Frame Video Prediction Using Quantized CNNs" at the IEEE Canadian Conference on Electrical and Computer Engineering (CCECE) held in Regina, Canada, in September 2023. The scholarship from MGCAANA has been a significant source of motivation and financial support, aiding my academic and research endeavors in 2023. I deeply appreciate this initiative by MGCAANA to support students in need.

Looking ahead, I aspire to become a lecturer in electronic and telecommunication engineering and continue my research in designing advanced video compression systems to meet the demands of modern technology.

MGCCANA member Ayanthi Fernando's daughter Lahini and son Vihanga received awards from the California State Assembly for the Earth day Art and Essay Competition.



Vihanga Received an Honorary mention.



Saving Energy to Save the Earth

By: Vihanga Walpita

Saving energy is an important thing to do if you want to help Earth.

Saving energy reduces the burning of fossil fuels that make the air polluted.

One way to save energy is to ride a bus somewhere instead of using a car. Cars put out toxic gases that are harmful to the Earth's atmosphere.

These gases make the Earth very warm. Some buses are powered by electricity, so they don't produce toxic gases, which makes it better for the Earth. Also, a lot of people can share one bus!

Saving energy is one very helpful way to save Earth. Using buses is

only one way to save energy. There are many other ways to save energy

like unplugging devices if it is done charging.

Maybe you can help save Earth too. Soon, Earth will have cool, fresh air to breath with.

Lahini won third place in the competition.

How I Save the Earth

By Lahini Walpita

The Earth has a big problem, toxic gas is spreading and killing animals and plants, and that all came from fossil fuels that was used to produce energy. They are destroying Earth, so, this is a way that I can protect Earth.

I can protect Earth by using a scooter instead of using a car, bus, or motorcycle, because they all need gas to work, and the gas is burning fossil fuels that destroy the Earth.

Riding a scooter is fun! You can meet new neighbors and go with your friends. It gives you more exercise to keep you fit, and it saves a lot of energy. When I save energy I don't have to burn fossil fuels anymore.



Reaching the New Goal **\$50,000** Set for Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (VSTF)

The Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (VSTF), set up by MGCAANA, provides financial aid to disadvantaged students at Mahamaya Girls' College. Scholarships from VSTF pay for educational expenses and boarding fees of students attending Mahamaya. "Vidya," a Sanskrit word, means knowledge or wisdom. Our initial goal was to raise \$20,000, which we achieved in 2018; The current goal is \$50,000.

The total amount collected for VSTF reached **\$46,006** as of July 2024. Currently, we are at 92% of the new goal.

To donate online or by cheque, please visit:

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

We value your donations - fulfilling our purpose of MGCAANA

According to Ms. Himashanie Diyabalange (Co-chair, VSTF) - on behalf of the endowment committee and the VSTF Board of Trustees:

VSTF Announcements: We are excited to share that in 2024, the VSTF awarded **24 scholarships worth Rs 20,000 each**. These scholarships will support deserving students in pursuing their educational goals. Congratulations to the recipients and thank you to our sponsors and extinguish donors for making this possible.

https://www.mahamayaalumnina.org/VidyaTrustFund/MGCAANA_Vidya_Scholarship_Trust_Fund_Brochure.pdf

Renewing MGCAANA Membership for the Year 2024

Thank you to members who already renewed their membership for the year 2024. If you have not renewed your membership yet, this is a friendly reminder to renew your membership to support MGCAANA's ongoing activities.

How you can renew your membership?

Online: Use your credit card or PayPal account to pay your membership fee through the MGCAANA membership renewal page. <https://www.mahamayaalumnina.org/membership.html>

By Mail: Please mail a check payable to MGCAANA (\$ 15 - Students; \$ 25 - Regular). Address: Treasurer, MGCAANA, 2417 NE 20th, Renton, WA 98056

Note: If you wish, you can also renew your membership for 3, 5, or 10 years by paying US\$70.00, US\$115.00 and US \$230.00 respectively. Your support helps MGCAANA continue its legacy in helping Mayans and their communities in North America as well as current students at Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

Upcoming MGCAANA Activities

- Board meetings
- Next Newsletter (October 2024)
- Member-led webinars - Stay tuned.

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

Please read the minutes of the BOD's monthly meetings posted on MGCAANA website:

<http://www.mahamayaalumnina.org/minutes.php>

If you have new ideas, concerns, suggestions etc. to improve MGCAANA and to find out how it operates, please feel free to connect with the BOD through email:

Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com

Newsletter Committee :

Ms. Veroni Nadeesha Jayawardena and Ms. Ayanthi Fernando
Proofread by : Dr. Asantha U. Attanayake

Dear valued members,

Please send your articles, pictures and artistic creations for the MGCAANA Newsletter to its official email account of MGCAANA, which is mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com

Send in any personal success stories, recipes or even old memories that you would like to share with our fellow Mayans. Kids and family members are most welcome to share their artistry with us. The Newsletter committee will retain your original work of art and will publish your work as space is available.

Thank you,

The Newsletter Committee.
MGCAANA 2024/2025