

# Maya Puwath - මායා පුවත්

**Bi-Monthly Newsletter of Mahamaya Girls' College  
Alumnae Association of North America (MGCAANA)  
Volume 16 – Issue 3 – June 2020**



## Message from the Editors

Dear Readers

We at the Newsletter Committee hope that all our readers are keeping safe during the COVID 19 pandemic and the civil unrest that have created so much uncertainty in our daily lives.

As you know, MGCAANA had its 16th Annual General Meeting (AGM) virtually via Zoom, on Saturday, May 30th, 2020. It was a memorable evening as Members of MGCAANA, together with their families, connected to make this event a success. This newsletter contains messages from both Incoming and Outgoing Presidents, with images of the AGM and the list of the new Board of Directors for 2020-2021.

In addition, this newsletter comprises of the new goal set for the Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (VSTF) and information on one of this year's fundraisers "*You've Got Talent*" where members and families/friends can showcase their talents to support the scholarship programs. We hope that our readers would participate in this worthy cause!

We cannot ignore the grim civil unrest felt all through the world, and included in this edition are articles that will give an insight to the origin and the unfolding of these horrid events. Vihara Dharmaratne's opinion piece titled "*Some Thoughts on Recent Events, Being Sri Lankan, and Living in North America*" is based on her experiences and view that "racism is not a political issue, but an ethical and moral issue." You will also find some useful information and access to resources on how to be anti-racist, compiled by Berlin Narampanawe.

Sureni Ranasinghe's mouth-watering recipe "*Oven-Baked Crispy Chicken Wings with Buffalo & BBQ Sauce*" is shared in our Recipe Corner. In the Poetry Corner, you will find a poem by Nilmini Dorabawila "*The World Inside*," which can be related to most of us.

On a somber note, you will also find the sad news about the passing of a fellow Mayan, Sasanda Nilmalgoda, who passed away recently in Manitoba, Canada.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition.

The Newsletter Committee

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## Dhammapadha

*Sabbe tasanti dandassa  
sabbesam jivitam piyam  
attanam upamam katva  
na haneyya na ghataye.*



All are afraid of the stick, all hold their lives dear. Putting oneself in another's place, one should not beat or kill others.

[Dhammapada \(130\)](#)

## THE 16TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of MGCAANA

The 16th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of MGCAANA was held virtually via Zoom, on Saturday, May 30th, 2020. Originally planned for the Memorial Day weekend in Seattle, WA, the 2019-2020 Board of Directors (BOD) of MGCAANA decided to move this annual event to a virtual platform, after careful consideration of the ongoing situation with COVID-19.

As an organization that operates remotely all year, connecting members across North America, the AGM, followed by a dinner with family and well wishers of MGCAANA, was the one and only opportunity every year for a large in-person gathering of MGCAANA membership. While MGCAANA certainly missed an in-person event this year, the BOD adapted well to the current environment to successfully host this annual event virtually, with the presence of many MGCAANA members and their families.

MGCAANA would like to express its sincere gratitude to all MGCAANA committees, valued members and their families for their support for making the 16th AGM a success!

### MGCAANA Executive Committee 2020-2021

- President: Amali Alawatta
- Vice President: Samanthi Prasangika Abeyrathne
- Secretary: Inoka Amarakoon
- Treasurer: Geetha Rajaguru
- Webmaster: Nadeepa Jayasundara

### MGCAANA Board of Directors 2020-2021

- |                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ● Samanthi Prasangika Abeyrathne | ● Senali Dissanayake          |
| ● Amali Alawatta                 | ● Nadeepa Jayasundara         |
| ● Inoka Amarakoon                | ● Nimalka Sivakumar           |
| ● Soranjani Attanayake           | ● Savithri Werasooriya        |
| ● Jayani Christopher             | ● Kanchana Jeewanthi Wijekoon |

### Couldn't attend the 16th AGM of MGCAANA?

Please visit the "Past AGM Information" page of our MGCAANA website to access all the document that were presented at the 16th AGM that took place virtually on May 23rd, 2020:

<http://mahamayaalumina.org/AGM16Info.html>

# 16th AGM of MGCAANA (Virtual)



# 16th AGM of MGCAANA (Virtual)



## **A Message from MGCAANA's Incoming President**

Dear Mayan Friends,

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve MGCAANA as your president for 2020-2021, an organization with a proud past and an exciting future! I am thankful, humbled, and honored! Let me also take this opportunity to acknowledge the great work done by the outgoing committee including the president, board of directors, officers, and all the other committees. My sincere appreciation to all the Mayans & their families in North America who participated and supported to make the 16th Annual General Meeting (virtual) a success! I also convey my gratitude to all the founding members and committee members who have been parts of MGCAANA since the very beginning and for their support to continue the mission throughout these years.

The focus for this year is to support and connect with MGCAANA members and engage them in our events and activities. I hope I can count on every one of you to extend your fullest support and cooperation. We would strongly encourage you to bring up new ideas and initiatives towards achieving the overall vision. Let us not forget that we have each other to overcome the many challenges that this year might bring! Looking forward for a fabulous 2021! Go Mayans!

Thank you!

Yours,

Amali Alawatta



***Amali Alawatta***

## A Message from MGCAANA's Outgoing President

As the outgoing President of MGCAANA, I am excited and honored to address the MGCAANA family with a high note that we successfully held the 16th AGM virtually via Zoom. Our original plan was to celebrate MGCAANA's 15th anniversary in Seattle, where MGCAANA was initiated back in 2005. However, due to COVID-19, we decided to get together online and rekindle the Mayan sisterhood. Nevertheless, I would like to thank everyone who offered their time and effort to organize the Seattle meeting. Memorably, the virtual AGM mimicked the in-person meeting following the ceremonial traditions mixed with lovely performances which brought a lot of content and nostalgia. We connected with more than 40 participants including the founders of our organization: Mrs. Werake, Mrs. Neranjika Dissanayake, Mrs. Arushie Nugapitiya and Mrs. Harshi Waters (who is also playing a valuable role as our attorney). I would like to express my heartiest gratitude to everyone who joined in and made the event colorful.



***Senali Dissanayake***

2019/2020 has been a successful and a productive year for MGCAANA with great teamwork. Throughout our journey we achieved our two fundraising goals and we generously donated some portion to many charitable organizations. I express my sincere appreciation to the Executive Committee (EC) and Board of Directors (BoD) of the preceding year for their immense support and hard work invested in the association. My gratitude goes to the Advisory Committee consisting of Mrs. Geetha Eragoda, Mrs. Dharshani Nanayakkara and Mrs. Himashinie Diyabalanage for their guidance and involvement. I am also grateful for the other sub-committees such as the endorsement committee who overlook the three major scholarships (students in North America, VSTF, NPLMS) and the newsletter committee. Last but not least, a huge thank goes to our strongest pillar and the glue of the organization: Mrs. Sujatha Werake for her continuous assistance to resolve the matters in hand and to jump over every hurdle along the way.

MGCAANA is an amazing group of individuals with a lot of energy and determination. No matter what differences in ideas or opinions, at the end, Mayans work together towards a common goal with the aid of the upbringing we picked up at our alma mater. I personally gained a lot of experience by working together with such a diligent and inspiring group of women. I am truly grateful for MGCAANA for enriching the proud Mayan inside me. I would like to convey my thanks to the newly elected EC and BoD for volunteering to serve and support a good cause. I hope the energy and fresh ideas will take the organization to reach the goals and explore new venues in accordance with our vision and mission. While handing over the leadership to the new president, I am looking forward to working as a BoD to continue my service. I wish all the success and glory to MGCAANA in the upcoming years!

## Opinion

### *Some Thoughts on Recent Events, Being Sri Lankan, and Living in North America*

By V. Dharmaratne

By now, most of you have observed tragic events unfold recently, followed by civil unrest, fervent activism, calls to action across North America and beyond, to put an end to systemic racism, in particular in the United States. While acknowledging that MGCAANA is **not** a political organization, I thought of sharing some personal thoughts with Maya Puwath readers, as I believe that **racism** is not a political issue, but an ethical and moral issue. As per MGCAANA's vision statement, "we seek to create a future where inspired, well rounded and successful alumnae and students work together to benefit the society," and our mission states that MGCAANA "builds, fosters, and promotes unique and total growth of each individual alumna and student by providing a network of social, professional, educational, and cultural opportunities." With MGCAANA's vision and mission in mind, I felt the importance and the need to do our part, to enable both an important dialogue of our times as well as **action**, by sharing some of my own thoughts.

Having lived and attended school in Sri Lanka, a multi-ethnic and multicultural country, most MGCAANA members, not all, had the experience of belonging to the majority Sinhala ethnicity of Sri Lanka. There's no denying that certain privileges were afforded to the majority ethnicity. Now we live in North America, with experience as persons of color, or a visible minority. I believe that this combination of experiences uniquely position most of us to approach race relations in North America with a better understanding and more empathy; most of us know what it feels like to enjoy certain privileges because of various identity groups we belong to, even privileges such as being able to attend one of the most prestigious girls' schools in the country. The way I view it, being relatively recent immigrants in North America is not an excuse or a reason to not be part of the change that we want to see in the United States, in Canada and beyond. (When I say "relatively recent immigrants," I am of course acknowledging the traditional territory of the Indigenous people before the arrival of settlers.) Let us also not forget the many privileges we benefit from living in North America, that a multitude of individuals and groups before us fought hard for. Rights, experiences and privileges we sometimes take for granted, like voting, attending university, or even a typical activity like going into a restaurant were not always existent or accessible as they are for most of us today.

A couple of personal anecdotes come to mind, as I think about the current state of affairs. In 2008, when I applied to attend University of Mississippi, I had little to worry about when applying for admission. This is an academic institution in Mississippi, a state with a dark and troubling history of slavery and racism, a state that continues to make progress, but still has a long way to go. Attending the University of Mississippi had a profound impact on my life, in terms of gaining an excellent education and honing many skills to succeed in life. Being able to gain admission to the University and access many opportunities was partly due to certain privileges of my upbringing, but also very much thanks to heroic figures of the American Civil Rights Movement, such as [James Meredith](#), the first African American student to get enrolled in the racially segregated University of Mississippi in 1962. (Given most MGCAANA members have some sort of involvement with North American universities, I very much encourage you to visit the hyperlink I shared about Mr. Meredith's experience.) To share another anecdote, I was appalled by the horrific abuse that Indigenous children experienced at [residential schools in Canada](#), and having been born in Canada, I was genuinely shocked to learn that the last of these residential schools remained open until 1996, *years after* I was born.

I strongly believe that if we live in North America, it is vital for us to have a good level of awareness and education about the history of where we live, to understand the struggles of the past, to take action in the present, to help build a future where we treat every human with the dignity and respect we all deserve.



## Let Us Be Anti-Racist

Information compiled by B. Narampanawe



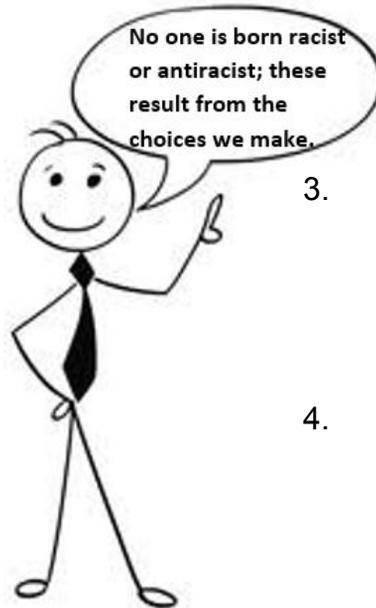
### How to Be Anti-Racist?

#### Being anti-racist at the individual and interpersonal level

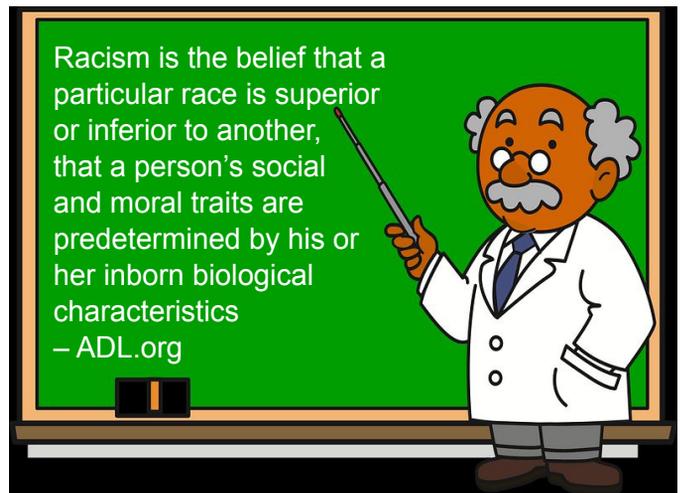
Being anti-racist is different for white people than it is for people of color. For white people, being anti-racist evolves with their racial identity development. They must acknowledge and understand their privilege, work to change their internalized racism, and interrupt racism when they see it. For people of color, it means recognizing how race and racism have been internalized, and whether it has been applied to other people of color.

#### Being anti-racist at the institutional level:

Institutional racism is the policies and practices within institutions that benefit white people to the disadvantage of people of color. An example of institutional racism is how children of color are treated within the U.S. education system.

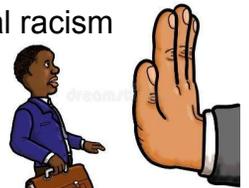


### What Is Racism?



### What Are Types of Racism?

1. Individual racism



2. Interpersonal racism



3. Institutional racism



4. Structural racism



## Let Us Be Anti-Racist

(continued)



**A Questioning Frame of Mind**  
A commitment to being anti-racist manifests in our choices. When we encounter interpersonal racism, whether obvious or covert, there are ways to respond and interrupt it. Asking questions is a powerful tool to seek clarity or offer a new perspective. Below are some suggestions to use in conversations when racist behavior occurs:

- Seek clarity: “Tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Offer an alternative perspective: “Have you ever considered \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Speak your truth: “I don’t see it the way you do. I see it as \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Find common ground: “We don’t agree on \_\_\_\_\_ but we can agree on \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Give yourself the time and space you need: “Could we revisit the conversation about \_\_\_\_\_ tomorrow.”
- Set boundaries. “Please do not say \_\_\_\_\_ again to me or around me.”

Being racist or anti-racist is not about who you *are*; it is about what you *do*

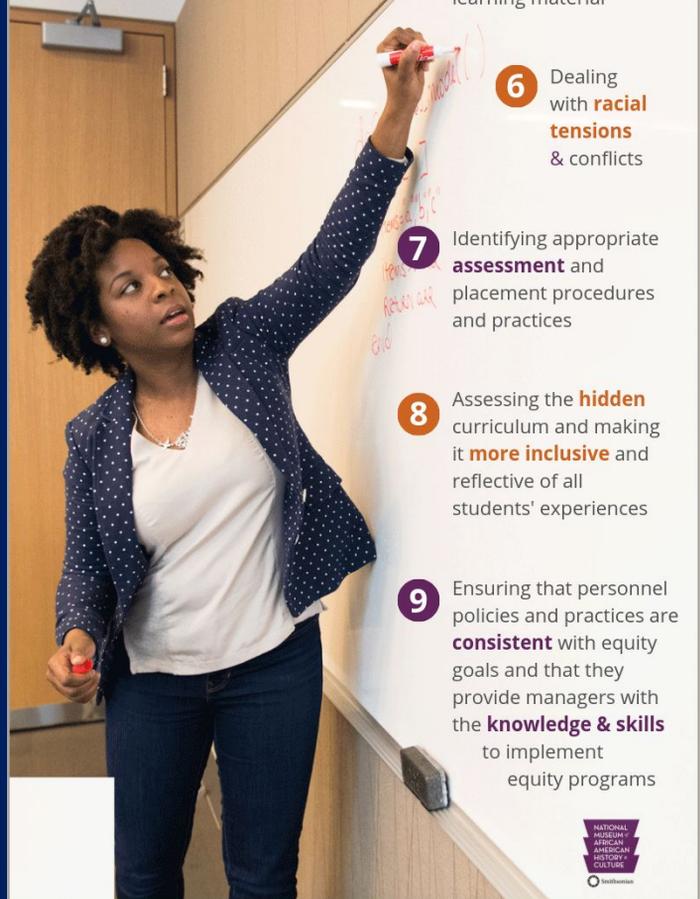
**THINK**  
**TALK**  
**ACT**



For more information please go to:  
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/being-antiracist>

## 9 Important Elements of ANTIRACIST EDUCATION

- 1 Examining the **historical roots** and contemporary manifestations of **racial prejudice** and discrimination
- 2 Exploring the influence of **race and culture** on one’s own personal and professional attitudes and behavior
- 3 Identifying appropriate **anti-racist resources** to incorporate into the curriculum in different subject areas
- 4 Developing new **approaches to teaching** children using varying cognitive approaches to **diverse learning** styles
- 5 Identifying and **counteracting bias** and stereotyping in learning material
- 6 Dealing with **racial tensions** & conflicts
- 7 Identifying appropriate **assessment** and placement procedures and practices
- 8 Assessing the **hidden** curriculum and making it **more inclusive** and reflective of all students’ experiences
- 9 Ensuring that personnel policies and practices are **consistent** with equity goals and that they provide managers with the **knowledge & skills** to implement equity programs





Maya Puwath has been reaching the MGCAANA membership since 2005, and "Pause – Rewind – Play" re-publishes past contributions to Maya Puwath, by MGCAANA members.

### The History of Father's Day in the US

Modern version of Father's Day celebration originated in United States of America and thereafter the tradition spread in countries around the world. The world owes thanks to Ms Sonora Louise Smart Dodd a loving daughter from Spokane, Washington as it is because of her struggle that Father's Day saw the light of the day.

The idea of Father's Day celebration originated in Sonora's mind when she per chance listened to Mother's Day sermon in 1909. Fairly mature at the age 27, Sonora pondered if there is a day to honor mother then why not for father? Sonora felt strongly for fathers because of the affection she received from her own father Mr William Jackson Smart, a Civil War veteran. Sonora's mother died while childbirth when she was just 16. Mr Smart raised the newborn and five other children with love and care.

Inspired by Ms Anna Jarvis's struggle to promote Mother's Day, Ms Dodd began a rigorous campaign to celebrate Father's Day in US. The Spokane Ministerial Association and the local Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) supported Sonora's cause. As a result Spokane celebrated its first Father's Day on June 19, 1910. Though there was initial hesitation the idea gained gradual popularity all over US and Fathers Day came to be celebrated in cities across the country. Looking at the heightened popularity of Father's Day in US, President Woodrow Wilson approved of this idea in 1916. President Calvin Coolidge too supported the idea of a national Father's Day in 1924 to, "establish more intimate relations between fathers and their children and to impress upon fathers the full measure of their obligations". After a protracted struggle of over four decades, President Lyndon Johnson signed a presidential proclamation declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day in 1966. Then in 1972, President Richard Nixon established a permanent national observance of Father's Day to be held on the third Sunday of June. Sonora Smart Dodd was honored for her contribution at the World's Fair in Spokane in 1974. Mrs. Dodd died in 1978 at age 96.

Sent by Hemalika Abeysundara based on the article at <http://www.fathersdaycelebration.com/fathers-day-history.html>

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- Poson Poya  
Friday, June 5,  
2020
- Esala Poya  
Friday, July 4,  
2020



# Oven-Baked Crispy Chicken Wings with Buffalo & BBQ Sauce

by Sureni Ranasinghe

## Recipe Corner

### Ingredients:

#### For the chicken wings

- 700g organic chicken, bone-in, skin-on chicken wings & drumsticks (14-16 pieces)
- 2 tsp baking powder (baking powder makes the chicken crispier & gives a golden color)
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp salt

#### For the buffalo sauce

- 1/4 cup hot sauce (regular hot sauce)
- 1/4 cup ranch dressing
- 1 tbsp butter

#### For the BBQ sauce

- 1/4 cup ketchup
- 2 tbsp dark brown sugar
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp chili powder

#### Preheating & baking tips

- Preheat the oven to 400F (200-205C) degrees. If you don't have a preheat option preheat for at least for 20 minutes.
- Bake the chicken wings for 40 minutes in total, half way through the bake take the tray out & flip all the chicken pieces & bake for another 20 minutes.

#### **To bake the chicken:**

- Preheat oven to 400F/205C degrees
- To prepare a baking tray: lay a foil on the tray and place a wire rack on top of the foil. Coat wire rack with cooking spray for easy clean up later on.
- Lay all chicken pieces on a kitchen towel and using another towel pat dry the chicken.
- Transfer all dried chicken to a clean dry bowl and season with salt, pepper, paprika & baking powder.



- Mix chicken well to coat the seasoning.
- Place seasoned chicken on the wire rack, leave space in between them.
- Bake for 20 minutes, after 20 minutes take the tray out and turn all the pieces, which helps to give an even brown and crispiness all around.
- While chicken is baking make the sauces.

#### **To make buffalo sauce:**

- Combine hot sauce, ranch, butter well in a small saucepan. Mix until well combined and bring it to a simmer on medium to low heat. Let it simmer for a few minutes and leave it on very low heat until the chicken is ready. You might have to stir occasionally.

#### **To make BBQ sauce:**

- Combine ketchup, dark brown sugar, apple cider vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, paprika, chili powder in a small saucepan. Stir well until combined. Simmer the sauce for about 15 minutes until thicken on low heat, keep stirring the whole time. Keep the sauce warm until the chicken is done.
- Once the chicken is done, divide chicken pieces to two separate bowls while it's still hot. Add Buffalo sauce to one bowl, turn & toss chicken to coat well and evenly. Add BBQ sauce to the other bowl, and repeat the same steps. Enjoy while it's still warm, with a side of ranch, blue cheese, celery etc.

#### **Video Link:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUV1X6vD1i4>

## The World Inside

by Nilmini Dorabawila

The world inside so busy at will  
Noisy and clanking  
Making a din  
The thoughts keep on coming  
Stifling everything else  
I try to find my breath  
And fail again and again

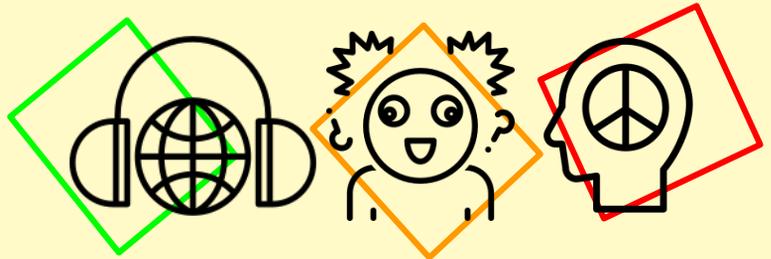
No release from the mess  
None at all  
The burden of thought  
Stifling the heart  
Heavier and heavier  
The thoughts carry on  
No release, none at all

Then I close my eyes  
Let the barriers fall  
The thoughts come,  
The thoughts go  
In a frenzy and fast  
Or lazily and slow

## Poetry Corner

The burdens come and silently go  
I stop expecting things,  
Expecting anything to change  
Not the river of thoughts  
Or the expected blissful peace

I become the spectator  
In a stage play  
Only witnessing, not participating  
Whatever comes my way  
And suddenly quite unexpectedly  
Silently if I may  
The breath goes away  
The curtain lifts  
And everything is so utterly still



## Mahamaya News

### Obituary: Sasanda Nilmalgoda (1956 - 2020)

It is with deep sadness that MGCAANA informs you of the passing of a fellow Mayan, Sasanda Nilmalgoda. She passed away on June 18th, 2020 in Manitoba, Canada, after a battle against cancer. MGCAANA extends its sincere condolences to Mrs. Nilmalgoda's family and friends. In lieu of flowers, Nilmalgoda family kindly requested donations to either [CancerCare Manitoba](#) or to a preferred charitable organization.

May Mrs. Nilmalgoda rests in peace and attain the Supreme Bliss of Nibbana.



Happy Canada Day to all MGCAANA members and well wishers living in Canada!



Happy Independence Day to all MGCAANA members and well wishers living in the United States!



## MGCAANA News

## MGCAANA Fundraiser!



you've got  
**TALENT!**



A Virtual Talent Show

Showcase your talent to benefit MGCAANA. Event conducted to support scholarship programs and other. Bring in your friends and family to support a worthy cause.

*Minimum donation \$12*

Saturday, August 1<sup>st</sup>  
2020

7 p.m. EST  
4 p.m. Pacific / 6 p.m. Central



Confirm participation via [mahamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com) by Saturday, July 25th, 2020. Family members are more than welcome to participate! More details to follow via email.

## New Goal Set for Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (VSTF)

The Vidya Scholarship Trust Fund (VSTF) set up by MGCAANA provides financial aid to financially-disadvantaged students at Mahamaya Girls' College. Scholarships from VSTF pay for educational expenses and/or boarding fees of students attending Mahamaya. "Vidya," a Sanskrit word, means knowledge or wisdom. Our initial goal was to raise at least \$20,000. We reached this goal last year. As of September 2019, we reached that goal, having raised over \$ 20,700.00, the interest from which has been going toward awarding around 14 scholarships per year.

To continue this noble cause, we have decided to set a new goal. The new goal will be raising an additional \$10,000, which will increase our goal to **\$30,000**. To donate online or by cheque, please visit: <http://mahamayaalumna.org/vstf.php>



## 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.mahamayaalumna.org/minutes.php>

If you have new ideas, concerns, or suggestions to improve how MGCAANA operates etc. please feel free to connect with the BOD through e-mail: [Mahamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com)

### Newsletter Committee:

Vihara Dharmaratne, Vajeera Dorabawila, Lilika Molligoda, Berlini Narampanawe

### Some Upcoming MGCAANA Activities

- Board Meetings (July, August, September)
- Virtual Talent Show (August 1)
- Next Newsletter (August)
- Launch of 2020-2021 MGCAANA Undergraduate and Graduate Scholarship (September 1)