



MAYA PUWATH

Vol.3 - Issue 5 October 2007

Editorial

Hello Everyone,

It has been two years since I proudly wrote my very first editorial to our initial edition of Maya Puwath. Time has gone by faster than we can have a handle on, but MGCAANA has accomplished milestones that we can be pleased with. Among those the undergraduate and graduate scholarship program offers funds to the alumnae of Mahamaya who are pursuing undergraduate and graduate studies in North America and Canada. This is a great opportunity and a privilege for the newcomers to the country.

Expansion of the computer lab was done by the generous donations of our members and very special thank you goes to Mrs. Werake for her unconditional dedication. The article which was written by Mrs. Werake for this issue proves the strengths of MGCAANA.

As we come up with a theme for each edition of Maya Puwath, the editorial committee has decided to focus on **cultural diversity** in this issue. Since I have been working with students and families from many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds for last 10 years, understanding the meaning of cultural diversity was essential for me and decided to pen down few of my thoughts.

Everyone has a culture usually defined as a combination of customs, traditions, values, phrases and other forms of communication by which we belong to a certain community.

I strongly believe that we are born into a culture and then learn how to think and behave within it. No matter where you later move to, the culture into which you are born and raised will have a life-long influence on your values.

As we continue our third successful year of MGCAANNA, I would like to conclude this editorial with this quote...

"To succeed internationally, we need to understand the cultures of the world; and we have all the cultures of the world represented right here - a tremendous competitive advantage."

Ernest Thompson, Proctor and Gamble

Priyanka Jayakody
Chief Editor- October Issue

Follow the law of morality; do not follow the law of immorality; he who embarks upon the path of truth lives happily in this world and in the hereafter.

Let no one follow a degraded course of existence, nor live in indolence; let him not follow false views, nor be a person who prolongs his worldly existence.

- Dhammapada-



"All humanity is one undivided and indivisible family, and each one of us is responsible for the misdeeds of all the others. I cannot detach myself from the wickedest soul."

Mahatma Gandhi

A Rich Tapestry Of Diversity

Sri Lankan culture is a rich blend of the interaction of diverse cultural patterns both indigenous and derived from, trade, religions, as well as, western colonization. The cultural patterns of Sri Lanka today show the lasting impact of a diverse range of cultures.

Sri Lankan culture today is a pleasant kaleidoscope that combines the influences of the many cultures and peoples that have left their indelible impression on the cultural patterns of the country. It is a culture that in its diversity is a rich tapestry combining the many influences of East and West. As the single country in South Asia that was most exposed to western colonial rule, it has surprisingly retained a great deal of its indigenous traditions, while at the same time absorbing the considerable impact of the West. It is in this sense of the Sri Lankan cultural experience can be described as truly unique among the cultural traditions of South Asia.

Courtesy of www.abooda.com

Sent by Priyanka Jayakody

Computer Technology at Mahamaya College

Computer technology was introduced to Mahamaya about 20 years ago during Mrs. Pilapitiya's time. A computer lab was set up, was air-conditioned to protect the machines, and a teacher was appointed to be in charge of the lab. That was the beginning of the computer era and it was a period of slow growth all over the technology world. In May this year when I visited the school, I was amazed to witness the expansion and hands-on training opportunities that the children have at the new Computer Lab. The Principal Mrs. Indra Withanachchi worked very hard to set up the present facility for the students with a vision of preparing them for the challenges of the modern world. We need to commend and recognize her enthusiasm, energy, and commitment. Setting up a computer lab and its administration was not an easy task. She managed to set up the new Computer Lab with 20 brand new IBM PC-compatible computers with internet facility. The previous Computer Lab is also available for use with 2 new computers, and the 4 used computers that MGCAANA donated.

In my visit I saw that all the computers and related peripherals were in good use under the watchful eye of Mr. Dassanayake, the Computer Master that the Education Department had assigned to Mahamaya. He is connected to Mahamaya as a parent of a student, and an old Rajan. He looked a promising, enthusiastic, alert and energetic teacher to me. I thought to myself that he is a good match to our school's needs. He keeps things working smoothly and efficiently. Every computer had more than one girl working. Running a computer lab with young users is not an easy task either. Mr. Dassanayake follows the guidelines that the school and the Department of Education have set up regarding internet security issues, safety of the students, monitoring the use of the computers, etc.

Students in grades 10, 11, and 12 study Computer Technology as a subject in school. In grade 10 one hundred sixty-one students, in grade 11 sixty-one students and in grade 12 four hundred eighty-seven students are studying Computer Technology as a subject this year. Grade 11 students who do Computer Technology as a subject learn Web-designing, and programming with VB. The school conducts evening classes for the students and our alumnae. These classes cover the subject areas such as: Certificates in PC Assembling, Networking, Desktop Publishing, Web Designing, Graphic Designing, and Animation. From what I learned from Mr. Dassanayake, we have excellent web designers, animation artists and graphic artists at Mahamaya. The school gives the tools and students excel in what they do.

Yes, we have 5,500 students at Mahamaya today. Although the student-computer ratio is not very attractive from the standpoint of the Western World, Mahamaya is trying its best to accommodate more students in technology.

If you are interested in helping the school in technology, please contact MGCAANA at Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com.

The article was written by Sujatha Werake. Some information was provided by Mr. Dassanayake in May during her visit.

Students Working In The Computer Lab



Culture Mix

The divider among the people in many North American societies I feel, is culture. We have so many different cultures living together. Each & every culture is so colorful & vibrant. They have their own rites & rituals. And they all keep their culture very close to heart. It could be a way of preserving each individual culture. A mixture could mean that we will lose some parts of our own cultures. Or it could be that we try our best to hold on to something that we grew up with. This is true to many an immigrant who has left behind so much that they want to hold on to something familiar. And the most precious thing they want to pass on to their children is the culture & rituals they grew up with. Most see culture as the link to maintaining their identity. But, in my opinion, this makes for divisions among the society we want to be included in. We live among these cultures, interacting and co-existing but we do not inter-connect. There is not much social gathering among people from different cultures. We tend to seek out "personal" friends from our own country men. This makes it difficult to be one as a nation. You meet someone new & the first thing they ask is where you are from. That is a way for most to define and decide if that meeting will lead to a lasting friendship. Culture is the mode for bonding for many of us. It is strange how when we leave Sri Lanka religion or race becomes secondary to culture. Here it does not matter if you are a Buddhist, Christian or Muslim. All that matters is if you are Sri Lankan. We relate more to people of Sri Lanka no matter what religion we follow. The common link is culture, culture and culture. But is this the best way to forge our way in this new land? Would it not be more nourishing if we can find a way to mix among cultures without losing our identity. Culture will always stand as a divider among communities unless everyone is willing to accept & respect another's culture. In short make the effort to mix and match cultures. Mixing cultures might give us a much more broader outlook on life.

Nazrana Caffoor

Stress and Sickness: How Stress Management Aids Wellness

As various colds and strains of the flu are passed around schools, offices and homes across America, you may be wondering what you can do to stay healthy. We've all heard recommendations to get flu shots, bundle up if it's cold outside, and the like, but your mom and your doctor may have neglected to tell you about an important precaution you can take to avoid getting sick: Practice your stress management skills! The effects of stress on immune system functioning and overall level of wellness have been studied and well-documented, and if you're worried about your health, stress levels should be monitored closely! To protect your health, stress should be kept to a minimum and other precautions should also be taken. To increase your odds of wellness, especially during flu season, here are some important steps you can take:

Practice stress management techniques- Journaling, yoga and even laughter have all been found to increase immunity.

Take care of your body- Eat a healthy diet, get enough sleep and exercise regularly to keep your body running smoothly. Taking better care of your body will keep it functioning properly and increase your ability to fight off the latest bug that's been passed around.

Maintain a supportive network- Social support boosts immunity and help you manage stress in your life, both of which will keep you healthier. By keeping several healthy relationships in your life, you will have friends to help you through the difficult times and increase your enjoyment of the good times helping everyone stay healthy and enjoy life more.

Stay organized and maintain balance in your life- Keep your home uncluttered. Become proficient at saying no to requests that aren't in line with your priorities. Staying organized and balanced will help you keep from overtaxing yourself, and can help reduce the level of stress you experience in your life, helping you stay healthier in the long run.


www.womentowomen.com

Prepared By Priyanka Jayakody




MAHAMAYA GIRLS' COLLEGE ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA


2007-2008 Undergraduate & Graduate Scholarship Program



This scholarship is intended to provide cost of books and material for a single semester for Mahamaya Girls' College alumnae pursuing **undergraduate** or **graduate** studies in the United States and Canada.



The scholarship award may range from \$250.00 to \$300.00, depending on the availability of funds.



The scholarship will be awarded to (a) student(s) demonstrating outstanding academic achievements, leadership ability, participation in extracurricular activities, and a significant level of financial need. Relatives of the Board of Directors and Officers of MGCAANA *are* eligible to apply, if they qualify otherwise.

APPLICATION PERIOD AND DEADLINE:




SEPTEMBER 1, 2007 – NOVEMBER 15, 2007
APPLICATIONS POSTMARKED AFTER THE DEADLINE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

AWARD NOTIFICATION:




ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 15, 2007

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:




Please visit our website at <http://www.mahamayaalumnina.org> to view and download the scholarship application*.

Be sure to read the 'Directions and Requirements' carefully before completing the application.



If you have any questions about the MGCAANA Undergraduate & Graduate Scholarship Program, please contact the Scholarship Selection Committee at Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com.

**All application information is for selection purposes only and will be strictly confidential.*



Thank you very much for your interest in the Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae Association of North America Undergraduate & Graduate Scholarship Program, and we look forward to reading your completed application.

CHOCOLATE BROWNIES

Ingredients :

2 tsp melted butter ,for greasing
60g / 2 ¼ oz unsweetened stoned dates, chopped
60g / 2 ¼ oz no-soak dried prunes ,chopped
6 tbsp unsweetened apple juice
4 eggs ,beaten
300g / 10 ½ oz dark muscovite sugar
1 tsp vanilla essence
4 tbsp low-fat drinking chocolate powder, plus extra for dusting
2 tbsp cocoa powder
175 g / 6 oz plain flour
60g / 2oz dark chocolate chips

ICING :

125 g / 4 ¼ oz icing sugar
1-2 tsp water
1 tsp vanilla essence



- Place the dates & prunes in a pan & add the apple juice. Bring to boil, cover & simmer for 10 minutes until soft. Beat to form a smooth puree', then set to cool.
- Place the cooled fruit in a mixing bowl & stir in the eggs, sugar & vanilla essence. Stir in the drinking chocolate powder, cocoa & flour.
- Fold in until well blended.
- Grease & line a 7 by 11 inch cake tin with baking parchment. Spoon the mixture in to the prepared tin & smooth over the top.
- Bake for 25-30 minutes until firm to touch or a skewer inserted comes out clean.
- Cut in to 12 bars & leave to cool in the tin for 10 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- To make the icing, sift the sugar into a bowl & mix with sufficient water & vanilla essence to form a soft but not too runny icing.
- Drizzle the icing over the chocolate brownies & allow to set. Dust with the extra chocolate powder before serving.

Courtesy of Quick & easy Traditional Cakes,

Sent in by Nazrana Caffoor.

Mayan's book Korner.....

- * A Thousand Splendid Suns By Khaled Hosseini
- * Dispatches From the Edge By Anderson Cooper
- * A Long Way Gone: Memoirs Of a Boy Soldier By Ishmael Beah
- * Infidel By Ayaan Hirsi Ali
- * Love In The Time Of Cholera By Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Note from the editor.

This summer I had an opportunity to enjoy few books which written by authors from different cultural backgrounds and decided to share them with you. Enjoy!!!

Priyanka Jayakody



Diversity

Cultural diversity is what America is today. The melting pot. It is the strength and the beauty of America. Everyday as I walk in to the day care center or the school my children attend I see children of all colors and hues, playing, singing, dancing and having a good time. To them it does not matter what color or ethnicity their friends are- just the way it should be. I am happy for my children to grow up in such an environment where they are not pre conditioned to judge a person by a race.

My kids have learnt different languages, about different food and clothes, cultural traditions, geography from the abundance of diversity that surrounds them. I wish our brethren in Sri Lanka could see this and emulate it. It saddens me to think that when we live among many nationals in America with no problems that we cannot live among 4 ethnic groups who are very similar in many ways, in Sri Lanka sharing and caring without trying to dissect the tiny island to pieces along ethnic boundaries!. Perhaps it is a part of human ideological evolution for there have been many battles fought for cultural diversity to be what it is today. Maybe Sri Lanka is still in that process and a better future awaits.

We often wonder what the kind of mix our generations to come would be and Iru our daughter has the answer. She is into the color pink these days. Everything is pink from shoes to socks to the kind of ice cream she likes- strawberry. Even her medicine when she was ill recently was pink and she drank it without a hum and even asked for more. Anyway, the latest is that she wants to grow up and marry a pink man and have pink baby. Jeeva and I await with great trepidation!

Chathuri Nugawela- Muansinghe