



## Dhammapada.

*Dunnigghassa lahuno  
yatthakamanipatino cittassa  
damatho sadhu  
cittam dantam sukhavaham*

The mind is difficult to control;  
swiftly and lightly, it moves and lands wherever  
it pleases.

It is good to tame the mind, for a well-tamed  
mind brings happiness



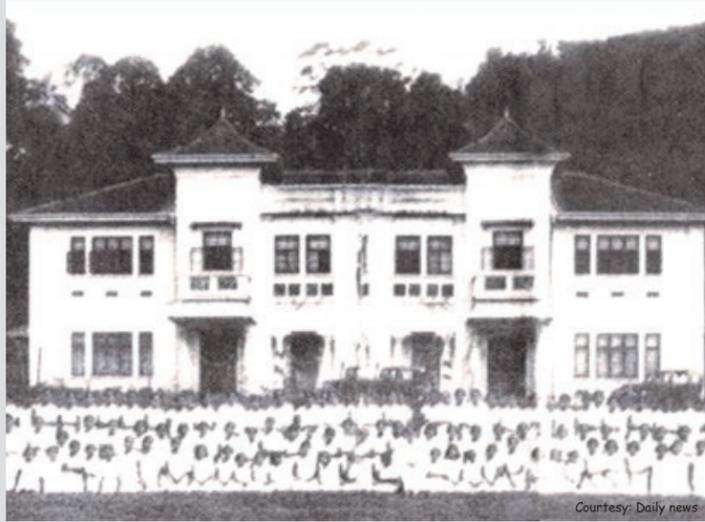
“Life is like riding a bicycle.  
To keep your balance, you must  
keep moving”.

• Albert Einstein



“You cannot teach a man anything;  
you can only help him discover it  
in himself”.

- Galileo



Main building—Mahamaya Girls College

## In This Issue

- Page 1 : Editorial
- Page 2 : Announcements
- Page 3 : Parenting and schooling– few tips and research opportunity
- Page 4: Raising children in a bilingual house and helpful resources
- Page 5: 33 & Counting-Part 1
- Page 6 : Chathuri Nugawela Munnasinghe ‘s speech at ASHA for Women’s 2012 Annual Gala Celebration
- Page 7 : Sri Lankan recipe
- Page 8 : Kids Corner

Dear readers,

It is great to be back after a short break. The surrounding is getting prettier as days go by with spectacular fall foliage colors we enjoy this time in every year. The trees are ready to rest, and live off the food they stored during the summer but for most of us, this is the peak time for work with no breaks in the horizon. While the surrounding hints us about the imminent cold season, its glamor sheds light to our tedious lives and keeps us going forward.

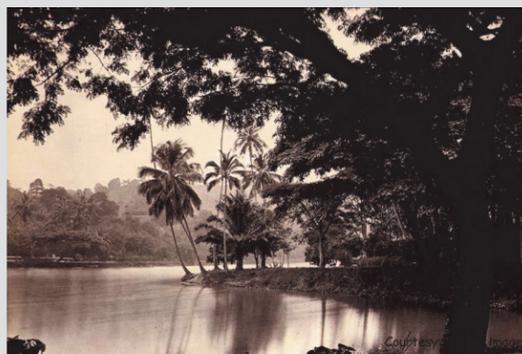
We are living thousands of miles away from our loved ones missing them everyday. We hardly have a time for ourselves as we are either busy with work or the chores at home. Those who have children at school age, barely have a time to breath and waiting for something to invigorate their minds; who have college educating kids find the days are too long and find ways to spend them till they reunite with the children, and those who have grown-up children – married and moved out - are trying to engage in social activities yet are left with more spare time than ever. Then, the bi-monthly published MGCAANA newsletter arrives at their “doorstep” bringing news views and entertainment. The newsletter carries nothing but joy and keeps us from isolation, most importantly, fills up the gaping voids of our lives.

Recently I was taken by surprise, when a friend inquired about an article that was published in our newsletter. He has a friend, a Mayan –who reads and shares the news on Maya Puwath. People communicate, and value our articles, thus our newsletter brings news to the society as well. So let me thank those who actively participate in contributing articles (every form) to our newsletter and invite the entire readership to take the lead on this valuable task.

My husband often says that the voluntary work keeps any society moving forward and highly commends the Mayans in MGCAANA for trying to make a difference. I can’t agree with him more. We all are busy and multi tasking yet manage to sacrifice bit of our valuable time to make that difference. Most importantly the membership stands by each other through thick and thin as children of one big family and get the organization moving forward adding the most obligatory momentum to it. Best wishes to all in all future endeavors.

“Trick-or-treat” – Happy Halloween to you all. Enjoy and pretend that nothing can frighten you!

-- Hashini Mohottala --





Mahamaya Girls' College  
Alumnae Association of North America

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.

Each 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.

Incoming high school students are required to include *copies* of their school transcript(s) – G.C.E. Ordinary Level and Advanced Level Examination Certificates (if applicable).

APPLICATION PERIOD AND DEADLINE:

**September 15, 2012 - November 15, 2012**

Applications postmarked after the deadline will *not* be accepted.

AWARD NOTIFICATION:

On or before **December 15, 2012**

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

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

The application is also available **online** at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LJYYJ5P>

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

If you have any questions about the MGCAANA Scholarship Program, please contact the Scholarship Selection Committee at [Mahamaya\\_alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:Mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com).

Thank you very much for your interest in the MGCAANA Undergraduate & Graduate Scholarship Program, and we look forward to reading your completed application.

## *Parenting and Schooling: Few Tips*

Month of September is the beginning of the school year. This is the time the parents and kids dread the first day of school heading back for another year or experiencing the school for the first time among younger kids. But there are great ways to make it a wonderful experience for your kids and for yourselves as parents.

Have a positive attitude from the start. Get involved and enjoy being there for your kids. Instill in them the love of learning and that helps you bond with your children more by being an important part of their lives. It is especially important for us to be part of our children's lives, because most of us are living here without our extended families that could have been a great support group for them.

Be a good reader yourself. Be consistent. Set an example. Some children may not like reading, but it often can be reversed by reading to your child every night, and your child seeing you reading your own book. Bedtime can be a great time to read. Make this a habit, just like having dinner. Start reading to your child when they are few months old. Be a member of your local library. Join the library's story time at an early age of your child. Help the child to pick books, let them feel the ownership of the process. Encourage the child to bring books of their choice from the school library to read at home. Give them a shelf at home to set library books. If you have enough space at home, set up a reading corner in a quiet and comfortable place to lie down, read and enjoy, rather than watching TV or playing computer games.

Participate in your child's classroom. Be a volunteer for a few hours a week, go on their field trips, if you can, make it the best experience possible for them. As parents dress appropriately when you go to your child's classroom, so that your child will not feel uncomfortable. If your child is shy at school, your participation can help them to come out of their shell. By being in the classroom, you get the opportunity to observe the teaching process and get helpful hints from the teacher where to help your child. You will be able to identify which kids you would like your child to foster friendships with. You get the opportunity to support their teacher by being a volunteer.

Play dates/Birthday parties and such events can help your child to socialize. You can take an active role in fostering positive friendships by setting up play dates for your child. These social events can help your child to adjust to school. When they develop friendships with their peers, they really start enjoying going to school.

Trips that you go with your children: Plan in advance to make them educational for your kids. Get them involved beforehand, let them do research by gathering information from books, and Internet, about the place that you are planning to visit. Try to combine your trip with a topic that they are studying at school. Of course the intensity of literature changes with the ages of the children. Teach them to take field notes and be hands-on during the trips.

You can do educational trips from home too by going on the Internet. It is a powerful tool. Let them get excited about what they learn, and let the excitement be contagious. Together you and your children can explore and learn new things. They can "show and tell" in the classroom at the time of sharing, of what they have learned on their trips. These trips can greatly reinforce what they learn at school. And also give them a lot of confidence by knowing the facts and presenting them to the class.

Please try to be a great participant in your child's life. Your kids' love of school and success in class work, mostly depend on your engagement with your children and school.

Happy parenting!

By Sujatha Werake



### Research opportunity

**The American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies** announces the continuation of its dissertation planning grants competition. AISLS dissertation planning grants are designed to enable graduate students to make a pre-dissertation visit to Sri Lanka to investigate the feasibility of their topic, to sharpen their research design, or to make other practical arrangements for future research. Applicants must be US citizens and will normally be enrolled in a PhD program (or equivalent) in a US university. The competition is funded by a grant from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, US Department of State.

Applicants should have completed most of their graduate coursework by the time they take up their grant. The grant is especially intended for students who are in the process of completing their dissertation proposals and preparing applications for funds to support their dissertation research, but other purposes may be proposed. Applicants should normally plan to spend at least six weeks in Sri Lanka. The maximum period of support is eight weeks.

For complete details, including application materials, please go to <http://www.aisls.org/diss-plan.html>

**The application deadline is 1 December 2012.**

## *Raising Children in a Bilingual Home*

Just thought to share some of my experiences as a mother who raised two grown up girls ( now 22 and 19) in a bilingual home and also as an educator who had a privilege to teach English as a second language to English Language Learners in elementary schools.

I was a stay at home mother till my oldest daughter started kindergarten and my youngest was two years old at that time. My husband and I always spoke in Sinhalese ( Sri Lankan) at home then and now. So our young daughters were accustomed to Sinhalese from home front and also from many Sri Lankan friends we associated with. But the exposure to English came naturally and conveniently with television, radio and their American friends. They learned and acquired both cultures and languages as we have taught them the equal importance of their backgrounds.

They were not forced to pick a language to speak, and as young parents we naturally expected them to pick both languages equally with no difficulty. One thing I didn't understand at that time was that language acquisition is a process and might take a while for the children especially when they are exposed to multi languages. My oldest was falling behind in speech compared to her own peers who were learning only one language. I was given advises and opinions by many family and friends who believed that bilingualism might effect them negatively in the learning process of language and speech which I took into serious consideration at that time. So I decided to stick to one language at home and it was not my native language!!!

So we decided to speak to them more in English at home but they were also exposed to Sinhalese listening to the conversations between me and my husband. As time passed by we realized that they became English dominant even though they understood Sinhalese very well. If I have known better that no research evidences were found that there was no connection between language delay and bilingualism, I would have given my daughters more time to learn both languages fluently on their own time. After 22 years later, though my both daughters are English dominant, we speak to them in Sinhalese most of the time and they can answer back in their native language and I'm not sure to call them bilingual or monolingual children.

As a family we created wonderful memories with our two daughters who were raised with bilingualism and exposed to Eastern and Western cultures. Also faced the challenges and tears that came with the territory trying raising the kids in a totally strange world apart from where we were raised.

I would like to share one of my cherished stories of bilingualism...One day my husband found a molded cheese in the fridge. He said "cheese eka pus kala" what he meant was it was molded. My daughter who was about 5 years old at that time heard her father and said, "daddy, pus didn't come to our house to eat cheese". She thought "pus" was a person who must have come to our house and ate the cheese. During my ESL teaching years I have encountered many rewarding experiences watching how students acquire their second language and applying it in their daily lives with pride and wonder.

I found the following article "Why Bilinguals Are Smarter" in The New York Times by Yudhijit Bhattacharjee (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/18/opinion/sunday/the-benefits-of-bilingualism.html>) is very interesting and many of us who are raising children in bilingual homes can relate to his ideas and understand the benefits and challenges of raising our children to be bilinguals.

By Priyanka Jayakody

## *Helpful Phone Numbers and Resources*

- 24-hour Crisis Line: 1-866-4 CRISIS
- Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-SUICIDE
- Crisis Clinic: [www.crisisclinic.org](http://www.crisisclinic.org)
- Mental Health Matters: [www.mental-health-matters.com](http://www.mental-health-matters.com)
- Clearinghouse: [www.mhselfhelp.org](http://www.mhselfhelp.org)
- Mental Health Info source: [www.medinfosource.com](http://www.medinfosource.com)
- National Research Center on Homelessness & Mental Illness  
[www.prainc.com](http://www.prainc.com)
- Recovery Inc.: [www.recovery-inc.org](http://www.recovery-inc.org)
- NARSAD, brain research: [www.narsad.org](http://www.narsad.org)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE(7233) or TTY 1-800-787-3224.
- National coalition Against Domestic Violence: Anonymous and Confidential Help 24/7:  
1.800.799.SAFE (7233)  
1.800.787.3224 (TTY)  
<http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/domviolence.htm> Go to this site and find out more information about domestic violence.
- Mental Health Today: [www.mental-health-today.com](http://www.mental-health-today.com)
- Health Place: [www.healthplace.com](http://www.healthplace.com)
- Online Support Groups:  
[www.wa\\_families@yahoo.com](mailto:www.wa_families@yahoo.com)
- Freedom From Fear: (anxiety, depression)  
[www.freedomfromfear.org](http://www.freedomfromfear.org)
- National Institute of Mental Health:  
[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)
- Social Security Administration:  
[www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)
- SSDI & SSI Social Security,  
[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) (800) 772-1213,

### *33 and counting - Part1 – Mount Rushmore & Yellowstone National Park*

It was mid of May in 2011 and the summer break for us. We were excited about our road trip to Yellowstone national park. Our team was me, my husband Sachith, our friend and batch mate from University of Peradeniya, Priyantha and his wife Sakunthala and finally Roshan malli (brother of Vindya Thilakaratne, '99 MCK). They too are all graduate students at TTU Math department and Sakunthala (Saku) came to the USA few months ago to join with her husband. Our plan was to camp two nights at Yellowstone National park and visit few other places on our way. The map was finalized, motels and camp sites were booked and the SUV we rented was fully loaded with camping gear and all necessities for a seven day trip.

Since fast food and eating out would not work with most of us, we decided to prepare Sri Lankan meals for the trip. We made fried potatoes, fried pol sambol, soya curry and seeni sambol. Also we packed enough raw rice and dhal with other cooking needs. A rice cooker, a portable gas cooker, an electric hotplate and microwave safe jugs and plates were packed. We didn't forget to pack enough tea bags and sugar for our morning tea. All the cooked dishes were packed in coolers and we made sure that the motels we booked have a microwave and a refrigerator. We decided to buy milk, bread and eggs when we reach our night stays. Me and Saku had the responsibility to check the coolers and refill ice when necessary. We also prepared some snacks to have while we drive and bought water and drinks. In that way we can save lot of time and money during our trip and be energetic and healthy.

We left Lubbock on 25th of Wednesday around 5 pm and drove all night while stopping at few places to get some rest and change the drivers. It is important that someone is awake to accompany the driver when you are having long day and night drive. So we took shifts to fill the driver's position and the companion's position and picked some fun topics to talk on our way while other three are sleeping soundly. We had a chance to view the sunrise over the highway and green hillsides which are much different than south plains. After refreshing in the next morning, we reached our first destination, "Mount Rushmore" in South Dakota. Although stone carvings are not new to us since we have seen incredible work in Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura, the hugeness of monuments and how good they have captures the presidents, astonished us at the very first sight. After visiting the monuments we took off to Red Lodge, Montana to spend the night after a long drive.

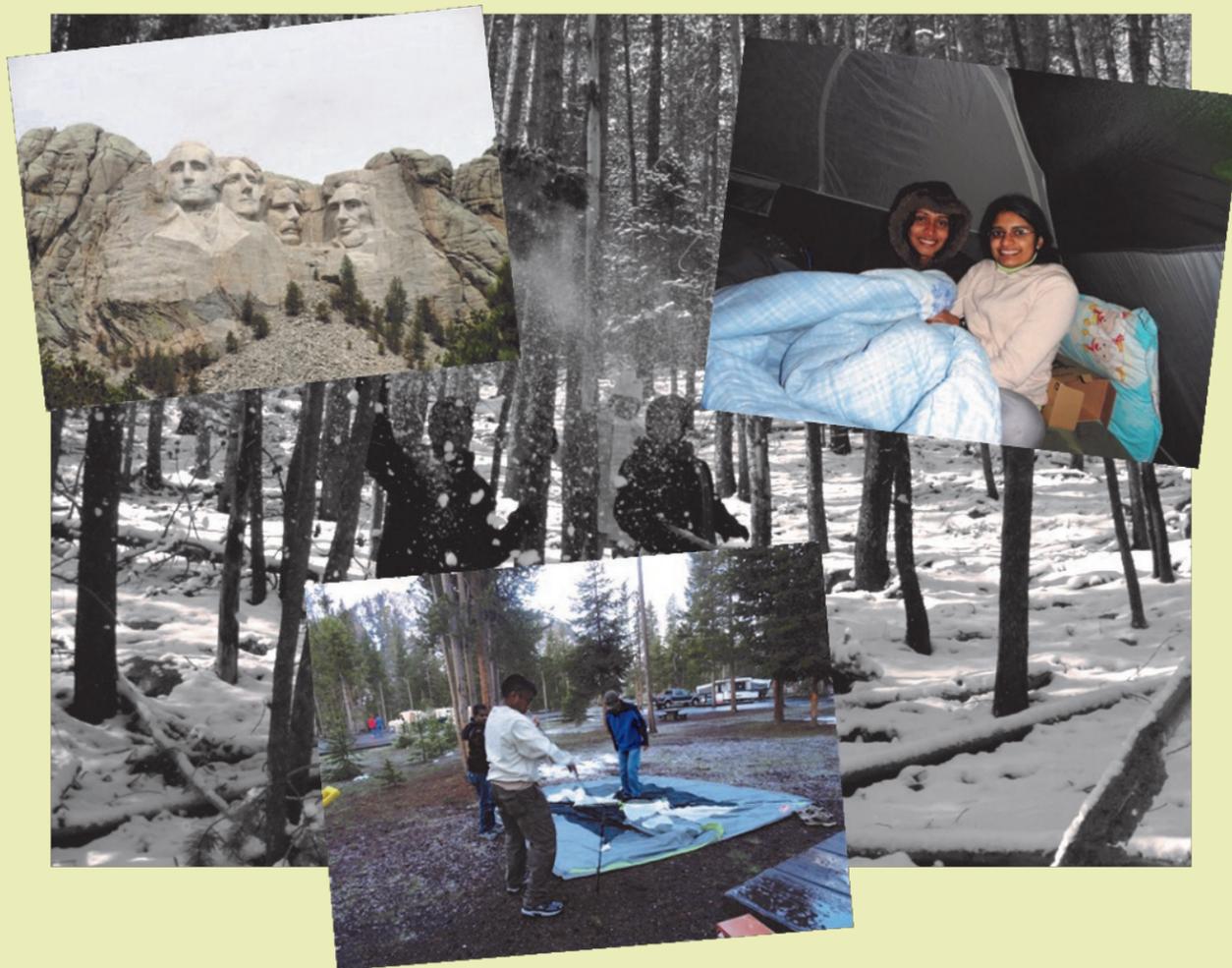
Our goal was to enter the national park through the north entrance in the morning which gives us a chance to view the Beartooth Mountains. The entrance was scheduled to open on 27th of May for the summer. Unfortunately they postponed it in the morning, which had never happened in previous years, so we had to change our plans. We had a good Sri Lankan meal and went half way through the entrance until they allow us, while enjoying piles of snow and cool creeks. There were heaps and heaps of snow and we played on them like kids..... well we never get a chance to do so in Texas!!!

We entered the Yellowstone National Park from an alternative entrance and drove around while watching wild life and geysers. There were hundreds of Bisons and we had a rare chance to see a mother grizzly bear with her cub. It was getting dark when we reach our campsite. Temperature was almost freezing but we were well prepared for that. Each camp site was provided with a fire ring and a barbeque grill and there were strict rules regarding waste due to bear attacks. We put up our tent and made a fire to warm up ourselves. Every other occupant in our camp site was in heated RV's but not in tents like us. Passing bys were looking at us hopefully thinking what a stupid gang to camp outside in this cold. Of course, who wants to freeze outside like that!!!!

After having hotdogs and a nice hot tea, we were ready to end the day inside our cozy tent. We could hear the soft sound of falling snow and a wild yip of a fox somewhere far away. Priyantha was making jokes about bear attacks and scary noises while Saku is experiencing the real winter weather for the first time. I tried to catch some sleep meanwhile dreaming about all the fun times we had camping as a girl guide and wondering how different it is to camp in woods like this.

Await for the next part to discover how we survived our night in the cold and the rest of our road trip

By Hemalika Karunaratna



## *Chathuri Nugawela Munasinghe honored at 2012 ASHA for Women's Annual Gala Celebration*

"ASHA for Women" selected eight South Asian women for the year 2012 for their achievements and contribution to society and honored them at a well attended ceremony on September 15, 2012 at George Mason University, Virginia as the highlight of ASHA's Annual Gala Celebration. <http://ashaforwomen.org/>

ASHA in its press release says, "The eight women are remarkable. Collectively, they represent the cultural, social, and entrepreneurial spirit of the South Asian community in all its vibrancy. Individually, each performer is an inspiration, displaying a unique vision and interpretation of success."

About Chathuri it says, "Writer Chathuri Nugawela has given a compelling voice to the cultural conflicts of Sri Lankan immigrants in her novel Eastern Waves. Drawing from her own life, she addresses cultural dilemmas and confusion of identity: mother country versus adopted land."

Chathuri's address was very well received by the audience of nearly 300. Chathuri's husband Dr. Jeeva Munasinghe, Children Meth and Iru, Mrs. Sandhani Wijesundara, Avanthi Hulangamuwa Kuruwita, and her husband Hasitha Kuruwita were among the attendees.

Chathuri's speech is given below:

Good Evening ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed a great honor to be here tonight at Asha's Gala amongst all these accomplished women and supporters of Asha. I am elated and at the same time, a bit nervous to say the truth- because I am a writer and not a speaker.

That being said, when I heard of the worthy cause this organization stands for and the hard work the volunteers put in, the least I could do is turn up, I felt. I wrote the book Eastern Waves, Western Shores in the hope of leaving a legacy for my two children, Meth and Iru, who are here with me tonight, to tell them where we came from and who we are, and why I do what I do as a parent.

While my attempt was to educate the new generation of Americans of South Asian origin on the nuances of our culture and heritage, it has also been an eye opening experience for me. This is one such instance- to be contacted by Asha and having the opportunity to be here with you today. I am saddened to hear about the prevalent domestic abuse in our community and my ignorance of it. Having grown up at the feet of a loving father and being married to a caring, nurturing human being, I had taken so much for granted and come to see that abuse need not necessarily be physical, it can also be emotional and psychological.

The interesting factor in all of this is that when you analyze the situation you will see that although women are the most common victims of domestic violence, the power to change the situation to a large extent also lies within the grasp of women. They say that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. So we have a degree of influence on our sons, their attitudes, our daughters and their attitudes. As a mother our duty is to love all children equally, not differentially based on their gender. Not to make our sons feel extra special at the expense of our daughters, not to allow them privileges that we do not afford our daughters, not to let our sons do as they please while we allocate house hold chores to our daughters. Not to let our sons bully their sisters, with or without malice and turn a blind eye and say out loud that boys will be boys. We need to empower our daughters to stand up for themselves, to put the family first, to be the glue that binds it but also refuse to be exploited. We need to learn and teach our children how to find the compassion to be the mother to everyone's child, and not treat our children in law any different than our own. Once our children are married we need to respect that union as separate from our marriage and refrain from uncalled for interference. These situations we create may form the foundation for domestic violence. It is important for mothers to realize that you cannot be replaced by a wife in your sons life, however hard the wife may try. Likewise to educate our daughters that a mother in law is not necessarily an adversary, and to understand her love for her son, and that she cannot replace you in your husbands heart. Both parties need to understand that they have very different roles to play. We also need to teach our sons, that in order to be a good father, first you have to be a good husband so that you could provide a harmonious home to your beloved children.

This is just food for thought that I would like to leave you with. And lastly, I would like to thank a gentleman whom I have had the misfortune to never meet but nonetheless whom I greatly admire, and that would be my father in law, Simon Albert Munasinghe, for the role model he had been to his son, my husband Jeeva, to be the loving man he is. For the way he had treated his wife, my mother in law with respect, which his sons emulate, and the words he had said to my husband, "Treat your wife the way you want your sisters to be treated by their husbands, and take care of your wife or someone else might.

If my daughter was getting beat up by her man, it is not a reflection on how I have raised my kid. It is a reflection on the aggressor's inability to be the human being that he is supposed to be and to step up to the plate and take responsibility to love and care for his wife and children promised. It is OK, in my opinion to welcome your daughter and her family back home with open arms and to nurture them, than let her live a life of fear, of physical, emotional, and sexual harm for the rest of her life, because she does not want to embarrass the PARENTS. Divorce is not a contagious disease, it is not genetical. In these circumstances of violence against family, it is the only answer, and may prove to be the life line. I am not trying to propagate divorce, but I want my daughter to know, god forbid if this ever happens to her that she does not owe me her life or her happiness and it is fine by ME for HER to say enough is enough!

Ladies and Gentlemen, it was a pleasure to be here, and thank you and I wish you the very best in your future endeavors. Last but not least let me leave you with a quote from none other than Mahatma Gandhi, "We must become the change we want to see in the world."

"ASHA for Women" is a 501©(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1989 that support South Asian women and their children who face domestic violence in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. It was one the first South Asian domestic violence organizations to be formed in the United States to cater to the needs of South Asian women who face language, cultural, and social barriers, and fall through the cracks of the domestic violence service system. Their mission is to provide the support that empowers South Asian women to become self-reliant and, live in an abuse free future.

By Sujatha Werake and Avanthi Hulangamuwa Kuruwita



# SRI LANKAN

## Recipes



### Thora malu moju

500 g fish slices  
salt and turmeric  
oil for frying

1 tbs finely chopped garlic  
1 tbs finely chopped ginger  
2 tsp black mustard seeds  
1/2 cup oil  
10 curry leaves  
3 strips pandan leaves  
1 tbs ground cumin  
2 tbs ground coriander  
1 tsp ground fennel (optional)  
1/2 tsp fenugreek seeds  
2 tsp chili powder  
1 tsp turmeric  
1 tsp salt  
1 tbsp sugar

Wash fish slices, dry and rub with salt and turmeric and shallow fry in hot oil until brown and crispy. Set aside on a plate. In container of electric blender combine garlic, ginger, mustard seed and some of the vinegar and grinded to a puree. Heat oil and fry curry leaves and pandan. \*Add coriander, cumin, fennel, fenugreek seeds and fry, stirring until spices are dark but do not allow to burn. Add chilly powder and turmeric and fry for few more minutes. Wash out blender container with remaining vinegar, add to pan with salt and sugar, bring to the boil and add the fish. Turn heat low and simmer for 30 minutes. Cool and store in a bottle-airtight.

\*I like to add big chunks of onions and sliced (lengthwise) green chili and I always use less spices. Try this recipe and tell me how you did.

- **Hashini Mohottala** (copied from a friend **Manori Perera**)



### Cashew nuts curry (Kiri Kaju Maluwa)

Serves 10

#### Ingredients

2 ½ cups of cashew nuts  
1 ½ cups of coconut milk  
½ teaspoon of turmeric powder  
1 teaspoon of roasted curry powder  
¼ teaspoon of red chili powder  
¼ teaspoon of black pepper powder  
Cinnamon ( ½ stick)  
Pandan leaves – 2 Inches (Rampe)  
Chopped onions  
12 curry leaves  
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil  
7 cups of water

#### Method

- Let the cashew nuts soak in 3 cups of water for 1 hour.
- Drain cashew nuts and place them in a pan containing 4 cups of water.
- Add ¼ teaspoon of turmeric powder to the pan and boil for half an hour. Drain again.
- Saute chopped onions in a pan for 3 minutes.
- Add cinnamon, pandanleaves, curry leaves, remaining turmeric powder, chili powder, black pepper powder and roasted curry powder to the pan and fry for 30 seconds.
- Add the coconut milk to the pan and let it boil.
- Add cashew nuts and cook until the coconut milk level reduces to cashew nuts level.
- Serves with rice and other curries.

-- Lahiru Narangamma

"One cannot think well, love well,  
sleep well, if one has not dined well"

Virginia Woolf

*Kids'*

*Corner*

Visit to the flower garden  
Name: Tarika Harini Waters,  
Age: 4 years  
Montessori School of Beaverton



Boat ride with Akki and Nangi  
Name :RavinduKarunaratne  
Age: 4 yrs. 6 months  
Bright Horizons, West-Hartford-CT

"If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales."

—[Albert Einstein](#)



Courtesy: Google images

"If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children"

— Mohandes Ghandhi



Courtesy: Google images

A PUBLICATION OF THE MAHAMAYA GIRLS' COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

HASHINI MOHOTTALA, GAYANI INDRASENA, PRABODANI SAMARAKOON & PRIYANKA JAYAKODY