

*A parfait media publication*

# Monsoon Journal

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## Immigration Minister Chris Alexander re-opens sponsorship programme of Parents and Grandparents

By Siva Sivapragasam

Minister of Immigration Chris Alexander has re-opened the parent and grandparent (PGP) category of family reunification program that had been paused earlier.

New applications will be entertained as of January 2nd, 2014. Application forms, guides and information on how to apply to the new PGP program is now available online.

The program had been paused in 2011 due to the heavy backlog of applications. An alternative program named Parent & Grandparent Super Visa was introduced in its place for long-term visits of parents and grandparents. The new program will

re-open with tighter admission criteria whereby applications will continue to reduce the backlog and also reduce the wait-times for families.

“Our government understands the importance of spending time with family and loved ones, especially during the holiday season. Our government is making improvements to the immigration system so that families can be reunited more quickly.” said Minister Alexander.

Canada has always been praised for managing one of the largest and most generous immigration programs in the world. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) strengthens Canada’s economic, social and cultural prosperity, helping ensure Canadian safety and security.



Monsoon Journal Wishes Everyone a very **HAPPY**

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**Thai PONGAL**

Details on page 23...

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# His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston - Governor General of Canada's New Year's Message



Their Excellencies the Right Honourable David Johnston and Mrs. Sharon Johnston  
Photo: Sgt. Serge Gouin

OTTAWA— As we usher in 2014, I think back on the past year—the challenges we have faced and the joys we have experienced as a country.

My wife, Sharon, and I are thankful to live and work in this country, where so many Canadians are devoted to caring for their fellow citizens.

We have seen Canadians helping others, giving back to the country and the world. These acts of sharing create a virtuous circle, a wonderful reciprocity, in which we find so many participants. They are volunteers and philanthropists, business leaders and military personnel, artists and athletes, friends and neighbours.

They are young and old.

They are strangers helping strangers.

And we have seen, too, how Canadians unite in response to tragedies—in Alberta and in Lac Megantic, for instance.

There is so much good in our country, so many compassionate and generous Canadians, willing to give back. We have seen this.

And yet, we also see so much that we still must do to build a stronger Canada, to provide all Canadians with the chance

to succeed.

Doing so begins with each and every one of us. We all have something to contribute, and I encourage everyone to find out what that could be.

I am now asking Canadians to discover their giving moment, to share their stories and to inspire others to give.

It doesn't matter if your gift is large or small. Or whether you make a cash donation. Or volunteer with an organization. Or help your neighbour to rebuild a fence. Whatever you give—time, talent or money—you are strengthening our culture of generosity and creating your very own giving moment.

And when we add up all the moments throughout this country, when all of us discover what we have to give, the result is a smarter, more caring nation.

The New Year is a blank slate full of possibility. It is a time to look back and rejoice in what we have accomplished. And it is a time to look forward, with hope and optimism.

On behalf of Sharon and my family, we wish all Canadians a very happy and healthy New Year.

David Johnston

## Canadian Economy Continues to Benefit from Exports

The Honourable Ed Fast, Minister of International Trade, on December 27th announced the launch of Canada's State of Trade: Trade and Investment Update 2013, a summary of the key trends and developments in international trade and investment during the past year.

The New report demonstrates the effectiveness of Harper government's ambitious pro-trade plan to open new markets, states a Government of Canada news release.

"Creating new jobs and opportunities for Canadians is our government's number one priority," said Minister Fast. "That's why we have worked hard to open new markets for our world-class exporters around the world. We know that as trade increases, so does our nation's prosperity, which creates jobs and puts more money into the pockets of hard-working Canadians," Minister Ed Fast added.

Detailed data show that as the recovery from global economic challenges continued in 2012, Canada once again proved that it remains one of the most prosperous countries and one of the most stable economies in the world. In particular, Canada's exports helped the country weather the global economic downturn in 2012. During that year, as global exports stagnated, Canada's exports of goods and services actually expanded and helped

grow the economy, illustrating the importance of trade to Canadian jobs, growth and prosperity.

### Quick Facts

-Canada's exports of goods and services grew in a challenging global environment that saw trade stagnate and exports decrease in countries around the world.

-WTO reports that Canada rose from 13th to 12th place in the rankings of the world's leading merchandise exporters, with US\$455 billion in total exports.

-Canada remains the most important trading partner of the United States, ahead of China and Mexico in total trade (16.1 percent of the total).

-Canada's exports to Mexico reached \$5.4 billion in 2012, making Mexico our fifth-largest export destination.

-Canada's total bilateral trade with China continued to increase in 2012, up 7.8 percent from 2011, to reach \$70.1 billion.

-The United Arab Emirates remains Canada's largest export destination in the Middle East and North Africa region, with \$1.5 billion in merchandise exports.

-Energy is Canada's top export commodity with a value of \$115.8 billion.

-In 2012, exports of agricultural and agri-food products expanded by 7.3 percent (up \$3.2 billion), reaching a new peak of \$47.4 billion.

## Ontario Premier celebrates the opening of the newly expanded library at Carleton University

Premier Kathleen Wynne was in Ottawa on December 5, 2013 to celebrate the opening of the newly expanded library at Carleton University.

Ontario provided \$16 million toward the expansion and renovation of the MacOdrum Library, to give more young people the tools they need to succeed and connect with great careers.

This investment is helping create a better environment for students to learn, with additional study space, a new digital media centre and a creative learning space called the Discovery Centre. The space is designed to encourage students and instructors to exchange ideas and work collaboratively.

The library expansion will help promote Ontario as a leader in research and innovation, giving researchers across the country the opportunity to access, collect, and share information. The expanded facility will also benefit people in the community by allowing them to access research materials and provide space for Carleton's expanding continuing education programs.

Supporting postsecondary institutions is part of the government's plan to invest in people, invest in modern infrastructure and support a dynamic and innovative business climate.



Premier Wynne celebrates the opening of the newly expanded MacOdrum Library at Carleton University in Ottawa.  
-pic by: Premier of Ontario Photography

### Quick Facts

-The expansion has doubled seating capacity in the library, creating study space for an additional 1,000 students. It has also improved access for people with disabilities.

-The MacOdrum Library is named in honour of Carleton's second president, Murdoch Maxwell MacOdrum.

-The Ontario government invested \$1.5 million in Lakehead's new Faculty of Law building, and \$21 million in Laurentian's new School of Architecture, which both opened in September 2013.

-Ontario has invested more than \$85 billion in public infrastructure since 2003. (via premier.gov.on.ca)

# from the publisher's desk

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## INDEX

Main News	1
Ads	2
Canada News	3&5
Publisher's Info	4
World News	6-9
Health & Care	10-21
Special Feature	22-39
Business & Finance	40-41
Tribute	42
<b>Community Watch</b>	<b>43-57</b>
Nelson Mandela	43
Accountants (SAAC)	44
Neethan Shan	45
Mixed	46
RBC	47
Children's Home	48
Silver Bells	51
Baha'i Community	52
UN Human Rights	53
DTA	54-57
<b>Regional News</b>	<b>58-61</b>
Waterloo	58&59
Whitby	60
Markham	61
Business & Finance - Chamber	62
Business & Finance - Life 100	63
Ads	64

# "Welcome New Year 2014": Exert the moral responsibility to further brighten the flame

Universally, Nelson Mandela has inevitably become a humanistic embodiment of democracy, freedom, equality and human rights. Mandela's life-altering decisions and actions have formulated his individual moral compass that lives on through his organizational foundation. As implied, social intolerance was one of many key issues that were effectively combated by him within his capacity as a lawyer.

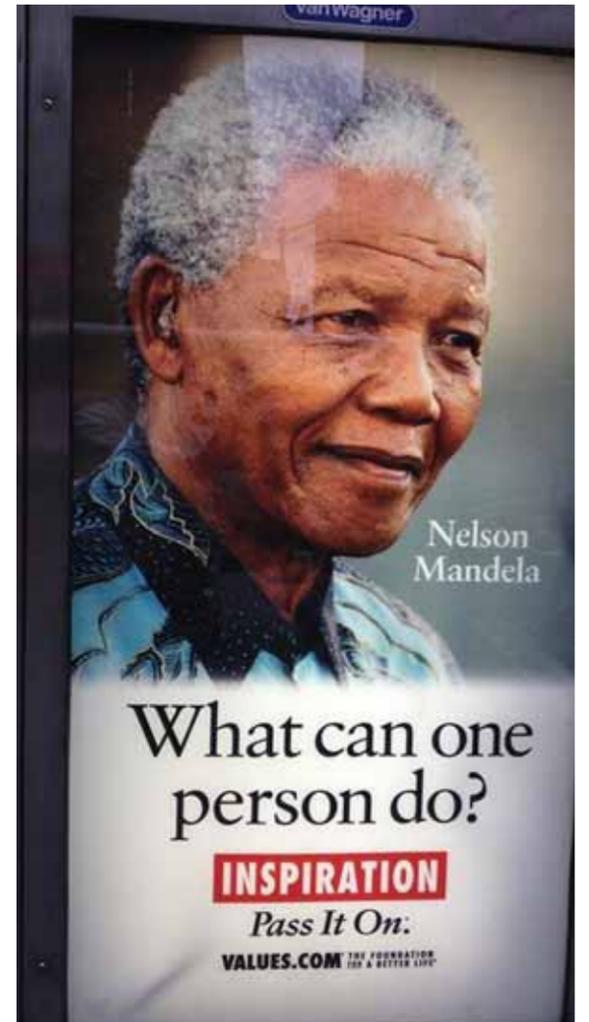
Mandela, known predominantly by his Xhosa name, Madiba has instilled a characterization of humility that has touched all parts of the globe. The term had affectionately denoted Mandela, primarily for his hardened commitment to eradicate the overarching apartheid system that sanctioned racism in South Africa. It was a deeply fragmented system that was amalgamated under the tyrannical belief of excessive white supremacy over all South African races. His prolonged work within the African National Congress had provided the South African with efficient political avenues to divulge and undermine the rampant apartheid cruelties. Anti-apartheid campaign mechanisms mobilized through forms of civil disobedience emphasized Mandela's determination and righteousness.

Arguably, the principled strength of his revolutionary activism was realized by his unethical imprisonment for seemingly disrupting the stability of the brutal system's merits. For nearly 30 years Mandela had been suffering as a prisoner for dissenting on a system that indirectly created tensional divisions between white and black South Africans. However, due to South Africans' and the world's advocacy for equal freedoms in Mandela's vision, his subsequent release ushered in a new dawn of peace and order. Mandela's abilities and relevance soon included him in sufficient consultations that multilaterally ended apartheid in a peaceful manner. Apartheid's demise had soon brokered a sense a doctrinaire of diverse rights and freedoms for all South Africans, regardless of external traits.

Mandela's charismatic qualities coupled with his leadership in a recognizable struggle had granted him a spot in his country's first purely pluralist elections. In which, the event had showcased the newly established voting rights of all South Africans and the former's historic victory as the country's first black president. Domestically, Mandela had tirelessly striven towards sound democratic reconciliation of his once segregated people. Internationally, he maintained an inclination to proliferate his own foundational ideals of equality to all global citizens. Also, he facilitated an international atmosphere that was composed of his alignment with mediation and cooperation. Overall, Nelson Mandela was truly a representational beacon of hope and unity, whose own ideological nature has transcended amongst the world in the pursuit of human progress.

Thank you Madiba.

Nelson Mandela had recently passed away on December 5, 2013 surrounded by loved ones at his home in Johannesburg, South Africa. Though, his death has been denoted by a toll of sadness and despair for the former South African president, his legacy will pragmatically live on through the morally democratic actions of individuals. This is most readily apparent through the goals and activities of



the Nelson Mandela Foundation within his South African homeland. Yet, given the timely connotation around Mandela's passing it delivers a new idealistic approach for the future.

In other words, since 2014 is at the forefront of transitioning today's global society, changing norms of New Year's resolutions can also be visualized. Basically, to honour Nelson Mandela, we should all promote further collaboration and cooperation in building explicitly concrete passages to societal opportunity such as education. In my view, certain incremental actions and choices by every global citizen are necessary to facilitate the elimination of civil barriers and the promotion of comprehensive prosperity.

For example, the Government of Canada has decisively introduced a set of scholarships under Mandela's name. Educationally, these funds are derived from their purpose to financially enable individuals to obtain efficient learning on governance and public policy to ensure sound state developments. Ideally, these elements have always been undertones Mandela's many aspirations for his country and beyond. From Mandela's perspective, "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Studying Nelson Mandela in general tied to extracting an informative attitude are both powerful ways to also sustain his utmost relevance on our societal direction. So for 2014's New Year's resolution we should somehow exert the moral responsibility to further brighten the flame initially lit by Nelson Mandela's contributions.

**Contributed by:**  
Harrish Thirukumaran

“Have a heart that never hardens, a temper that never tires, and a touch that never hurts” - Charles Dickens (1812-1870) Novelist

Printing the Winds of Change around us All lands home, all men kin.

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## If power is still out after the ice storm...



Forester, David Knight, works high above the ground to remove tree branches from overhead wires on Islington, December 23, 2103-Pic: facebook.com/TorontoHydro

As of December 28, power has been restored to approx. 95% of customers affected by the ice storm of December 22. 16,000 customers remain without power as of December 28, Toronto Hydro said in a social media update and added:

**Reminder:** If Toronto Hydro is reporting that your neighbourhood has been restored when your home is still without power, you should do the following:

1) Check to see if your neighbours have power. If they don't, it is likely that more work is to be done on your street.

2) If your home is the only house without electricity, check your electrical panel inside the home to see if the breakers are in the "on" position.

3) Check outside to see if the electrical equipment on your home is damaged or if the service wire is down. If the wire is down, please stay back and contact a licensed ECRA/ESA electrical contractor. A list is available at <http://www.esasafe.com/consumers/contractorlookup/>

4) If you have completed the above and your power is still out, please report your outage to 416-542-8000.

## Québec's population grew by 200 people a day in 2012

Québec's population increased by slightly more than 73 000 people in 2012. This represents an average increase of 200 people per day and corresponds to an annual growth rate of 0.91%, a lower level than that recorded over the preceding four years, but one of the highest levels

since 1990. Québec's population was 8.12 million at the end of 2012, and 8.16 million on July 1, 2013. These are some of the findings in the 2013 edition of Bilan démographique du Québec, published by the Institut de la statistique du Québec.

- (gouv.qc.ca)

## A portrait of the health and needs of Québec seniors: the first results of a vast survey done in 2010-2011

In Québec, 84% of people 65 and over who do not live in an institution said they have a chronic health problem, 57% said they have a disability, and 52% have a chronic health problem and a disability. Nonetheless, the majority of Québec seniors consider themselves in excellent or

very good health compared with people their age. These first results are drawn from a statistical report entitled Utilisation des services de santé et des services sociaux par les personnes de 65 ans et plus, published today by the Institut de la statistique du Québec. - (gouv.qc.ca)

## Canada needs a national plan to deal with dementia

Canada is facing a looming crisis in the number of people affected with dementia—so New Democrats are calling on the government to develop a pan-Canadian strategy to deal with the disorder, a press release by NDP said.

"G8 countries will hold a special summit on dementia on December 11 and Canada will be one of the few countries at the summit without a national dementia plan," said NDP MP Claude Gravelle (Nickel Belt). "Canadians deserve better and I call on the government to support my bill C-356 to develop a national plan on dementia."

Gravelle was joined by the Ottawa and Renfrew Alzheimer Society and Matt Dineen whose partner in her early 40s was recently diagnosed with dementia.

"I have written Health Minister Rona

Ambrose as she prepares for the upcoming special December G8 Summit," said Dineen. "A national dementia strategy is imperative for my family and so many others."

747,000 Canadians live with dementia now. The number is expected to rise to 1.4 billion by 2031. The illness costs the Canadian economy an estimated \$33 billion including millions of hours of unpaid caregiving.

"Canada needs a dementia plan now," said NDP health critic Libby Davies (Vancouver—East). "Claude Gravelle's bill supports The Alzheimer Society's call for a national dementia plan to help reduce the burden of dementia and to support more people with the disease across Canada."

(ndp.ca)

## Harper government helps Canadians with disabilities access jobs Enabling Accessibility Fund - New Workplace Accessibility Stream Announced



The Government of Canada is inviting small businesses and social enterprises to apply for funding through the Enabling Accessibility Fund for projects that will increase accessibility for Canadians with disabilities in workplaces across the country.

The Enabling Accessibility Fund call for proposals, which was launched at the Calgary Chamber of Commerce on December 20, gives eligible small businesses and social enterprises in all provinces and territories the opportunity to submit

proposals until January 20, 2014.

Organizations can receive grants of up to \$50,000 per project. Projects must address the objective of removing barriers, improving accessibility and enabling Canadians with disabilities to participate in and contribute to their local economies. They must support employment opportunities for people with disabilities through construction and renovation activities that will improve accessibility in the workplace.

- CNW



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A round the World

# China Marks Mao's 120th Birthday with Muted Celebrations

China celebrated the 120th anniversary of Mao Zedong's birth Thursday, December 26th with top leaders paying a ceremonial visit to Mao's mausoleum and praising the achievements of the man who founded the People's Republic of China.

While the celebrations were somewhat muted this year, the reverent remembrances were typical for China's Communist Party, which has traditionally turned to the late chairman for legitimacy. Mao remains a potent symbol in China, although analysts say the public has grown more ambivalent about his legacy.

President Xi Jinping called for austere celebrations to mark Mao's birthday, consistent with his push against lavish ceremonies and wasteful public spending. China's media have reported a general scaling down of budgets and events connected with the anniversary's celebrations.

Political scientist David Zweig says the muted celebrations do not mean that the leadership is keeping Mao at arm's length.

"They very much want to be certain that they get a good bounce from this, they want to keep Mao as an important player in the cards that they hold in their hands," he said.

On Thursday, the Communist party's

mouthpiece People's Daily celebrated Mao's success in liberating China's "semi-imperialistic, semi-feudal" society. It also stressed the new leadership is a continuation of Mao's work.

"The mission for generations of Chinese Communists has always been the same: revolution, construction and reform are deeply linked with each other in history," the commentary read, "One development is accomplished on the basis of the one that came before."

On Mao's errors, Chinese leaders have long embraced the view that there were missteps in the country's path towards a communist society. In the 1980's former leader Deng Xiaoping's remarked that Mao was seven parts right, and only three parts wrong. That evaluation still holds for many Chinese historians as well as the public.

In Thursday's speech, Xi Jinping appeared to reference that view by saying that in evaluating a country's history, one needs to consider the social conditions of the time.

"We cannot judge those people who came before us by the current conditions and the level of knowledge and development we have today. We also cannot expect from them the achievements only obtainable by later generations," Xinhua quoted Xi as saying.

Critics say that such assessments do

not take into account the most negative effects of some of Mao's campaigns, which have been largely forgotten by China's official historiography.

Among the most controversial policies were Mao's attempts to industrialize the Chinese countryside during the Great Leap Forward, which caused a mass famine and killed tens of million of people.

Ten years later, the cultural revolution threw the nation into a period of communist fervor and spurred a wave of political violence.

"The left and some people within the leadership in China worry that if you spend too much time criticizing Mao for the cultural revolution and the famine that you don't have that many years to glorify him, and therefore his legacy becomes much weaker," says Zweig.

Historian Xu Youyu talks of an ambivalence in contemporary attitudes about Mao.

"From the perspective of intellectuals, more negative things are said about Mao because there is more information out there about certain parts of history," Xu says, "For example the fact that during the great leap forward Mao left more than 30 million people die of starvation is acknowledged by more people now."

But at the same time, Xu says that the passing of time has softened the memories of many who suffered under Mao's



**MAO TSE-TUNG**  
(December 26, 1893 – September 9, 1976)

rule, and for those among them who are seeking political power, celebrating Mao remains advantageous to their goals.

"They are more willing to talk about Mao's contributions because the sufferings are increasingly distant, but the opportunities for power are increasingly numerous," Xu says.

Those who celebrate Mao's record despite a personal history that is more complicated include China's President Xi Jinping, whose father was purged and persecuted during the cultural revolution. Despite that history, Mr. Xi has become known for coining slogans reminiscent of Mao's times, and launching education campaigns that echo Mao's pursuits for ideological purity.

[VOA News]

## US Textile Industry Grows With More Technology and Fewer Workers

By Brian Padden

Burlington, North Carolina - After decades of decline, the U.S. textile and apparel industry is growing again and many factories are competing with low-wage operations in countries like China. In North Carolina, where the textile industry was once



dominant, the industry has reinvented itself using technology but also employing far fewer people than in the past.

Robots do most of the heavy lifting at the National Spinning Company plant in Burlington, North Carolina. This factory dyes over 110,000 kilograms (250,000 pounds) of yarn per week in a variety of colors. The yarn is sent to clothing and upholstery makers both in the U.S. and around the world. Michael Hankensen is one of only two technicians who service the dye producing machines.

"As you see, most of this is extremely heavy, cumbersome, and trying to move it around in the order that these robots do it, it would take an army of men to accomplish what these robots do," said Hankensen.

Technology is helping bridge the wage gap between labor-intensive factories overseas that pay workers only a few dol-

lars a day and this North Carolina plant where about 100 employees make between \$10 and \$20 an hour.

Plant manager Ed Atkins says it's important to limit labor costs but the company must also provide higher quality and better customer service to compete in the global market place.

"We've diversified ourselves, looked for markets that depended on the quick response that you can provide from American-made products, little niche markets. I mean we don't try to compete in the generic cotton business or anything like that, because it's not where our strengths are," said Atkins.

The collapse earlier this year of a garment factory in Bangladesh that killed more than 1,000 workers illustrated the tragic consequences of relying on partners that bring down costs by sacrificing health and safety.

Deborah Wince-Smith, president of

## Sri Lankan born Aruna Amirthanayagam leads US Mission

Aruna Amirthanayagam has been appointed as Deputy Ambassador of the U.S. Mission to the Eastern Caribbean based in Bridgetown, Barbados. Aruna, who studied at St. Joseph College, Colombo obtained an undergraduate degree from Stanford University and a MBA from Cornell University. He has been a Career Diplomat for the last 20 years for the U.S. having served in 6 countries, currently stationed in Bolivia.

He is the son of late Guy Amirthanayagam (Ret. Civil Servant and EX. Deputy High Commissioner to the U.K.) and Indrani Ratnanather and the son-in-law of J.M. Rajaratnam (Chairman: Singer, Sri Lanka) and Rajeswari Muthukumaru



the non-profit Council on Competitiveness, says the future of the textile industry lies in innovation, not low wages.

"Companies and enterprises are really bringing their core activities to where they have a skilled workforce, where they have innovation talent and where they're

actually able to develop the next generation of innovation that drives manufacturing," said Wince-Smith.

With 23 U.S. plants built in the last three years, and exports up over 30 percent, the textile industry is making a comeback in America. (VOA News)



# Study: Fathers Need to Eat Healthy Before Conceiving

While most people understand the importance of a pregnant mother's diet on the health of the baby, new research says the father's diet before conception is also important.

Researchers at the McGill University in Canada focused on vitamin B9, also called folate, which is found in green leafy vegetables, cereals, fruit and meats. It is well known that in order to prevent miscarriages and birth defects mothers need to get adequate amounts of folate in their diet.

The McGill research shows that the father's folate levels may be just as important to the development and health of their offspring as the mother's, and therefore prospective fathers should also pay attention to their lifestyle and diet.

"Despite the fact that folic acid is now added to a variety of foods, fathers who are eating high-fat, fast food diets or who are obese may not be able to use or metabolize folate in the same way as those with adequate levels of the vitamin," said McGill researcher Sarah Kimmins. "People who live in the Canadian North or in other parts of the world where there is food insecurity may also be particularly at risk for folate deficiency. And we now know that this information will be passed on from the father to the embryo



with consequences that may be quite serious."

For the study, the researchers used mice, comparing the offspring of fathers with insufficient folate in their diets with the offspring of fathers whose diets contained sufficient levels of the vitamin.

They found that paternal folate deficiency was associated with an increase in birth defects of various kinds, compared to the offspring of mice whose fathers were fed a diet with sufficient folate.

"We were very surprised to see that there was an almost 30 percent increase in birth defects in the litters sired by fathers whose levels of folates were insufficient," said Dr. Romain Lambrot, of McGill's Department of Animal Science, one of the researchers who worked on the study. "We saw some pretty severe skeletal abnormalities that included both cranio-facial and spinal deformities."

The research also showed that there are regions of the sperm epigenome that are sensitive to life experience and particularly to diet. And that this information is in turn transferred to a so-called



epigenomic map that influences development and may also influence metabolism and disease in the offspring in the long-term.

The epigenome is like a switch, which is affected by environmental cues, and is involved in many diseases including cancer and diabetes. The epigenome influences the way that genes are turned on or off, and hence how heritable information gets passed along.

"Our research suggests that fathers

need to think about what they put in their mouths, what they smoke and what they drink and remember they are caretakers of generations to come," said Kimmins. "If all goes as we hope, our next step will be to work with collaborators at a fertility clinic so that we can start assessing the links in men between diet, being overweight and how this information relates to the health of their children."

[VOA News]



**Deepa Balachandran**, B.A. (Hons.), B. Ed., J.D.

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# Tsunami 9 Years Later

**“The people who had, lost. The people who didn’t have, gained.” – “Rich interested parties were busy buying up land from people who had lived there for generations”**

Q&A with Michele Gamburd  
– by Jim Stevenson

On December 26, 2004, a massive undersea earthquake near Sumatra spawned a massive tsunami that devastated coastal areas of the India Ocean, including Sri Lanka. What poured in immediately after was relief aid that produced a sudden tidal wave of changes in social structures.

Michele Ruth Gamburd, Professor and Chair of Anthropology at Portland State University, in the northwestern U.S. state of Oregon, is very familiar with the small village of Naeaagama. Naeaagama is about 80 kilometers south of the capital, Colombo, and where Gamburd conducted years of research. Her latest book, *The Golden Wave*, was a product of her return visit following the tsunami.

Below are excerpts from the interview:

STEVENSON: The tsunami hits, and we have all of this aid pouring into an area that probably was not that wealthy, although tourism certainly brings in a fair bit of money. And then we set up these interesting social dynamics.

GAMBURD: One of the things that the aid did, it artificially inflated social statuses. This particular event brought in a lot of help in the form of new houses, new fishing boats, new bicycles, new sewing machines, pots and pans, and mosquito nets, and clothing, and school books and all things that mark status. All people felt that the survivors of the tsunami deserved help. But they also were a little bit worried that people who didn’t deserve help were getting perhaps a little too much from that relief that came in. There is a poem that I heard in several forms that conveys people’s sense of what happened with the aid. “The people who had, lost. The people who didn’t have, gained.” So it is basically a poem about class, that the middle class people who were fairly well off lost more than they received in compensation. But the poor people who did not have very much received more than they lost. So there is a sense then that everybody ended up “leveled” by the tsunami.

STEVENSON: How was this foreign aid distributed? Was it handled by the NGO’s (non-government organizations) or was the aid given to local authorities who then doled it out?

GAMBURD: That is a really interesting question and one that caused a lot of concern in Sri Lanka. Who is administering this aid and how are they doing it? If you think about it, it is not that easy. There are a lot of well-meaning donors who have things that they want to give, and you have a lot of deserving tsunami survivors who have needs that need to

Dr. Michele R. Gamburd



be leveled. And how do you match that aid, the money or the things to the deserving people. How do you know those are the right people? The NGOs in particular were looking for local intermediaries who could speak the language, who were hopefully politically savvy, who knew the people, and who would keep them from getting ripped off.

STEVENSON: We are now at the anniversary of the tsunami. Next year will mark 10 years since that event. As you have seen it, how has the trajectory of this village changed because of the tsunami and this aid that has poured in, now that we have a little bit of time perspective?

GAMBURD: That is a good question. For most people along the southwest coast, the tsunami is over. Life is returning to normal. I would say though there has been a big change along the coast. In the relief process was they set a 300 meter buffer zone on the southwest coast. A zone where nobody could rebuild. The problem arose however in that it was very difficult to find suitable land. The government of Sri Lanka was going to purchase that land and let it be used for that reconstruction. The land that they could find at an affordable price was inland in spots that were not very desirable. The buffer zone was reduced from 300 meters to 100 meters. Everybody whose house had been within the 300 meter zone were still given a house and land elsewhere. They were not given deeds to that land so they were unable to sell it. So what happened then between the 100 and 300 meter mark was this massive transfer of property. Rich interested parties were busy buying up land from people who had lived there for generations.

STEVENSON: You are based in Oregon, a place where many say a tsunami is possible and could happen there. What do you feel that we learn from what happened in Sri Lanka to apply for preparedness in Oregon, or Sri Lanka or

# Heavy Internet Use May Lead to Addictive Behaviors

Young people who spend a lot of time on the Internet may exhibit classic addiction behaviors, according to new research.

Researchers at Missouri University of Science and Technology, Duke University Medical Center and the Duke Institute of Brain Sciences, tracked the Internet usage of 69 college students over two months. What they found was a correlation between certain types of Internet usage and addictive behaviors.

“About 5 to 10 percent of all Internet users appear to show web dependency, and brain imaging studies show that compulsive Internet use may induce changes in some brain reward pathways that are similar to that seen in drug addiction,” said Dr. P. Murali Doraiswamy, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University Medical Center.

For the study, the students were asked to complete a 20-question survey called the Internet-Related Problem Scale (IRPS). The IRPS measures the level of problem a person is having due to Internet usage, on a scale of 0 to 200.

This scale was developed to identify characteristics of addiction, such as introversion, withdrawal, craving, tolerance and negative life consequences. The survey also captures escapism, ratings of loss of control and reduced time on daily activities.

The researchers also tracked the campus Internet usage of participating students over two months.

They found that the range of IRPS scores among participating students over the two-month period ranged from 30 to 134 on the 200-point scale. The average score was 75.

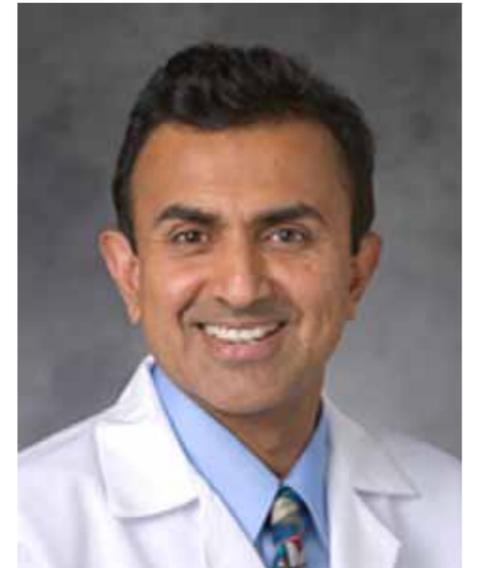
Participants’ total Internet usage ranged from 140 megabytes to 51 gigabytes, with an average of 7 gigabytes, and that use was divided into several categories, including gaming, chatting, downloading, email, browsing and social networking (Facebook and Twitter). The total IRPS scores exhibited the highest correlations with gaming, chatting and browsing, and the lowest with email and social networking.

Classic addiction behaviors were tied to specific Internet activities, according to the researchers. For example, they found that introversion was closely tied to gaming and chatting; craving to gaming, chatting and downloading; and loss of control to gaming.

Students who scored high on the in-

elsewhere?

GAMBURD: I feel that the media, TV and radio, has done a very good job of bringing tsunamis to people’s consciousness here in Oregon and around the globe. The last big one is dated to January 26, 1700. And we know this because that tsunami propagated all the way across the Pacific and hit the coast of Japan, just as Japan’s tsunami of 2011 propagated across the Pacific and hit various spots



Dr. P. Murali Doraiswamy, MD

troversion scale spent 25 percent more time on instant messaging than those who scored low on the scale. Students who reported increased craving on the IRPS downloaded 60 percent more content than those who scored low. Not surprisingly, students who scored high on the IRPS scale spent about 10 percent of their Internet time on gaming, compared to 5 percent for the group that scored low.

“We tend to take drug-related addictions more seriously than if someone were using the Internet as a drug,” says Doraiswamy. “The negative consequences of the Internet may be quite underappreciated.”

According to the researchers, the demand for professional help for a “digital detox” is on the rise, but there is little data to guide diagnosis or care. They believe that results from this study and others may shed light on the potential of the Internet to affect our behavioral and emotional wellness, and the need to establish criteria for normal versus problematic usage in different age groups.

The team cautioned that the current study is exploratory and does not establish a cause and effect relationship between Internet usage and addictive behavior.

They add that most of the students scored a little lower than the mid-point of the scale. Furthermore, students exhibiting problematic Internet usage may also suffer from other mental disorders, a fact that was not examined in this study.

The research, presented Dec. 18 at the IEEE International Conference on Advanced Networks and Telecommunications Systems in Chennai, India.

[VOA News]

on the Oregon and the California coast here in the U.S. The media really brought it home what it means when water in this quantity flows ashore and comes in where it is not welcome. So I think it is a warning to people who live in the run-up zone. I think the other thing that we need to think about is how we involve the survivors in their own rescue.

[VOA News]



# Global Economic Outlook Is Stronger in 2014

By Mil Arcega

The global economy may be entering a new phase as the year draws to a close. New data suggest some of the uncertainty that has characterized much of 2013 appears to be lifting as a new year begins, though economists are cautious. Despite steady improvement, U.S. unemployment remains high, Europe's debt crisis is far from over, and China's economy continues to slow.

As the year 2013 ended, more people are finding work in the United States, the economy is growing at the fastest pace in two years and Congress has a new budget that effectively removes the threat of another costly government shutdown.

Barring another political standoff, small business advocate John Arensmeyer sees an improved business climate in 2014. "Could be a better year than 2013, particularly if we don't see the type of shenanigans we saw with the shutdown."

Across the Pacific, China's economy has slowed after decades of double-digit expansion.

But even with a relatively modest outlook of seven percent growth, international economist Uri Dadush said China continues to exert strong economic influence in the region.

"It's going to be somewhat slower go-

ing forward over the next year or two, but still sufficient to pull a large number of countries along," said Dadush.

But while improving demand is likely to benefit countries from Cambodia to Japan, European economies remain weak.

The European Commission says growth will slow in the 18 nations that use the euro - with unemployment likely to inch higher in the new year.

Despite recent banking reforms, Dadush said tough austerity measures in countries that received bailouts continue to weigh on Europe's economy.

"Italy's in deep trouble, and it's going to take some years even for the Spains and the Portugals and the Irish to come out of the mess," said Dadush.

Lingering questions also remain about the international impact of the U.S. central bank's decision to scale back monetary stimulus. With prices of raw materials likely to fall next year, economists say commodity-dependent countries could see their revenues fall.

"That includes Brazil, but it also includes Turkey, it includes Hungary, it may include Indonesia, that is also commodity-dependent by the way," said Dadush.

In the Middle East, some of the Arab Spring countries, which remain politi-



cally unstable, are expected to experience economic difficulties in 2014.

Pinfan Hong, chief of global economic monitoring at the United Nations, said, "Nevertheless, we believe some improvements are building the momentum for next year. So we expect the world economy to grow by about three percent for 2014."

2014 also bodes well for Africa. After expanding at an annual pace of 4.8 percent in 2013, the African Development Bank projects growth to accelerate to 5.3 percent, bolstered by strong growth in the service sector and increased agricultural and mining activity.

(VOA News)

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# Evolution and Treatment of Type II Diabetes Mellitus

**Richard Jeyaranjan,**  
MD, PhD, FRCPC



Phases of economic transitions of any country or region of the world can be categorized into four. During first phase of famine and pestilence, there were more deaths due

to infections and malnutrition than other conditions.

During the second phase of receding pandemics, as infections were being controlled, people were able to engage in cultivation and preservation of food. Infant mortality and life expectancy started to improve.

During the third phase of man-made diseases, with improving irrigation, cultivation, food preparation, and over-consumption, along with the use of tobacco and alcohol, conditions such as stroke,

heart disease, high blood pressure, and cancer became more prevalent. The common underlying change in the human body as these changes took place was an increase in the level of Insulin as the medical community has come to realize much later. More consumption of food leads to more secretion of insulin to assimilate it.

The fourth phase, being mentioned here only for completeness, involves delayed degenerative diseases such as dementia and arthritis.

Countries with established market economies, emerging market economies, and the developing market economies have entered and passed through the above phases at different periods of time in the history. In 1922, when Banting and Best discovered insulin at the University of Toronto, North America was near the end of second phase of receding pandemics. At that time, there was no effective treatment for what was then the only form of diabetes mellitus which was due to lack of insulin secretion in

the patient's body. This is diagonally opposite to the excess insulin in otherwise healthy people consuming abundance of food as they most do in the present day. In 1936, description of a new form of diabetes in an obese adult who did not lack insulin eventually led to existence of the term Type II Diabetes Mellitus while the original condition without insulin was renamed Type I Diabetes Mellitus. These two conditions are also called insulin independent and insulin dependent diabetes mellitus, respectively.

It is the type II diabetes that is highly prevalent among Asians and increasing in incidence in all populations. It is a condition that is NOT due to lack of insulin. In contrast to type I diabetics, most, if not all, type II diabetes have excess insulin but this insulin is ineffective in their bodies due to obesity and lack of exercise making them insulin resistant. Such high circulating insulin is one of the culprits behind the conditions such as stroke, heart disease, high blood pressure, and even cancer. In the treatment of type II

diabetes, therefore, every effort should be made to minimize further excesses in insulin and insulin resistance by attempts to loose weight by dietary calorie restriction and exercise. Medications that are known to enhance the action of one's own circulating insulin or those capable of blocking the dietary carbohydrates from absorption should be preferred over those that lead further excesses in insulin. It goes without saying that Insulin itself as treatment of type II diabetes should be reserved as the last resort when compelling indications that outweigh the risks exist.

Unfortunately, many diabetics are totally unaware of the above facts. It is important for them to know their options while being treated. While some endocrinologists have argued against all the evidence pointing towards the detrimental effects of excess insulin, all healthcare providers should encourage their patients to be participate in informed clinical decision making.



# Recognizing Autism Spectrum Disorders in Children



**By: Jeavana Sritharan,**  
BHSc, MHSc,  
PhD Student

As of 2012, the prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in Canadians has continued to grow and has become the most common developmental disorder affecting children. With increasing numbers, comes the demand for better services and treatment opportunities. But this rise in autism disorders does not just affect Canada or North America.

In Sri Lanka, it is estimated that over 30,000 children have some form of autism. This number is considered to be an underestimate as there is no appropriate ongoing reporting or screening tools in Sri Lanka for autism. In India, at least 1 in 500 children is affected by autism. These numbers may not seem significant but in comparison to the entire population, the number of Asians and Hispanics with autism disorders has increased.

International studies have estimated that at least 1 in 150-160 children has ASD and boys are 4 times more likely to have it than girls.

Autism disorders are neurological conditions that affect brain growth and development and can affect any age group or ethnic group. The most severe form of ASD is known as autism while other conditions fall along the spectrum and may vary in severity. These disorders are consistent throughout life but signs are recognizable as early as 18 months.

This spectrum of disorders includes: Autism, Asperger Syndrome, Rett's Disorder, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder (CDD), and Pervasive Development Disorder (PDD).

These developmental disorders are housed under the term ASD and are related as they share many common characteristics and signs. The challenge is that these disorders can vary among each person and can range from mild to severe in terms of symptoms. All of these forms are accompanied with difficulties relating to social interaction and communication.

Some early signs of ASD include unresponsiveness, difficulties with social interaction, repetitive behaviours, unusual limited or focused interests, and appearing withdrawn from social engagement.

Other signs of ASD include but are not limited to the following:

- poor understanding of social cues (ex. tone of voice or facial expressions)
- poor eye contact
- no smiling

- limited gestures by age 1
- no single words by 16 months
- cannot combine words by age 2
- does not respond to verbal cues
- delayed language skills
- resists changes or new routines
- repetitiveness with particular words or phrases
- has difficulty interacting with parents, other adults, and children
- strong dislike to cuddling
- showing distress at inappropriate times (ex. Laughing or crying)

These difficulties are recognized early in childhood as parents often notice minor or severe differences in development related to communication or social interaction. Physicians will usually use different standardized tests to make a diagnosis as ASD has no cure so diagnosis and early treatment are imperative to improve the conditions of the child.



## What are the causes of ASD?

This is difficult to determine but researchers believe that genetics play a strong role in these disorders. Aside from genetics, there is speculation concerning pre and post natal development, immune deficiencies, and potential environmental factors.

## How does ASD affect a child in school?

It is possible for many children affected by ASD to attend regular school but this is highly dependent on each child's ability to function. For example, a child with autism may be able to handle high level situations within the school and play environments. However, there are barriers when it comes to social interaction between teachers or other students so this is why providing support and therapy to the child is of utmost importance. Without early treatment there can be additional problems later in life such as the inability to make friends or hold conversations, repetitive use of language, unusual restricted patterns, and the possibility of increased adverse health conditions.

As ASD is a developmental condition, it is also important to understand what ASD is not. It is not contagious, infectious, caused by parenting, or caused by vaccines.

## Understanding myths and stigmas

1. It is the parents fault or the mother's fault during pregnancy. No one is to blame for any developmental conditions as there is no fault towards the parents or mother dur-



ing pregnancy. It has nothing to do with religion, culture, or parenting style. By placing importance on these irrelevant issues, we are taking away importance from the child and the impact ASD has on the child and family.

2. A child will outgrow autism when he/she is older. A child affected by ASD will not improve unless they are treated early on in life. Early intervention is MOST IMPORTANT for children with ASD. If you try to wait it out, the condition will only get worse and it will become very difficult to help the child later on.

3. A child with autism will have a shorter life span. This is absolutely incorrect as a child with any form of ASD can live long and healthy with the appropriate support system and treatment methods.

4. Immunizations cause autism. There is insufficient evidence supporting this meaning that vaccines have not been proven to cause autism. The time vaccines are given to a child (12-18 months) is roughly the same time that parents are able to identify traits of autism and this is purely coincidental due to the window period of development at this young age.

## What is the best treatment method for ASD?

For children, it is clinically proven that Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) is most effective. Therapists who specialize in these forms of interventions work on providing direct and precise instructions to the child using effective methods depending on the child's development condition. The use of speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical education, art or dance therapy are common approaches to allow the child to learn with a unique approach.

Speech Therapists will help to promote effective communication skills. They will work on improving non-verbal communication (using signs, pictures, symbols, etc.), pronunciation, vocabulary, and conversation building. Occupational Therapists are

directed towards helping individuals accomplish daily tasks from bathing or dressing to going to school to accomplishing hobbies or sports. Therapists focusing on behavior analysis will help to increase social behavior like social interaction, play, writing/reading, arithmetic, and the use of language appropriately. These Applied Behaviour Analysis therapies work with the child providing intensive teaching for many hours a day or week.

In some cases, physicians may prescribe medications to treat specific severe symptoms like anxiety or obsessive compulsive conditions but this is dependent on the type of disorder the child has. As children are a vulnerable population, it is better to avoid controversial therapies or interventions and focus on options that have scientific evidence or that are recommended by physicians.

## The beauty of art, music, and dance

With difficulties surrounding communication among the affected children, the positive side is to acknowledge the qualities that are their strengths. Using creative or non-verbal methods of expression, you can help to create a different path for social interaction and communication for the child. Focusing on what the child needs and understanding their unique qualities can make all the difference in improving their condition.

There are many resources for ASD, if you would like additional information please check out Autism Canada at <http://www.autismcanada.org/> or South Asian Autism Awareness Centre at <http://saaac.org/>.

*Jeavana Sritharan is a PhD Student in Medical Science at the University of Toronto. She has a Master's degree in Health Sciences from the University of Ontario Institute of Technology and a Bachelor's degree in Health Sciences from the University of Ottawa. She is currently working with Cancer Care Ontario with the Occupational Cancer Research Centre and is the Co-Founder of the webpage, Health Perspectives. Contact email: [info@healthperspectives.ca](mailto:info@healthperspectives.ca)*

# New Soul delivers big cheque at KIA

The Rouge Valley Health System Foundation was invited to the unveiling of the newest Kia Soul on December 5 at Bessada Kia in Pickering.

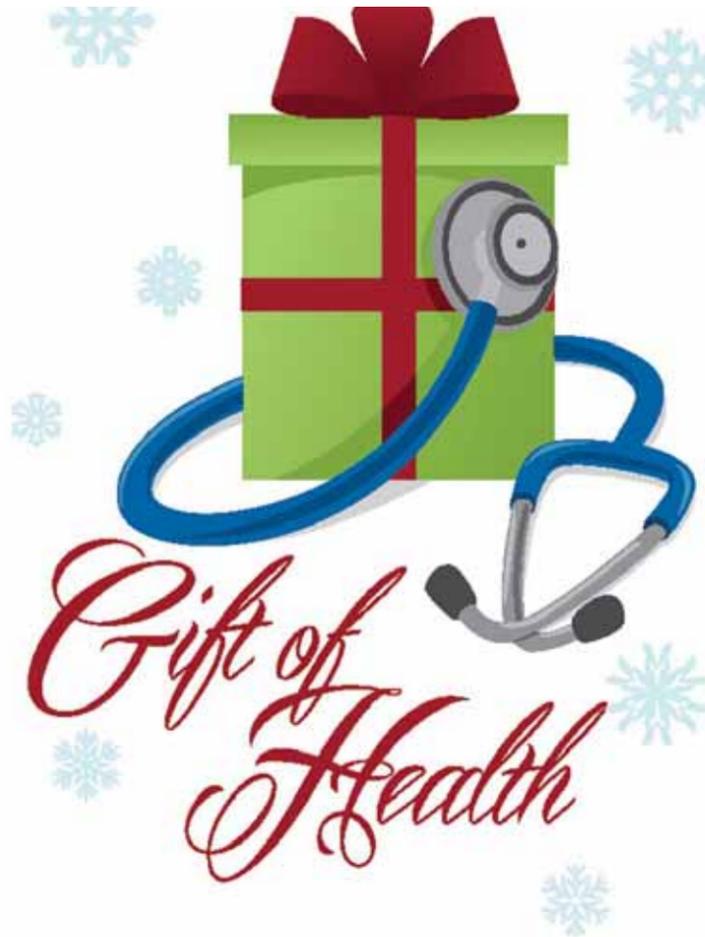
The folks at Bessada Kia chose to use this great occasion as an opportunity to present a \$5,000 donation to the Foundation, to support the best patient experience at Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering hospital.



Tracy, at left, with Maureen, at right, received the donation on behalf of the Foundation, from Misty, Joe and Marcelle, of Bessada Kia



## Thank you for your kind messages!



Through the Gift of Health campaign, the Foundation is posting messages from our donors on Christmas tree poster boards located at both Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering and Rouge Valley Centenary.

We have received so many kind Christmas messages directed to our staff and patients and we are so grateful for the wonderful supporters who send these with their donations. Here are a few more messages that can be seen on the display:

“Seasons Greetings to patients and staff with best wishes for a healthy and peaceful New Year, from Myrna and David.”

“Happy holidays to those who are not able to be home during this time due to work or health! P. Populkas.”

“I’m sure you will be as well cared for at Centenary as I was 10 years ago (angioplasty). Merry Christmas, John S.”

## Beautiful quilts are presents for patients

The Twisted Stitchers Quilt Guild in Ajax delivered handmade quilts for patients at Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering hospital this week.

Kathy and Sue brought in the results of some of the group’s latest efforts, six

beautiful quilts to be given to recovering patients at RVAP. On behalf of the staff and Auxiliary who distribute the quilts to patients, thank you ladies for this generous gift.





# RVC volunteers bring the goods

Centenary's Volunteer Services held a mini-bazaar on December 5 and had exceptional results. The event raised \$2,537.75!



A volunteer stands behind one of the many tables with crafts, knitting and treats available.

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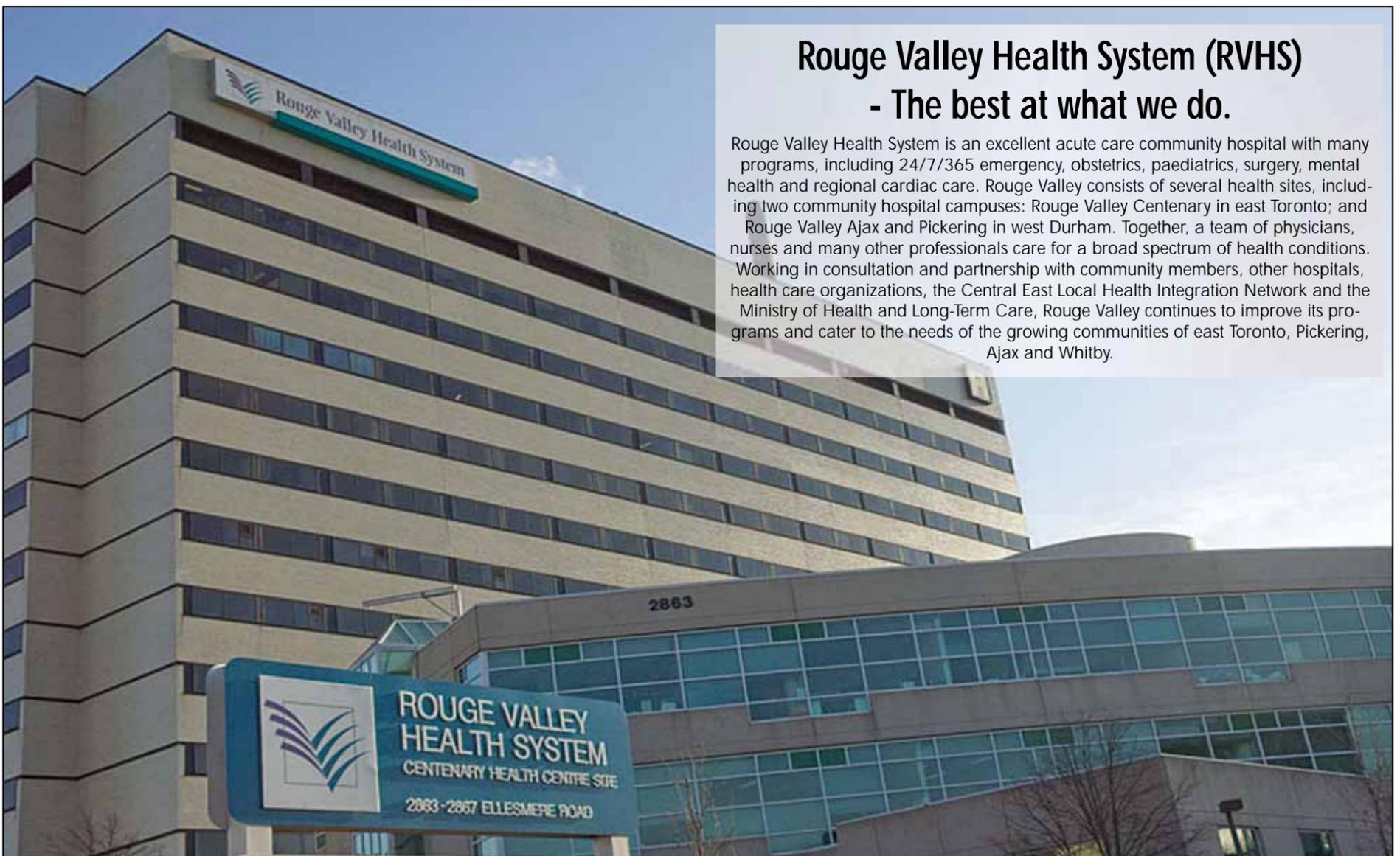
## Equipment donations helping patients get around

In recent months, the Foundation has been contacted by grateful patients and their families wishing to support patients at Rouge Valley Centenary hospital, with equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, and crutches.

As a result, these items have been distributed to staff to provide to patients in Centenary's Chemotherapy and Oncology Clinic and the Emergency Department. The Foundation thanks the Panchal family, in memory of Lina (Lily) Panchal, the Giannou family in memory of Ted Giannou, the Arjmand family, and the Collins family in memory of John and Mary Collins, for helping to make the patient experience the best it can be at Rouge Valley Health System.



Staff at Centenary, in the Chemotherapy and Oncology Clinic above, and Emergency below, were more than happy to receive the donations to provide to their patients.



### Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) - The best at what we do.

Rouge Valley Health System is an excellent acute care community hospital with many programs, including 24/7/365 emergency, obstetrics, paediatrics, surgery, mental health and regional cardiac care. Rouge Valley consists of several health sites, including two community hospital campuses: Rouge Valley Centenary in east Toronto; and Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering in west Durham. Together, a team of physicians, nurses and many other professionals care for a broad spectrum of health conditions. Working in consultation and partnership with community members, other hospitals, health care organizations, the Central East Local Health Integration Network and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Rouge Valley continues to improve its programs and cater to the needs of the growing communities of east Toronto, Pickering, Ajax and Whitby.

**O'Reilly Bonspiel hits the \$100,000 mark!**



The O'Reilly Family

2013 Champions

Thanks to the outstanding dedication and commitment of event organizers,

Leslie O'Reilly and his wonderful family, Providence Healthcare is proud to announce this year's event reached their cumulative goal to raise AN INCREDIBLE \$100,000 in support of the urgent needs of Providence Healthcare! Congratulations to the O'Reilly Family and a heartfelt thanks to the many donors and supporters who contributed to the success of this event over the years.

What an accomplishment – 15 Years and going strong! This year's Bonspiel was a celebration unlike any other. The support and enthusiasm shown by sponsors, donors, players and friends was so amazing. (Click here to see the team scores).

We were humbled by the generosity of all attending and excited to offer guests an exceptionally fun-filled experience. Congratulations to all of the day's play-

ers (and our 2013 champs!) who participated in the spirited games, and to the lucky winners who took home some of the awesome prizes available. A very special thanks to our event sponsors and donors; Mark Russom, Beck Taxi, Brian Bursten...and YOU!

The impact of the funds raised through the O'Reilly Bonspiel will make a positive difference at Providence and in the lives of so many people that need and depend on our continuum of care. All proceeds raised go directly to supporting the areas of urgent need, and will help us provide best-practice, innovative care, hope and healing to our community. On behalf of the Foundation team, we sincerely thank Leslie – and the O'Reilly family – for their tremendous efforts in putting together such a wonderful community event, year after year.

Some of the photos from the event can be seen here.



# HOPE STARTS HERE

Every day at Providence Healthcare, we dedicate ourselves to providing compassionate, transformative care to patients and families who count on us – to comfort them in their journey, help them return to the lives they love, or look forward to better days ahead.

Every positive outcome begins with one positive step, one reason for hope. That hope starts here. It starts with you.

**HOPE STARTS HERE AT-A-GLANCE**

**PROVIDENCE HAS THE SOLUTION**

Providence Healthcare Foundation will support three urgent priorities, including:

**TRANSFORMATION BY DESIGN**

Unique rehab spaces ensure patients live the philosophy of rehab, everywhere, always, one patient at a time

Innovative process changes through the eyes of our patients and staff

Those recovering from stroke and other illnesses relearn practical skills in a home-like setting, including cooking, ironing and cognitive rehab, such as creating a grocery list

Through rehabilitation and education, Providence helps people find the courage, confidence and motivation to recover, return home sooner and safely

**PALLIATIVE CARE RE-DEFINED**

The current traditional Hospital unit does not match the extraordinary care or reflect best practices for this specialized, end-of-life care

Remodeled program will be home-like, tranquil and celebrate life

Caregivers will be our focus—more family gathering and overnight space

Private and semi-private rooms will prevail with a private entrance to ensure privacy and dignity from the start of a patient's end-of-life journey

**KNOWLEDGE CENTRE AND EDUCATION FUNDING**

Innovation requires an ability to recruit and retain the most talented staff

'Investing in Our People' is a key priority—it will ensure better outcomes for those who come into our care – now, and into the future

Knowledge Centre will centralize learning, research and ethics functions of

the organization into one location

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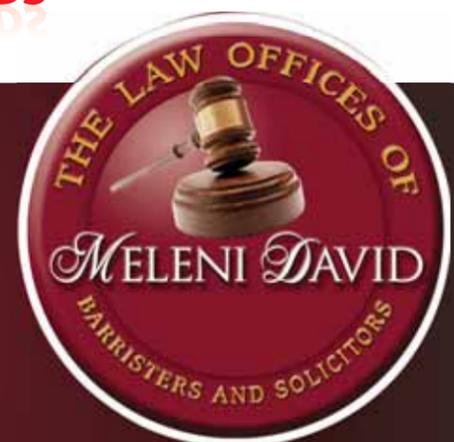
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“The old adage ‘You are what you eat’ is especially true for your teeth,”

Eating right can help you fend off plaque, gum disease, and cavities.

A tooth’s worst enemy is acid – either directly contained in the food and drink, or produced by bacteria that thrive on sugar and convert it to acid. The mouth’s best friends are foods that neutralize acids, provide minerals and vitamins to repair tooth enamel and stimulate saliva.

#### Good foods

1. Water helps wash away food debris and keeps your saliva levels high. Believe it or not, saliva is actually your mouth’s best defense against tooth decay because it contains proteins and minerals that counteract enamel-eating acids. Saliva is made up of 95 percent water, so if you want to avoid unnecessary cavities do yourself a favor and stay hydrated. Water also displaces sugary drinks like soda and sweet flavored waters, which can damage tooth enamel and promote decay.

2. Milk, It’s not just your bones that



# Foods and Dental Health

benefit from milk; your teeth get stronger and healthier when you drink, too, because it contains calcium. Calcium helps protect your teeth against periodontal (gum) disease and keeps your jaw bone strong and healthy. Since women are more likely to get periodontal disease if they don’t absorb enough calcium from their daily diet, it’s especially important for eat and drink plenty of calcium-rich foods. Drinking 1% low-fat or nonfat (skim) milk will help you gain the most nutrients without the extra artery-clogging fat of 2% or whole milk.

3. Apples, carrots and celery, these snacks are known as dental detergents. Crunchy fruits and vegetables increase the flow of cleansing saliva, giving your mouth a fresh feeling. Just be sure the fruits you choose between meals are not high in acid; they can be hard on your tooth enamel.

#### Top of Form

4. Fatty fish like salmon and Atlantic mackerel are one of the few good food sources of vitamin D. Vitamin D is critical for oral health since it allows your body to absorb and use calcium, a nutrient that protects your teeth and gums from disease. The vitamin D found in salmon makes it easier for your teeth and bones to get the full power of calcium from the foods you’re eating.

5. Strawberries are brimming with gum-building vitamin C. Vitamin C is required for production of collagen, a key protein that maintains your gums’ strength and integrity — and strong gums are an integral part of overall oral health. Just a half a cup of fresh strawberries delivers more than 70 percent of the daily value for vitamin C!

**Dr. Shanmugam Sivanesan,**  
President, Toronto East Dental Society  
(TEDS)

6. Oranges help keep your gums healthy by strengthening blood vessels and connective tissue, including the connective tissue that holds your teeth in your jaw. It’s the vitamin C in citrus that is so powerful. Vitamin C also helps reduce inflammation, which may prevent or slow the progression of gingivitis, so make oranges, grapefruits, and other citrus regular features in your fruit bowl!

7. Raw Onion, Try a slice or two of fresh onion on your sandwich. Research at a Korean University showed that raw onions have powerful antibacterial properties. In an experiment, onions wiped out four strains of bacteria that can cause cavities and gum disease. Of course, after eating raw onions you may end up with killer breath!

8. Cashews, Cashew nut shell oil has been shown to have microbe-fighting properties against bacteria that lead to tooth decay. Not only can these nuts help keep your teeth clean, they may also clear your skin — research shows cashew nut shell oil helps to fight one of the bacteria that cause acne.

#### Foods to avoid

1) Carbonated beverages & other drinks - Soft drinks are a perennial target of nutrition police, because they add so much sugar to the national diet. The sugar content — as much as a king-sized candy bar — is bad for both body and teeth. But teeth aren’t safe even for those who stick to diet drinks! Like their sugar-load-

ed versions, artificially sweetened soft drinks contain tooth-eroding acids, such as phosphoric and citric. Even canned iced teas, which normally might be good for teeth, contain flavor-enhancing organic acids that can erode tooth enamel.

2) Not-so-healthy vitamins - Even so-called health drinks are brimming with danger for your teeth. Sports drinks are notoriously acidic and full of sugar. And vitamin waters can contain as much sugar as a candy bar. Chewable vitamins — from multivitamins to large chewable vitamin C tablets — are especially bad, because they contain a concentrated acid that tends to cling to and between teeth.

3) Mouth-drying consumables — Alcoholic beverages or one of the medications that affect salivation, a dry mouth is danger to teeth and gums. Psychiatric medications are among the worst culprits in causing dry mouth. One must take extra care to keep the mouth hydrated by washing with water or fluoridated rinses or mouth hydration solutions.

4) Long-lasting and sticky sweets - Caramels and other sugary sweets are bad for teeth. It’s not just the sugar, though; it’s how long the teeth are exposed to sugar. So while those caramels stick and cling tenaciously to tooth surfaces and crevices, hard candies and lollipops are also very bad; they’re designed for a long, leisurely suck. This principle applies to any sweets, from candy to sweet drinks —sugar should stay in the mouth as briefly as possible.

5) Dried fruits — While fresh grapes and plums are considered “good” foods, if they are dried, they go from hero to villain. Although often touted as healthy snacks, dried fruits like raisins, prunes and apricots, are similar to caramels.

Already sweet when fresh, their sugars are highly concentrated as the water is dried away, and their gummy texture can cling to teeth as much as gooey candy. And worse, the fruit is packed with non-soluble cellulose fiber, which can bind and trap sugars on and around the tooth, making it worse than candy.

6) Starchy foods - Many starchy foods, including white bread, potato chips and French fries and al dente pasta, can easily become lodged between teeth and in crevices. While they may not necessarily taste sweet, the starches can begin converting to sugar almost immediately, not only by the bacteria, but also by the pre-digestive process that begins in the mouth through the enzymes in saliva.

7) High-acid foods and drinks - Citrus fruits and drinks contain powerful citric acid — in fact, such juice is often used as a cleaning agent. While oranges, lemons and grapefruit can be a healthy part of the diet, they should be consumed quickly, preferably as part of a meal, and the teeth should be rinsed afterward. Sucking on citrus fruits should be avoided; this especially applies to the “home remedy” practice sucking lemon wedges for tooth-whitening.

“Brushing is recommended after every meal. However there is an exception; if one has just eaten or drunk an acidic food or beverage, they should rinse with plain water to clear the mouth, and then wait at least half an hour before brushing. After the acid bath, tooth enamel is more vulnerable to damage. Waiting a while gives saliva a chance to re-mineralize the tooth so the brushing doesn’t worsen the damage”

# Nurse went above and beyond to provide excellent care

It wasn't just the care itself, but how it was delivered that made a big difference for Alfonsina (Flo) Germano when she visited The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) for a panectomy this past fall.

Flo's one-night stay turned into two at the hospital's General campus, due to some follow-up care after her surgery, and she began to get a little anxious. However, the compassion she received from a nurse she met on her second night, Katrina, alleviated her fears and provided comfort.

"She provided such incredible care for me," says Flo. "I was scared, but she explained everything that was happening so I could understand. She went above and beyond to help me feel better."

Flo added, that Katrina always had a smile on her face no matter how busy she was and always asked how she was doing or feeling.

"It was like having an angel in the room," she says.

Katrina provided such an outstanding care experience for Flo that Flo wanted to take the time to write to the hospital and commend her for her efforts.

"Patients are in pain and nurses do what they have to do, but the way Katrina cared for us was remarkable," says Flo. "It's so important to recognize the good work, not just the complaints."

She also wanted to mention Dr. Narayanan Nandagopal who performed her surgery, stating that she specifically came to see him because she had heard such great reviews.



Alfonsina (Flo) Germano, visited TSH for a panectomy and was both impressed and grateful for the outstanding care she received from her nurse.

## Compassion of TSH Surgeon a life changing experience for patient



Radica Bhawani-Clatworthy had never been a patient in hospital before. So when the Scarborough senior learned she had to have emergency surgery to remove her gallbladder this past May, she was understandably scared and nervous. But some simple acts of reassurance and compassion from surgeon Dr. Saul Mandelbaum made all the difference in getting her through a stressful experience.

On May 27, Radica visited the Emergency Department at the General campus feeling unwell. After some initial testing, she was informed her gallbladder would have to be removed.

"Perhaps for some people this would be no big deal, but by the time I reached the surgical suite, I was quite emotional," explained Radica. "I was afraid I was going to die, but Dr. Mandelbaum came and held my hand and comforted me."

As she was put under anesthesia, Radica remembers Dr. Mandelbaum continuing to reassure her. "He was the last person I saw."

Radica's surgery went well and the long time Scarborough resident says she's feeling much better.

"I don't have the pain I used to and feel like I have a new life," she says. "I have the highest respect for Dr. Mandelbaum and the entire team at The Scarborough Hospital."

## TSH AND RVHS WELCOME CENTRAL EAST LHIN'S FUNDING FOR MERGER PROCESS



On November 27, at their Board of Directors meeting, the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN) Board passed a motion to allocate \$3.8 million in funding for the ongoing merger exploration process between Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) and The Scarborough Hospital (TSH).

The funding approval includes \$1.3 million to reimburse the hospitals for their initial integration planning costs, and up to \$2.5 million to fund the costs for the next phase, which includes due diligence, integration planning activities and stakeholder engagement.

"The Central East LHIN's support is good news for our communities and for our two hospital corporations," said Joan Wideman, Board Chair, RVHS. "This provides us with the opportunity to move to the due diligence phase of this process."

"We will continue to inform and engage our engage our communities throughout the process."

"We are pleased with the participation of our staff, physicians, and our communities," commented Stephen Smith, Board Chair, TSH, "and we extend our appreciation to the Central East LHIN for their support in the

process and for providing us the means to forge ahead with next steps."

In early November, the Boards of Directors of the two hospital corporations approved, in principle, proceeding to the next steps toward a merger. That was followed on November 27 by a public endorsement of a merger by physician leaders and associations practicing at the two hospital corporations.

With the decision by the Central East LHIN to provide one-time funding for the next phase of integration work, the next steps will involve financial and legal due diligence, governance planning activities, and ongoing stakeholder engagement.

The next phase is expected to be completed over the next 60 to 90 days, at which time the two hospital Boards will reconvene to make a final decision as to whether or not to proceed with a merger. At that time, the Boards will consider the outcome of the due diligence, stakeholder input, level of financial support secured, and the status of the capital planning grants for facilities renewal.

Should the hospitals recommend proceeding with a merger, the matter would be considered by the Central East LHIN Board and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

# Berry Merry Christmas



It was a Berry Merry Christmas in The Scarborough Hospital's paediatric clinics on December 20 as staff from the Scarborough Mirror visited with stuffed animals for the for the children and babies spending time on the unit over the holidays.

## TSH LABORATORY SERVICES ACHIEVES HIGH PROVINCIAL ACCREDITATION SCORE

Following on the heels of The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) attaining Exemplary Standing by Accreditation Canada, the hospital's Laboratory Services also scored high in standards set out by the Ontario Laboratory Accreditation (OLA).

"We averaged 95 per cent across both campuses during our recent accreditation, up from 92 per cent four years ago," explains Petra Sheldrake, Patient Care Director, Laboratory Services, TSH. "OLA reviews up to 500 requirements in our labs, and it's a vigorous review that looks at safety, the lab information system, point-of-care testing, test validation and accuracy, to name a few. We're really put 'under the microscope.'"

OLA sent six assessors to review TSH's Laboratory Services at both the Birchmount and General campuses over a four-day period. As a comparison, Accreditation Canada sent five assessors for five days to review the entire hospital last year.

"One of the requirements is that we conduct internal audits every two years and self-assessments during alternate years, so our 'preparation' for accreditation is really an ongoing process," Petra adds. "Right before



accreditation, though, we go through all of our requirements to ensure we are meeting them."

Dr. Dhun Noria, Medical Director of Laboratory Services, says the accreditation results point to the excellent teamwork of the lab staff.

"I am proud of our staff, their education and enthusiasm, and our state-of-the-art equipment," Dr. Noria says. "Accreditation is so encompassing; with six assessors spending four full days in our two labs. You can imagine how thorough, how intense it is."

### About TSH

Situated in one of the most diverse communities in Canada, The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) delivers compassionate, patient-centred care at two hospital campuses (Birchmount and General) and five satellite sites. TSH is a regional centre for dialysis and is renowned for its mental health, orthopaedic surgery, paediatrics, chronic disease prevention and management, and cancer care programs. Affiliated with the University of Toronto, TSH is also a referral centre for vascular surgery, pacemakers and cataract surgery.

# Dyversity Communications wins 15 awards in a record-breaking year!



Display of all the awards won by Dyversity Communications



Albert With Ontario Award

The buzz of excitement is high at Dyversity Communications Inc., the leading multicultural agency in Canada. On November 7, 2013, its President & CEO, Albert Yue was on stage receiving the Ontario Award for Leadership in Immigrant Employment from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. This award honours outstanding employers, “champions of immigrant success”... whose “hiring practices, innovation and inclusive business culture pave the way for greater economic growth” by helping “businesses in Ontario grow and succeed on a local and global level.” It was also the 15th award the agency has bagged in 2013.

With the close of the year still a little way off, Dyversity is celebrating a rich haul of 14 awards for creative and marketing excellence in 2013. This award count includes a gold, 2 silver and 2 bronze awards at the Summit International Awards (SIA), three 1st Place and three 2nd Place awards at the NAMIC Excellence in Multicultural Marketing Awards (EMMA), 2 Silvers at the Mark Awards (which recognizes the best in class work in the cable and entertainment world), and a Cresta Finalist. The wins are across categories such as integrated multimedia, direct mail, print, collateral and online. It includes work for

Rogers Communications, Hyundai, and self-promotion work for Dyversity.

As the agency gears up to enter its 21st year, Albert Yue explains his vision, “I have always believed that newcomer professionals are valuable assets. As an immigrant myself, I established Dyversity two decades ago, to harness this international talent pool, using it to connect Canadian and global brands with the ever growing Canadian ethnic market. From a small team, Dyversity is today the leading multicultural agency in Canada, employing more than 45 professionals, both Chinese and South Asian, in its strategy, creative, media and PR divisions. All are first generation, each talented, with the hunger to succeed and build a great future in Canada.”

The future is exhilarating for Dyversity which is poised to take the burgeoning multicultural market to the next level, growing the business for its impressive client list of blue chip names like RBC Royal Bank, Rogers, Unilever, Hyundai, Pepsi, Tridel, Smuckers, Ontario Lottery and Gaming (OLG), and Federal Express (FedEx), to name a few.

As we herald a new year, the agency looks forward to an even more luminous year in 2014.



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- Nursing Assistant



Available at Markham & Toronto Campuses

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# Thai Pongal: The charming festival of Thanksgiving

by K. Thirukumarar

Tamil month of 'Thai', falling on January 14th or 15th is Pongal day, the Tamil Thanksgiving Day celebrating sun, rain, farm cattle and ushering in pureness and prosperity.

In Sri Lanka, Thai Pongal is celebrated on Jan 14th in 2014, in accordance with the Tamil almanac.

Thai harvest celebration and thanksgiving are marked by the spillover of the traditional sweet rice cookout and everything good in abundance to follow in the year it joyously indicates.

Celebrated Philosopher-Poet Thiru-

valluvar says in the first Kural ~ couplet, under Part I ~ Virtue (1.1.1 The Praise of God),

"As the letter A is the first of all letters, so the eternal God is first in the world". (Translated by Rev. G.U. Pope)

("Agara Muthala elluththellam Athi pakavan muthatre ulagu")

On Thai Pongal Day, the Sun is the celebrated Athi pakavan, the eternal God.

The farmers' markets around towns and villages bustle with activity during days preceding Thai Pongal. The bountiful harvests parade the markets, and the final day the market convenes prior to Pongal known as Pongal Santhai (Pongal market) especially lavishes in prosperous sentiments.

Thai Pongal is extremely popular with children.

The legendary Kuzhandai Kavignar Azha Valliappa, (1922-1989) a pioneer known for dedicated work of children's literature in Tamil, wrote the following poem about Pongal in his collection of poetry for children, Malarum Ullam (Blossoming minds):

The poem brings out the charm in preparing for and celebrating Pongal festivities, and roughly translates as follows:

*Walls newly painted  
floors neatly polished*

*Day break shower  
Lamp within flicker*



Poem by Kuzhandai Kavignar Azha Valliappa



Whole Foods Market Mission statement: A fitting testimony of "Pongal" sentiments

*Garner decorated crock  
Dazzle around turmeric*

*Crock atop stove  
Milk therein pour*

*Foaming milk spillovers  
Greetings galore 'Pongal 'o Pongal' \**

*Offer almighty rice  
Coconut sugarcane feast*

*Together we eat  
Singing dancing joyously*

\* Greeting on Pongal day saying "Pongal 'o Pongal" signifies the abundance of milk foam spillover, from the clay pot and other vessels that are used to make the sweet rice – Pongal, as sign of prosperity and happiness.

'Thai paves the way for good things to follow', is a Tamil proverb.

Thai Pongal marks the first day of the Tamil month January; it is also the celebrated Tamil month for weddings, lasting introductions to eternal friendships and love.

## Special Day throughout South Asia



Festivities on this day in January are celebrated in most of South Asia with some regional variations. It is known by different names and celebrated with varied customs in respective parts of the countries in the region.

In India it is known by different regional names:

(1) Makar Sankranti: Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Odisha, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal (2) Uttarayan: Gujarat and Rajasthan Maghi: Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab (3) Lohri: Punjab

(3) Pongal: Tamil Nadu (4) Magh Bihu or Bhogali Bihu: Assam Valley (5) Shishur Saenkraat: Kashmir Valley (6) Khichdi: Uttar Pradesh and western Bihar (7) Makara Sankramana: Karnataka (8) Makara Sankramanam: Andhra Pradesh

In other countries too the day is celebrated but under different names and in various ways:

(1) Nepal: Maghe Sankranti - Tharu people: Maghi Other people: Maghe Sankranti or Maghe Sakrati (2) Thailand: Songkran (3) Laos: Pi Ma Lao (4) Myanmar: Thingyan (5) Cambodia: Moha Sangkran (Source: Wikipedia)

## TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH

Tamil Heritage Month initiative, takes place during the month of January in many cities across Canada as well as in a few cities around the world. Just in the five years of existence, the initiative has grown tremendously with formal recognition from various levels of government and institutions in Canada.





# SADHGURU:

Sadhguru speaks about what kundalini is, and how it can be dangerous if one approaches it irresponsibly. He also speaks of yoga, which is a scientific method of raising the kundalini.

## Sadhguru:

In the evolution of the body, the monkey is very close to you. In the evolution of the self, the crow, the cow and the snake are held as very close to the human form. Because of this, even today in India, if any one of these three animals die, traditional people still give them a funeral. In this culture, it was always said that you should not kill any of these animals. In case they die somehow, people actually give them a funeral like they would for a human being, but on a smaller scale because with just a little more evolution, these animals would be like you.

Kundalini is symbolized as a snake because a coiled-up snake is so hard to see unless it moves.

In the yogic culture, the snake is a symbolism for kundalini – the unmanifest energy within you. The nature of kundalini is such that when it is still, you do not even know it exists. Only when it moves, you realize there is so much power within you. Till it moves it is almost non-existent. Because of this, kundalini is symbolized as a snake because a coiled-up snake is so hard to see unless it moves. Similarly, you do not see this coiled-up energy unless it moves. If your kundalini is aroused, miraculous things that you cannot believe possible will happen with you. An unleashing of a completely new level of energy begins and your body and everything behaves in a completely different way.

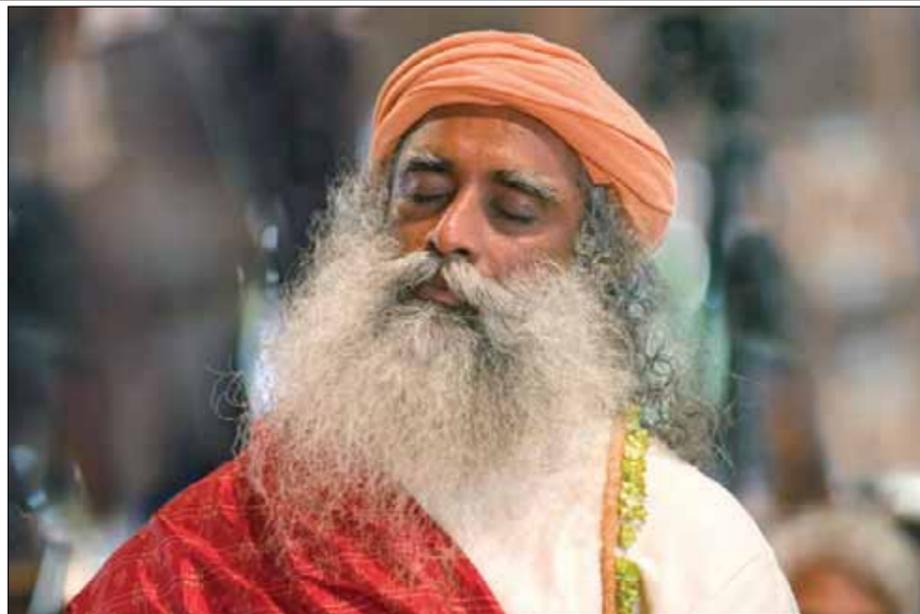
Heightened states of energy are also heightened states of perception. The whole yogic system is aimed only towards enhancing your perception. A spiritual process essentially means just that – to enhance your perception because you know only what you perceive. This is the reason for the symbolism of Shiva and a snake. It indicates that his energies have reached the peak. His energies have reached the top of his head and so his third eye has opened.

### The Third Eye

The third eye does not mean someone's forehead has cracked and something came out. It simply means another dimension of perception has opened up. The two eyes can see only that which is physical. If I just cover them with my hand, they cannot look beyond that. That is how limited they are. If the third eye has opened, it means another dimension of perception which is inward looking, which looks at life completely differently, has opened up and everything that can be perceived is perceived.

If the necessary supportive atmosphere is not there, simply attempting to raise kundalini could be very irresponsible and dangerous.

Nowadays, a lot of books and yoga studios talk about Kundalini Yoga though they don't know anything about it. Even to utter the word "kundalini" we always bring a sense of reverence and then utter the word because it is so enormous. If you have to activate the kundalini, the necessary preparation in your body, mind and emotion should happen, because if you pump energy into a system which is not ready for that kind of voltage or volume, things will fuse out.



**Sadhguru Vasudev is a realized master, yogi and mystic, who has founded Isha Foundation, an international public service organization that strives for ultimate human well-being. For world-wide program information, visit [www.ishafoundation.org](http://www.ishafoundation.org)**



So many people have come to me who have lost their mental balance and physical capabilities because they tried to do kundalini yoga without the necessary guidance and assistance. If the necessary supportive atmosphere is not there, simply attempting to raise kundalini could be very irresponsible and dangerous.

### Energy has no discretion

This doesn't mean there is something wrong with Kundalini Yoga. It is a very fantastic process but it needs to be done properly because energy has no discretion of its own. You can make your life out of it or you can burn your life out of it. Electricity is making our life. But if you stick your little finger into it, you know what will happen! Energy has no discretion. How you use it is how it is. Kundalini is also like that. You are using it right now but in a minimal way. If you maximize it you can raise beyond your limitations of existence. All yoga in one way is towards that but Kundalini Yoga is particularly towards that. In fact, all life is towards that. In some way, people want to experience life more intensely than they are experiencing it right now. Someone wants to sing, someone else wants to dance, someone wants to drink alcohol, someone else wants to pray – why are they doing all this? They want to experience life more intensely. Everyone is trying to raise their kundalini but they are doing it haphazardly. When you approach it scientifically with a proper method, we say it is yoga.

### Tamil month Margazhi

At the onset of the Tamil month of Margazhi, Sadhguru speaks about the spiritual significance of this time and how we can

make use of it to create balance and stability within ourselves.

The Margazhi brings a natural sense of stability into the system...the effect the Margazhi month has on the human system – it pulls you from the base.

We are at a time of the year which is considered significant for those on the spiritual path. The Tamil month of Margazhi starts from December 16th. At this time of year the planet Earth is closest to the sun. In the northern hemisphere this should have been the hottest month, but it is the coolest because the northern face of the planet is facing away from the sun. The closeness to the sun renders an angle where the sun's rays are diffused as they hit the planet. They fail to warm the earth as they would have if it were a little away. But in terms of the sun's gravity functioning on the planet, right now it is at the highest. January 3rd, 2014 is the day when the planet is closest to the sun, so the maximum pull of the sun's gravity happens at this time. That is the effect the Margazhi month has on the human system – it pulls you from the base.

Margazhi is a time to bring balance and stability to the system. There are practices in the yogic system which have been transmitted into the culture in many different ways. This is a time when men will do what generally women are supposed to do, and vice versa. In Tamil Nadu, men will go on nagarasankeertan; they will sing and practice devotion – which are largely considered feminine. Geometry and masculinity are very directly connected. The feminine always pays maximum significance to an object's color and outer form. The masculine



always sees the geometric base first. In this month, women practice geometry – not on paper, but in front of their homes, drawing geometrical figures or kolams.

Because of a general pull downward, the muladhara (the foundation chakra), and thus the preservative nature of life, become dominant. All life in the northern hemisphere is at its minimum right now. If you plant a seed, the growth will be slowest at this time, and it will not sprout very well. Since the growth is held back by a certain inertia in the life force, this is a time the body can recoup and preserve itself well. Recognizing this, it is still maintained that there are never any marriages in Tamil Nadu during Margazhi. This is not a time for conception. Even grihastas, or householders, practice brahmacharya for this period.

This is also a good time particularly for those suffering from psychological imbalances because the sun's energy is pulling downward, and they can stabilize themselves. In the yogic system, if there is a psychological imbalance, it is always seen as water element going out of control. If you have a tank full of water and shake it, it will slosh. The water element causes various levels of imbalance in a person if the right kind of things are not done with it. Traditionally, in this month, there are various practices to be in touch with water. Generally, people don't want to miss the brahma muhurtam (3:40am, a conducive time for spiritual sadhana). One of the simplest things people do is go into temple ponds at 3:40am to take a dip.

The Margazhi brings a natural sense of stability into the system. There are any number of spiritual seekers who are constantly one step forward, one step backward. This is happening to too many people because there is not enough sadhana towards stabilizing themselves. If you are pulled upward and you are not stable within yourself, it will lead to imbalances. This month is used for stability and the next month, the Thai, is used for mobility. If you have created enough stability within you, only then would you dare to be mobile. This is a time to create balance and stability.

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The greatest psychological discovery of this century is that Self-Esteem and Self-Image are achieved by developing one's personality. Today Psychological educational applications are being implemented as a motivational factor for the development of human resources. This is achieved by employing modern components that contribute to the advancement of human personality.

Personality is the particular combination of emotional, attitudinal and behavioural response patterns of an individual. It includes decision making ability, intelligent thinking, physical appearance etc. The personality of an individual is reflected as the combination of values such as being very active, intelligent thinking, honesty, respecting the rights of others, self control, ability to face difficult situations etc.



S. Pathmanathan, B.A. (Hons) Cey

Revised and translated by

S. Raymond Rajabalan, B.Sc. (Hons) Cey



can be motivated to develop perfect self esteem by constantly encouraging them with positive thoughts, so that the feelings of inferiority complex in them could be gradually eliminated.

Perfect happiness is the primary requirement for developing self-esteem and this in turn provides the power to surmount any form of obstacles. It has been proven that unselfish attitude and self respect ultimately leads to perfect happiness.

In order to learn about self esteem one should like himself. Once an individual

begins to appreciate himself and accepts his self image he should then pay attention in developing socially acceptable characteristics such as proper dress sense, friendly behaviour, ability to interact with others etc. When one develops a favourable opinion of oneself then it will be an easy task to march towards success.

When one considers self image, all aspects of a person including his mind and body should be taken into account. Some are unable to achieve success because they have anxiety disorders while some are constantly plagued by guilt feelings. If

one accepts the simple fact that life is limited but it is also dynamic, one can move forward in life and this is possible only by developing self-esteem.

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology proposed by Abraham Maslow, an American Psychologist in 1943 in a research paper "A Theory of Human Motivation". Maslow subsequently extended the idea to include his observations of humans' innate curiosity. His theories parallel many other theories of human developmental psychology some of which focus on describing the stages of growth in humans. Maslow used the terms Physiological, Safety, Belongingness and Love, Esteem, Self-Actualization and Self-Transcendence needs to describe the pattern that human motivations generally move through.

Maslow studied what he called exem-

# Self-Esteem and Self-Image

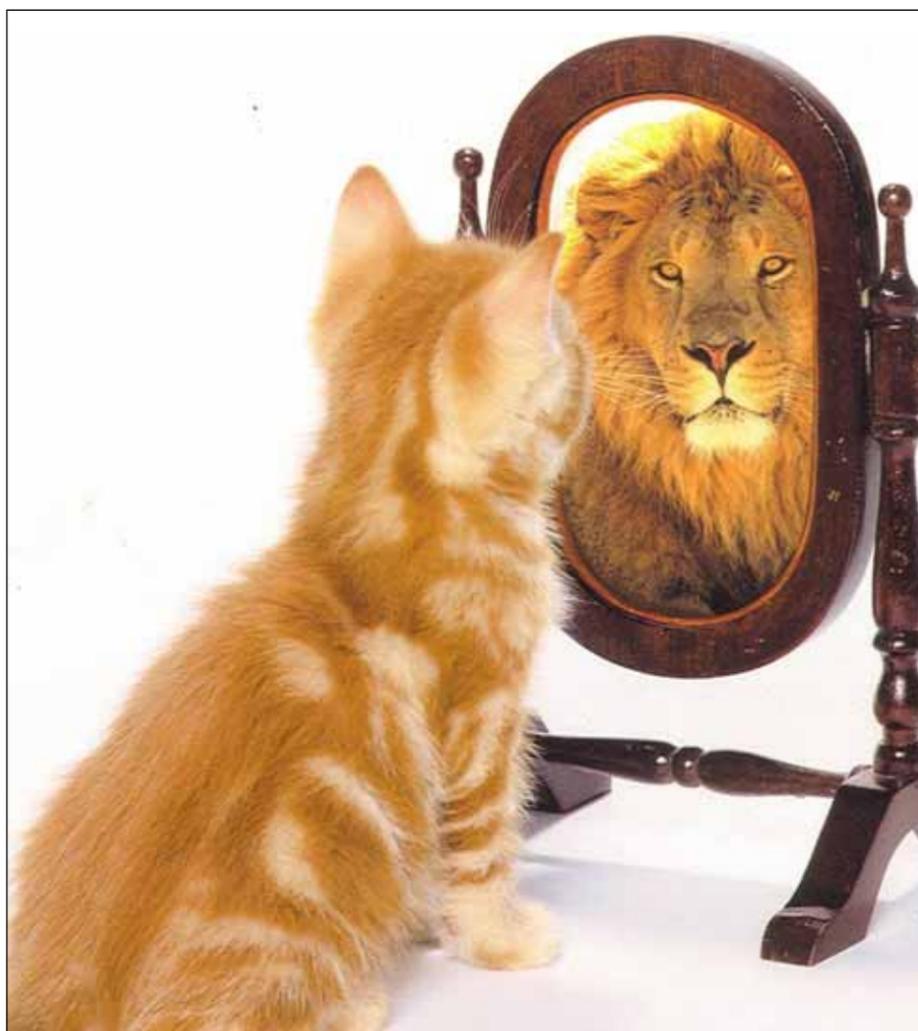
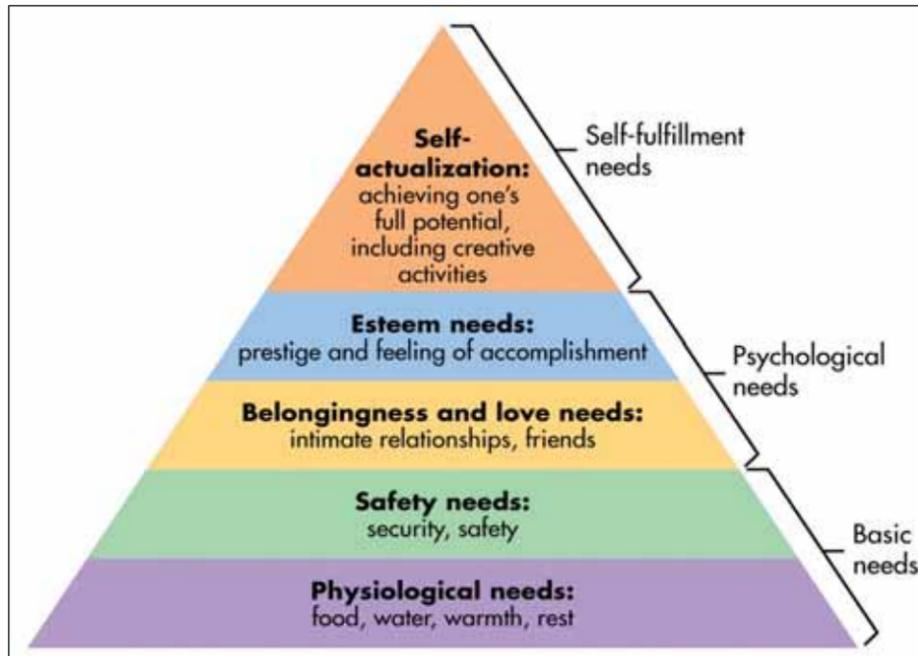
Persons with noble personalities have the ability to differentiate people from problems. They enjoy humanity and have the ability to act constructively. They maintain a noble personal life and avoid trying to find fault in others actions. They take great efforts to be happy and take special care in developing a healthy society.

Different personality theorists have presented their own definitions of the word based on their theoretical positions. Psychologists such as Sigmund Freud, an Australian neurologist and Erik Erikson, a German born American psychoanalyst have proposed various theories regarding human personality.

A person's self-image is the mental picture, generally of a kind that is quite resistant to change, that depicts not only details that are potentially available to objective investigation by others (height, weight, hair color, gender, Intelligent Quotient score etc.), but also items that have been learned by that person about himself or herself, either from personal experiences or by internalizing the judgments of others. A simple definition of a person's self-image is their answer to the question "What do you believe people think about you?"

Self image includes one's profession, personal life, social contacts, friendly behaviour, motivation, success etc. One must choose his own values in order to achieve success and happiness. There are many who are confused regarding their self-worth, self-love, self-respect and self-efficacy. Since each and every one is unique, a knowledge about self esteem is absolutely necessary in order to develop their own abilities.

Every parent attempts to instill confidence in their children and shower them with them with love and affection. However, gradually the children try to distance themselves from their parents due to the influence of a variety of external factors including peer pressure. Consequently various negative factors such as Fear, Feelings of insecurity, unhappiness etc begins to develop among the children though it is not always the case. According to scores of psychologists, the children



plary people such as Albert Einstein, Jane Addams, Eleanor Roosevelt

An interpretation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, represented as a pyramid with the more basic needs at the bottom

Self esteem based on not being selfish, projects a favourable view of one's personality. During many job interviews, questions such as Do you feel that you will succeed in this job? What should you do for others to respect you? Do you often compare yourself with others? Are you able to make decisions on your own? are aimed at the applicants. These questions are designed to judge a person's self esteem. One common question asked from those who apply for higher positions is "What do you believe as the most accurate opinion others think about you?" The answer to such a question is believed to help the employer make a fairly accurate judgment about the self esteem of the prospective job applicant.

Self-schema

The term self-schema refers to the beliefs and ideas people have about themselves. These beliefs are used to guide and organize information processing, especially when the information is significant to the self. Self-schemas are important to a person's overall self-concept.

The term schematic describes having a particular schema for a particular dimension. For instance, a person in a rock band at night would have a "rocker" schema. However, during the day, if he works as a salesperson, he would have a "salesperson" schema during that period of time. Schemas vary according to cultural background and other environmental factors. Once people have developed a schema about themselves, there is a strong tendency for that schema to be maintained by a bias in what they attend to, in what they remember, and in what they are prepared to accept as true about themselves. In other words, the self-schema becomes self-perpetuating.

In general self-esteem and self-image are twin factors that contribute to the overall success of an individual.

# THAIPUSAM – A CELEBRATION OF FAITH AND GRATITUDE



## C. Kamalaharan

Thaipusam, an important festival of the Hindus, falls in the month of 'Thai' (Jan-Feb), according to the Tamil calendar. It is celebrated with gaiety and fervour in India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius, Thailand, Myanmar and in countries where there is a significant presence of the Tamil community. The word Thaipusam is derived by combining the month 'Thai' and the Natchathiram (star), Pusam (Cancer). Thaipusam falling on a 'pournami' (full moon) day, when the moon traverses through the zodiac sign 'katakam' (cancer), is considered auspicious as any activity undertaken on this day results in success.

The significance of Thaipusam according to the Hindu scriptures varies. It is mentioned that it was on this day the Divine 'Vel' (spear) was handed over to Lord Muruga by Goddess Parvathi to fight the demon, Soorapadman and as an expression of gratitude Thaipusam is celebrated to commemorate the slaying of the demon which literally means victory of good over evil. It is also mentioned that it was on this day the curse inflicted upon Lord Muruga by Goddess Parvathi for eavesdropping the 'manthiram' imparted by Lord Siva to Goddess Parvathi, was lifted. There is also a reference to the cosmic dance of Lord Siva that took place on this day.

Thaipusam though celebrated in all Murugan temples, the Batu Caves Subramaniya temple in K.L, Malaysia is the focal point of this festival. The colourful procession with the awe-inspiring 'Kavadi', participated by more than one thousand devotees, is a visual treat. To witness this spectacular event more than one million devotees and thousands of tourists congregate annually from within the country and from abroad. The shouldering of 'Kavadi' is a physical burden through which devotees implore for help from Lord Muruga, to avert a great calamity that awaits them, to lessen the burden of bad 'karma' they themselves have created and beg for pardon for the wrong doings they have committed. Thus the shouldering of Kavadi is a penance, a personal act of purification. 'Kavadi' is a Divine act which must be performed with devotion and humility, not as a means of showing off. In preparation for shouldering the 'Kavadi', a devotee has to lead a life of abstinence and maintain a strict vegetarian diet, well ahead of the festival, mostly a month before.

On the day of the festival some devotees shave their heads prior to performing the 'Kavadi'. Most of them pierce their flesh through the skin, tongue and cheek with a 'Vel' or skewer, while others get their backs pierced and hooked by sharp pointed

hooks to which are fastened cords. As the performer dances and moves forward his movement is held back by a devotee who holds the cords from behind and pulls with force. Some are even hung high up, on to a long flexible wooden frame, fixed to a bullock cart or a tractor. The devotee swings up and down as a fellow devotee stands far behind on the frame and exerts pressure on it. This 'Kavadi' is known

approaches the temple from a distance.

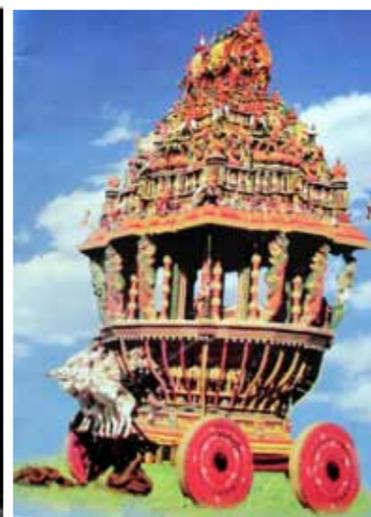
In Sri Lanka Thaipusam is celebrated in all the Murugan temples and in other temples where the idols of Lord Muruga are installed separately. The Thaipusam festival at Inuvil Kandasamy temple is a crowd pulling one. Devotees from neighbouring villages and also from far off places arrive in large number to view the exquisite Mancham which

is the largest and the oldest Mancham not to be seen the like of it anywhere. Specially trained sculptors from Tamil Nadu were brought and the work began in the year 1902. The maiden run took place in 1906. It's an enchanting sight to see the colourfully decorated and illuminated Mancham being drawn at night, with the tinkling of the 1008 small bells fixed all around the Mancham, the group singing of devotional songs and soulful Nathaswaram music. It is said that those days the Mancham was drawn by horses. Beside Thaipusam festival the Mancham is also drawn on the 12th day of the temple's annual festival. This year Thaipusam festival falls on the 17th of January. On this

day by observing the festival with staunch faith and leading a life of abstinence, one's prayers will be answered by Lord Muruga.



The Batu Cave Chariot



The Inuvil Kandasamy Temple Chariot

as 'Paravai Kavadi' (bird kavadi). There are yet others who wear special shoes made of a wooden base with about 60 to 100 nails fixed upright and walk with the sole of the feet resting on the nails. This 'Kavadi' is known as 'mullu mithivadi' (thorn footwear). The piercing of the flesh by the 'Vel' and the hooks and wearing of shoes with upright nails gives the devotee the power of endurance. It is believed that only when the mind is free of material wants and the body is free of physical pleasure, a devotee can undertake this physical task, without experiencing pain. Devotees who shoulder 'Kavadi' with complete faith say that they don't feel the pain as they are in a spiritual and devotional trance which brings them closer to the Lord. The trance is induced by the loud chanting of 'arohara' and singing of devotional songs, the clanging of cymbals and the rhythmic beatings of the drums and other percussion instruments.

The main attraction in the procession besides the 'Kavadi' is the bullock drawn silver 'Mancham' (chariot) which winds its way through the city, along a 15 kilo meter stretch of road for almost 8 hours. Seated majestically on the pedestal in the 'Mancham' is Lord Subramaniyar and His consorts Valli and Theivanai. The procession commences from the Maha Muthumariamman temple, usually before midnight, on the eve of Thaipusam festival and reaches the Batu Caves temple. Devotees who accompany the procession finally climb a flight of 272 steps to reach the sanctum of Lord Subramaniya Swamy and pray.

The 140 feet tall gold-painted, concrete and steel sculptured statue of Lord Muruga with a huge 'Vel' in His right hand, adds beauty to the breathtaking view of the temple and its surroundings as one





## WORDS OF PEACE

# Connection



Built into every human being is the conviction that joy is a possibility, that happiness is a possibility—that we can be fulfilled. We look for that joy in everything we do. Somehow, though, it's hard to hang on to.

"Everything that we do, we do to be content, but we don't make the connection that what we do to be content doesn't bring us contentment," says Prem Rawat, who offers people a way to find a permanent happiness he says lies in the heart of every human being. "Maybe all the things that you do are necessary for whatever reasons, but to accomplish that one objective of real joy, all that isn't going to do it.

"It's like this: A person walks into his home, and turns the light switch on, as is his habit. He turns the light switch on, but the light does not go on.

"What does he do? What do we all do? We turn it off, and then turn it back on again. In fact, I have seen people do it rapidly, as if they think that if they flick the switch faster, that will create the electricity to turn the light on. You can do this all day long, but that bulb isn't going to turn on. If that bulb is blown, all the electricity in the world will not put it together again."

What we need, Mr. Rawat says, is something to help us quit the habit of doing the same things over and over in search of a happiness that never lasts—something that can repair the connection with the source of happiness within us.

"We want to invent a tool that could fix this," he says, "without realizing that an incredible tool has been given to us to make this possibility real. This tool that has been given to us is called life.

"Now, I know that you have heard of life as a river, life as a journey, life as a road. Those analogies are fine, but I'm just saying, consider this—that this life is a tool to accomplish something. This life that you have been given, this existence you have been given, can make something real. Do you want, in your life, to accept that possibility? This is the question that definitely needs to be asked. Not, 'Wouldn't you like to be happy?' Anybody would say, 'Sure!' But are you willing to accept that this life is a tool, and that through this tool, you can accomplish the greatest of all joys?"

Everyone has heard that there are no guarantees in life, but Mr. Rawat says that's not entirely true.

"It is good that you are alive," he says. "It is good that you exist. It is good

to want to be happy, and it is good to be happy, to be content.

"There's no guarantee that there won't be a disaster coming your way. That everything will go according to your plan is uncertain, but for you to be content in the uncertainty can be very certain, because that certainty is not sparked by this world. The source of that certainty that you can be content comes from within inside of you. It's called knowledge of the self—not of your behaviors or your potentials, but knowledge of the self that you are. For that, you need to understand that life is a tool.

How can anyone begin to use this life as a tool to self-knowledge?

"The world's going to say that's the wrong question," Mr. Rawat says, "but the heart's going to say it's a wonderful question. Ask the right person, and there will be an answer. The heart knows when it receives the true answer. How beautiful, how precious is that?"

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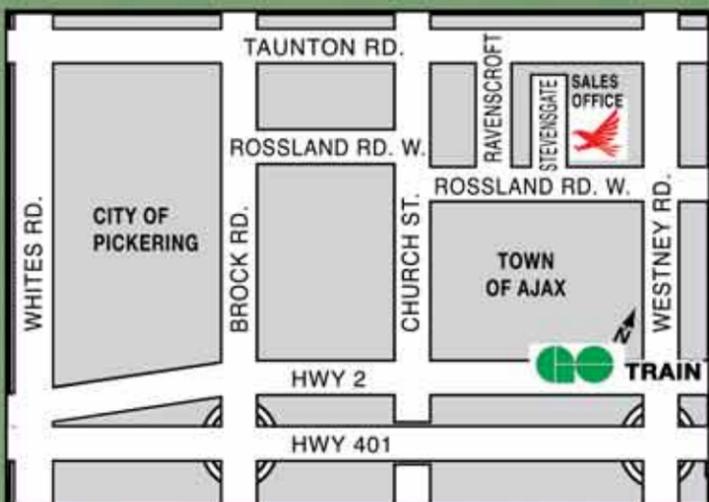


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# What Has Been Achieved from the Namibian Experiences

By Harrish Thirukumaran **Part 6**

Moses Garub

## 'The Kids-Soup Kitchen'

On the last Namibian Sunday, my group and I had volunteered at a local soup kitchen in Katutura called Moses Garube that was organized by man named Samuel Kapepo. It has been built to help feed



Harris with BNC Student (Pic. by Ali)

poor Namibian street children from succumbing to hunger. It was also a way to raise awareness of the continuous plight of today's youth by assisting them directly or indirectly in the community. It is routinely opened and ran on Wednesdays and Sundays. Yet, Wednesday operations had been recently shutdown due to the lack of volunteers. We had worked alongside other international and regular Namibian volunteers where we interacted with one another to understand each other. First off, all cups, plates, and pots had to be properly washed and rinsed for cooking and eating. Dan and I had gathered buckets of water where I had rinsed out multiple plates, bowls, and cups. The kitchen had been preparing cooked rice, chicken, and potatoes for the youngsters. It was like all of us were moving as a human assembly line to clean the dishware and making the food. It really demonstrated how well multiple volunteers can sustain an excellent preparation process.

Once the boiling of rice had gone underway, Kapepo had arranged a large group building type of exercise, where all volunteers including us Canadian volunteers had formed a circle going around and introducing ourselves. Basically, you were to 'loudly' say your name, country of origin and current studies. The activity brought upon a friendly and positive atmosphere among the centre. It was nice to hear about the other volunteer's origins and purposes in Namibia as well, like there was a couple of German volunteers who had been in the country for awhile. There were many local volunteers who I considered to be prosperous in their native home such that they are able to attend high education in colleges in universities. There were some people who were studying accounting and tourism as majors.

The icebreaker had even presented the soup kitchen organizer Kapepo's enthusiastic and easygoing personality, which was joyous to see from him. Ideally, he is seen as an exceptional role model for the children as he is lively but does value proper behavior of all people in addition to the children. His speech had also exemplified the belief that a collective group is heavily required to boost prosperity through providing small assistance to communities. During that day, the amount of contributors had crucially helped to contain hunger in the Katutura community by serving its youth. The idea also went along the lines of guaranteeing social capital formation that is important to handle various differential community interests. I thought it felt family-oriented which also stemmed from Kapepo fondly labeled us as 'brothers and sisters.' I thought it was motivating to be involved with a larger diverse group of volunteers and all aiming to make a difference.

## The Meaning of African Volunteerism

Later on, we were offered to voice our opinions on the common issue of AIDS that has been prevalent in

Namibia and the continent. The main interpretation of the disease is that it is a repetitive cycle flow from numerous social and economic concerns that negatively affects the nation. Overall, most notions had developed that AIDS must be suppressed by gaining insight through many socioeconomic perspectives and topics to realistically deal with the epidemic. That being tied to this phenomenon that it is created from a lack of improvement in certain economic or educational fields. For instance, millions of young men and women can unknowingly contract the disease if they lack the knowledge on preventing it. This being due to inadequate education systems that isn't as prioritized by governments. In addition, economic costs of sufficient education can be exceedingly high based on certain household income statuses. In which, many are deprived of intelligence surrounding prevention of AIDS.

Economically, stagnating job creation and inflation can take a heavy toll on low-income households and unemployed which can stall proper insurance benefits to help sustain a moderate living. Socially, it can place a heavy burden on men and women when applying for beneficial social programs. The worst - case scenario being that of women especially could resort to prostitution to earn income, which increases their chances of getting the disease along with decrease in numbers of women in the population. From AIDS to alcoholism, the basic concept theorized in the discussion is the idea that most political issues must be gradually dealt with based on varying perspectives related to the problem. That to successfully eliminate these problematic affairs you must provide an outlook on contributing to the issues that connects to the main dilemma such as AIDS. The analysis was undoubtedly impactful to hear as it had taught that the African people are just as determined to solve their issues by clearly working together to raise a loud voice towards all individual governments.

## Food is ready

Afterwards, the food was ready to be served soon and all the children had gathered inside the enclosed area where they all sat patiently as everything was being prepared. At this point, Kapepo had firmly expressed his own life teachings to the kids such as knowing when to show respect to others. He also spoke along general ability in safely crossing the busy streets after being allowed to go home. It was curious seeing how he enlisted me and one other Brockmember Annie, in where he had acted out what would happen when you don't look both ways and when you do to cross a street. Though it seems somewhat mature for their ages it was a fundamental aspect to



With the BNC students pic by Dan

learn about daily living. In its own way since most of the youth were stereotypically street kids the basic teaching would also help them safely navigate around their antagonistic surroundings. Next, the children had all kindly organized into two single file lines to wash their hands and obtain the servings.

All the volunteers had pitched in grabbing a few plates and handing them to the grateful children. Their satisfactory meal had composed of rice, chicken and potato stew, and a small bag of chips. Our group

and the others were also offered leftover meals as well. Since being accustomed to being a vegetarian I had plain rice and chips, which was fine with me. This project was an absolute success based on my opinion and Kapepo through seeing all the smiling faces during the lunch. The day was accompanied with nice weather and it was enjoyable to feel integrated in the Namibian community by volunteering for the residents. The sheer inspirational environment from the volunteers, the children, and Kapepo had made the project worthwhile to do again if offered another opportunity.

## BNC - The Lasting Precious Moments

For the last week in Namibia, we had returned to the BNC where our group had prepared to construct a play day on Wednesday as a gift for the outstanding students. In retrospect, they themselves had also arranged a treat for our contributions to the BNC. Before the excitement, we had spent quality time during the first two days back. While planning the extravaganza, a few of my co-volunteers and I had to pre-occupy some of the kids to prevent them of learning of the surprise. So I had spent some more time with Ben along with Alpertino, Denzel, John, and Mae. It was interesting to note that before meeting Mae (pseudonym), MaryBeth had explained she was a bit mentally challenged tied in with being an impulsive kleptomaniac to some degree. However, I had noticed she did not purposely exhibit those qualities and was seen as an entirely friendly person who had a particular talent for drawing. I think she is a goal-oriented individual, as it seemed she desires and pursues art as her pleasure.

Inside the classroom, I had played some board games with Ben and John. We played checkers, which I actually didn't know very well but Ben and John had the courtesy to teach me the rules. They were both engaging games as it had also showed me the impressive amount of skill the two had in making their moves and understanding how to gain an advantage. I had even got good hits on their own checker pieces myself, where I felt proud considering I've never really tried the game. Getting to actually play the game had also taught me how long the game can go which can be exhausting as opponents can repeatedly make the same moves to prevent

themselves from losing pieces. In the end, it was crazy that they both beat me but it comes to show that they have viable intelligence to contemplate a sophisticated game like checkers. The instances had also represented that MaryBeth is doing a fine job in boosting their intellectual capacity to get by in life and not just by athletics. Their profound abilities had even transcended to that of chess, which is far more complicated than checkers.



# Travelling to Africa? of a Student Volunteer

Alongside Denzel and Innocent we had played a bug matching game, which was just as fun as checkers and was more of a leisurely game. Although I haven't mentioned Denzel around this time I was able to spend time with him. It was somewhat rough for him as he was a 15-year-old physically and mentally disabled youth. However, he is an enriching character who embraces many capabilities to thrive off of. His motivational attitude has stemmed from fortunately transitioning durability from a wheelchair to basic walkers where he can actually move just like others around him. It was also comforting to always see a wide smile on his face no matter his current surroundings. During the game, it was amazing to see his capacity to differentiate the cards and clearly identify the same cards to ensure the match. He had won the most games, 2nd to Innocent. Being at 3rd place did not matter to me as it was all about testing the skills the children had possessed. For the remainder before the BNC surprise, I had played a card game called Spot It with Ben, Innocent, and Alpertino, drawings with Ben and Delano, and basketball in the courtyard.

## A Memorable Gift

Soon after, the event was ready to commence and the students had all gathered various chairs from their classrooms and set them up in the playground centre area all in precise rows and columns for everyone to sit and watch the BNC's choir performance show. The event felt very much like an auditorium-styled event in an outdoor setting. The mural of the Namibian flag and world map provided a perfect backdrop for the choir's representative Namibian culture. The choir girls had all dressed up in stylish pink dresses while the guys had dressed with similar pattern pink shirts and black pants.



The 2013 Brock University Namibia Group pic by Dan

They had played a wide array of songs using an African drum instrumental while they were all singing and dancing. It was a delightful performance to watch with many of the songs sounding recognizable from the regular days at the BNC. It was amazing to see how many of the students often sang when they were socializing with each other. Yet, it felt more appreciative to allow them to formally express that passion through a serious well-choreographed ensemble. Their songs had ranged from tunes like "Welcome to Namibia" to "Namibia's finest" all of which contained English and Damara. "Namibia's Finest" would be considered my favorite as there was an excellent tune flowing throughout along with the spontaneous mini duet dances between the boys and girls. I thought this song had really put the performance over the top. The last day at the BNC had definitely concluded on a good note stemmed from the choir extravaganza.

## Play Day: An Everlasting Influence on the BNC

On Wednesday, we had setup the festivities for the play day for the BNC kids as a gift to ensure an amazing holiday break along with seeing their educational and personal cooperation during their recess. The play day was actually held in a local park in Katutura that my group visited during the Township tour with Patrick. The park had a somewhat rough ground with pieces of glass so we had

to ensure that all the children had proper footwear. The group had also made loads of pasta salad and gathered apples for the kids during the lunch break. Once the park was organized for the play day, the first group of kids had arrived in the van and it was absolutely hysterical and touching seeing their cheery, overwhelmed faces as they stepped out of the vehicle, where they even verbally responded with a little thank you song. The event first started out informally where we had allowed the children to freely play around the park. Most of the kids joyfully went near the lake with curiosity, skipping rocks and having fun in which I had joined as well. It was great seeing their enthusiastic faces while they were playing catch, tag, or the parachute game as well. It had also been nice to know that some of the children were familiar with the park such as Junior, reminiscing how he came to the park when he was much younger accompanied by his family and small pet dog.

When all the children arrived, the real activities had soon got underway as characterized by a few kids' snooping. The activities held were various different physical team-building stations where the kids were split into individual coloured teams and were competing against each other in the stations based upon ability and sportsmanship. They were guaranteed points on their amount of 1st place winnings in each station tied in with their accumulation of acceptable integrity. Some stations involved a water balloon toss and a spelling contest where members had to spell out NAMIBIA using tennis balls.

My station leader, Dan and I had worked on the 'Frog Relay Race'. In our station, it was a basic foot race in which the competitors had to race each other with restrictions like grabbing onto ankles and as a frog. The coloured team that had all players sitting down first determined the winner. Points were awarded to both teams winner and loser if they showed encouragement and integrity for each other such as properly congratulating the winning team

or refraining from cheating ploys. The exertion of skill on the relay race was great to see amongst the children. They had truly channeled their own efforts to actually succeed in the games even though they were just for fun. It was satisfying as well to see that the team members were able to deliver good words of confidence along with showing genuine kindness in the competitive races. The station was honestly a joyous pleasure to be in charge of as it was great to see the athletic ability of the children and seeing them work together as a team. From Dino, Ben, Elias, Lorenzo, Brumelda, Beauty, Johanness, John, and so many others it was terrific to see them laugh and enjoy themselves from the station's amusement.

I was certain that the kids had as much fun at the numerous other stations especially at the water balloon toss where players were happily surprised when they were splashed by the popped balloons. After a full complete rotation of the posts, the main formal field day event was finished where the exhausted players were offered a well-deserved lunch break. During lunch, we had noticed there were still considerable amounts of water balloons left. So as a premeditated plan devised and approved with MaryBeth, Christina, and Geraldine, we had decided to deplete them through a large water balloon fight. To make it discreet, Marybeth had 'arranged' a Simon Says game with all the kids where we had placed the buckets and ourselves in 'strategic' positions. It was funny, as players had already started to suspect on our little charade.

Soon after, we were given the signal once Mary had playfully said "Simon Says all Canadians throw water balloons!" which proceeded with ensuing chaotic fun where all the kids had dispersed around the park

avoiding the balloons. Soon, it was crazy as the kids started to turn the tables on us where they had cleverly filled up water jugs, plastic bags, and bottles to get us soaked, which was absurdly successful judged by our drenched clothes. From my perspective, the alteration from formality to informality was considered to be a significant attribute of our communication with the BNC and Namibia itself. After all the water balloon frenzy excitement settled down it was drawing near the end of the play day and it was time for the kids to return back to the BNC. Before the choleric moment, we had all gathered for one final group photo with the children sporting their new Brock sunglasses that were sent by our group. The closing goodbyes were intimately delicate to go through as it was deeply saddening to do.

The emotions surrounding the moments were formed internally and externally. It was even pretty rough for the students struggling to say farewell especially the young ones. Although, we were able to manage it by reminding everyone of the great times created from the BNC and the individuals themselves. That along with how their charisma definitely made the experience unforgettable such as Johanness' commitment to keep the BNC clean forever. Emotionally, I felt there was this idea that they always had a smile on their faces that generated an impossibility of yourself containing a frown no matter what the day brings about. Those last few interactions, highlighted the unique character of the youth cultivated by the BNC and sealed our hearty enduring relations. The facility may be known as the Bernard Nordkamp Centre but ultimately the children will demonstrate why it's called "Best Namibian Children."

## What Has Been Achieved from Africa?

Since returning back home to Canada and New Jersey, it has felt like an extremely fluctuating transition to resume daily routines in the 'First World' from the 'Third World'. Though I was with a Brock group, my abroad program in Namibia had also granted myself an increased sense of independence by discovering the actual affairs of Africa as compared to North American projected views. I had realized that Africa namely Namibia has a well-structured political format along with a stable economy ensuring a solid social lifestyle. I believe in a way having taken up the opportunity to witness Africa has also shaped my tolerance and views when reading or seeing news related to Africa.

The recurring idea is that you never really understand the cultural complexities of a place until you directly uncover it on your own. The difficulty attained from the trip as well has also been trying to reiterate the entire trip into a clear cut answer to questions like "How was it?" In addition, I have wondered what our Brock influence had put upon the various children in Namibia. It had been noted that we had been internationally volunteering there on their holiday break. So the question might be has our Canadian influence positively impacted their persons in the pursuit of an education?

Going to Africa and coming back to our realities has also made me realize that you should not undervalue the importance of an education and to not plague yourself with unwanted ignorance.

At times, it is difficult to be applicable to an education but in Namibia it is an intangible symbolic tool that is regularly preached and crafted by the BNC, which strives to be manually sustained for the benefit of the deprived youth. Their mission should be followed as an example to realize the excellency of our education system along with continuously learning more ways to maintain it just like Namibia.

I have felt considerably thankful for all the Namibians I have met for their stories and their understandings of themselves and life. I gratefully thank the tennis students for actually inspiring myself to reaffirm my interest in tennis since returning that had been lacking for some time. I am also thankful for Ben whom I worked closely with and was able to learn more about his character and ability at the BNC. I thank Delano and Sylvester for generously offering to help clean and organize the supply container. I am thankful for the BNC's amazing choir gift to us for our devoted service to the BNC. I thank Shaun Awaseb for his kind friendship and hospitality at the Wadadee House.

Overall, I am thankful for being able to volunteer internationally in Africa for the first time while learning more about myself along the way.

*(This series began in the August 2013 issue of Monsoon Journal and is concluded with this installment of 6/6)*

*(Harrish Thirukumaran attends second year at Brock University, Ontario, during 2013-14)*



## Special Feature

# JOHN BODDY HOMES PRESENTS 'EAGLE WOODS'

THE EAGLE GLEN B LR



THE PRESCOTT A LR

John Boddy Homes, voted 'Best Home Builder' in Ajax/Pickering for the seventeenth year in a row for this year's Readers' Choice Awards, has broken ground in its newest community in south Ajax, "Eagle Woods". Located just minutes east of Toronto, and within walking distance to shores of Lake Ontario, "Eagle Woods" combines the closeness and convenience of city living with the beauty and tranquility of the neighbouring lakeshore. "Eagle Woods" currently offers spacious two-storey freehold townhomes and will feature later semi-detached homes as well as detached homes in two-storey, back-split and side-split designs. Homes start at 1,700 square feet and will range up to 3,534 square feet in size. John Boddy Homes offers full-depth traditional size lots with a minimum of 110 feet in depth and "Eagle Woods" will offer a great selection of extra deep lots, pie shaped lots, pond lots, conservation area lots, golf-course lots and walk-out basement lots. With such a broad range of house sizes and styles, "Eagle Woods" has the ideal home to suit every preference. From the unique exteriors and charming streetscapes, to the elegant interiors, various John Boddy Homes include impressive standard features such as vaulted ceilings, double door entries, décor columns, mirrored sliding closet doors, ceramic kitchen backsplashes, double basin bathroom vanities with make-up counters and so much more. Their gourmet kitchens, welcoming great rooms, cozy gas replaces and elegant dining rooms with coffered ceilings are all spacious and comfortable, making them the perfect location to enjoy time together with family or entertain friends. In addition, some models include impressive extras such as classic French doors, transom windows and custom octagonal skylights allowing light to travel throughout the home for a bright and spacious feel.

For their homeowner's convenience, most homes from John Boddy include main or second floor laundry rooms, kitchen breakfast bars, walk-in pantries, private water closets, interior garage access, high efficiency furnaces and basement rough-ins for future bathrooms. Other features include arched entryways, moulded polyurethane millwork - which will not rot,

twist or warp - window mullions on all front and rear facades and decorative garage doors featuring appealing window lites. Custom landscaping packages and paved driveways are also included in all homes providing the renowned curb appeal that enhances the entire "Eagle Woods" community.

Innovative floorplan designs combined with an extensive array of standard features included with every new home have become a corporate trademark of John Boddy Homes. Not only does a John Boddy home offer such striking standard features, there are also a wealth of opportunities to upgrade, making their homes as unique as each individual homeowner. The "Eagle Woods" Sales Office will feature a Décor Centre that contains a wide range of upgrade items to select from in order to customize your home. Their knowledgeable décor consultants allow home buyers to make upgrade selections on site, enabling them to conveniently personalize their home.

When you purchase a new home in "Eagle Woods" there are no hidden closing costs. John Boddy Homes pays foreducation levies, development charges, water and hydro meter hookup fees, boulevard tree planning, a landscape package and paved driveway.

Currently John Boddy Homes is offering an incentive package of \$2,000 in free upgrades plus 5 appliances or Builder's Premium Hardwood 3" by 5/8" in the Great Room and Dining Area, as well as a 6 months Roger's Package which includes free internet, phone, cable and a HD PVR.

John Boddy Homes now offers exclusive in-house financing and mortgage services through JBH Financial Services Ltd. At JBH Financial Services we are able to provide you with the convenience of purchasing the new home of your dreams and qualifying for a mortgage all in the same place - it couldn't be any easier! JBH Financial Services works with most major banks and lending institutions and offers a six-month rate hold. These six-month rate holds allow you to lock in the lowest rates available while guaranteeing you the security and peace of mind of knowing that your rates will not increase before your house closes. In fact, if at the time of closing interest rates are lower than what

you signed at, we will provide you with the lower rate! Discover the JBH Financial Services advantage.

The "Eagle Woods" community offers many important neighbourhood amenities such as places of worship, fully equipped parks and easy access to both Ajax and Go-Transit Services. Toronto is easily accessible from nearby Highway 401. Located just south of a host of shopping and recreation centres, "Eagle Woods" allows residents all the amenities of the urban lifestyle while providing the serenity of the neighbouring lakeshore.

Since 1955 John Boddy has been involved in the construction of thousands of new homes throughout Ontario and has earned a reputation as an accomplished builder of fine residential communities. Of significance are the award winning 1000-acre "Bridlewood" Community developed during the 1960's and 1970's in Scarborough; the "Forestbrook" Community in Pickering developed in the 1980's; "Willowcreek" in Peterborough; and, more recently "Eagle Ridge on the Green" and "Eagle Glen" in Ajax developed from the 1990's until present day.

The John Boddy Homestead of experienced management, planners, designers, supervisors, marketing and sales personnel has distinguished itself by creating innovative and unique designs in truly outstanding communities that meet the needs and desires of today's families.

New model homes for the "Eagle Woods" community are under construction and will be open in early 2014. Drop by the current Sales Presentation Centre located on Stevensgate Drive, north of Rossland Road West, one half kilometre west of Westney Road and three kilometres north of Hwy. 401. Sales Presentation Centre hours are Monday through Thursday 1:00pm to 8:00pm; Saturday, Sunday and Holidays 11:00am to 6:00pm; closed Friday. Let their friendly knowledgeable staff help you determine which John Boddy home is perfect for you and your family and get set to join the ever growing "Eagle Woods" family community. For more information, please call (905) 619-1777 or visit their website at [www.johnboddyhomes.com](http://www.johnboddyhomes.com).



## J.J. Atputharajah

### A. Mythological Art Works

The Tamil cinema is among the largest film industries in terms of the number of films produced annually in India. Tamil films are distributed to various parts of Asia, Southern Africa, North America, Europe and Australia. In 1985, the Tamil film industry made its peak with a net output of 236 films. Film songs and music form an integral part of Tamil films. In the earlier days Tamil films gave lot of priority to classical or oriental music. Several films ran in the theatres for months just for people who wanted to listen to devotional songs. Thiyagarajah Bhagawathar became a popular film star specially for his ability to sing classical songs with tremendous ability and zest. His films 'Harithas' and 'Amarakeetham' ran for months just because the audience wanted to listen continuously to the songs sung by him. Very much later K.P. Sunderambal acted in Awwayar which also ran for a record period of time mainly due to the song sung by her. The subject of films in the earlier days were woven round kings, queens and royalty and later followed by depicting the life-styles



rural based films like 'Puthiya Paravai', 'Muthal Mariyathai', 'Manvasanai' and 'Kilakku Cheemaile' paved the way for rural themes in Tamil films which were hitherto dominated by middle class urban sentiments. Lyrics depicting the stark realities of rural life were heard through renditions of authentic markers. Some of them highlighted the deprivation and distress of rural life. They also reflected the fragrance of the soil. Poet Vairamuttu who was another significant catalyst who engineered the change felt that 'art work based on 'lived experience' has a lasting impact on the people'. He is credited to have written the largest number of songs in the Tamil and it is 5800 to date. Some of his hits include 'aanantha ragam kedkutte', 'Chinna, chinna aasai', 'Poralae Ponuuthayie', 'Kailikkatil perandachu' and 'karakaddakkaran'. They mostly reflect the rural themes.

### D. 'Masala Mix Songs'

Towards the end of the 20th century, film themes and content of Tamil films took another turn to realistic and anti-sentimental themes. They can also be classified as "masala mix" songs. Nowadays the film songs are mostly delivered



their feet. The influence of western tunes and music have changed the nature of the Tamil film songs. Indian films give importance to dance and songs and it is difficult to find genre films unlike in foreign countries. Indian films do not maintain the sanctity of a genre. They are a blend of different genre like 'Enthiran'. This is to satisfy all the categories of the audience. Only a few films produced in Tamil without songs and dances like 'anathanal' were successful. The rural people will not patronise films which do not have dances or songs in them. Besides, dance and music DVDs/CDs produced separately bring in quite a lot of income to film producers apart from creating an aura of attraction for them even before the films are released.

Therefore songs and dances will continue to an essential feature of Tamil films. The music have also become global

# Changing Style and Content of Tamil Film Songs

of the zamindars and the wealthy people of those days.

Films like Manthiri Kumari and Marmayogi were about the exploits of the kings and the sword handlers. The songs in those films added meaning to the contexts in those films. S.A. Natarajan, the villain in 'Manthiri Kumari' led Mathuri Devi to the mountain top singing the song 'Varaai, nee Varaai' before pushing her down. This was followed by

films which depicted the life-styles of the zamindars who were wealthy land owners. In 'Devadas' Nageswara Rao, son of a zamindar falls in love with a next door girl from a poor family and their love affair was rejected by the wealthy parents. The songs in those films were written by Udumalai Narayana kavi and sung by Ghantasla, the maestro telugu singer. Ellaam mayai thaana, ulage mayam, thunintha pin maname thuyaram korlathe, uravum illai pahai yum illai - all proved to be well rendered songs which added to the portrayal of the characters very realistically. Nageswara Rao as Devadas and Savitri as Parvathy gave sterling performances as the lovelorn lover and his lass. The songs added momentum to an outstandingly memorable film of those times.

### B. Social reforms - 'Parasakthi'

The release of the film 'Parasakthi' led to another change in the nature of Tamil films. The story and dialogues written by M. Karunanidhi led to the introduction of leftist ideas into

the Tamil films. Songs with socialist themes became common. The interests of the working classes were highlighted in the films. It also gave importance to effective dialogues in Tamil films. Words with numerous alliterations found place in the dialogues spelled out by the actors. The film songs too followed suit and left ideas were being broadcast through Tamil films. "Nenju Porukutillaiya in the Nilaketta Manitharai Ninaitthu Viddal", 'Ka Ka ka" were good examples of songs with socialist ideas. Later 'Manohara' another of Karunanidhi's films became famous for its vibrant dialogues verbalised by Sivaji Ganesan. For some time, rhythmic dialogues appeared to have gathered precedence over songs in Tamil films.

### C. Artworks based on 'lived experience'

From seventies Tamil film songs showed the influence of folk and rural music to a greater degree. The content of the films produced too changed giving emphasis to the strata of society especially in the villages and rural areas. The rural touch began to acquire prominence in the film songs. Illaiyarajah, Bharathi Raja and Vairamuttu are the three personalities who were responsible for the change in the style and content of the Tamil films in the latter half of the 20th century. Illayarajah who had composed a massive total of 4500 songs and still going strong has among his creations some big hits like 'Kanne kalaimane', 'illaynila polikirathe', 'Illamai enum poongatte', and Nilave va'. Bharathiraja also favoured neo-nativity genre films. His



in a very speedy manner and it is very difficult to understand them. The terms used to compose them are also not purely Tamil. Sometimes dances and songs incorporated into the films are not related to the story of the films. Veteran poet Vairamuttu says, much depends on target audience. There was a time when the lyrics touched the heart. Now it is increasingly about making listeners tap

in nature. They are a mixture of a variety of hybrid tunes - as Tamil films are shown in nearly 80 countries all over the world. The film industry has become a very popular enterprise in Tamil Nadu so much so that the production and marketing of Tamil films have increased by leaps and bounds. The cooperation among producers and technicians in various language groups / regional productions have further enriched film production locally and internationally. The life-style of the rural people are given top priority in Tamil films as the vast majority of the audience-nearly 80 million- live in Tamil land. However global trends and innovations are adequately taken into consideration. Tamil films/songs elicit a unique place in world film industry.



Special Feature

SRI LANKA:

# Jaffna's First Art Gallery

By Thulasi Muttulingam

A bright white building has just recently opened in Rakkah Lane, Jaffna. Enter it and the first thing the eye is drawn to, is a cold white sculpture of a flame; a beautiful blend of ice and fire, seemingly depicting controlled passions set alight. And thus is one introduced to Jaffna's first art gallery, opened this December.

Three showrooms have been allocated to exhibit local artistes' works on the upper two floors. The first painting one comes across though, is on the staircase landing on the way to the exhibit rooms. It is a well-known figure of auspicious welcome to the average Jaffnaite; Ganesh, the elephant headed god. But in keeping with what the gallery probably intends to exhibit, he's not the Ganesh of temple murals – the only form of art work established in Jaffna at the moment. He's a modern artist's not so rigidly defined Ganesh.

Art in Jaffna has thus far been confined mostly to temple murals. The gal-

lery and its exhibition of paintings is thus a very new concept here. Artists exist but they have mostly had limited exposure and encouragement, and been sidelined to treating their passion as a hobby. Parents here are not likely to be too happy to see their children having a penchant for sketching or painting. It is not an economically viable pursuit.

And that is precisely what in part, this new gallery seeks to redress. "Most of these artists do not earn much, if at all for their art work," says Father Saveri, Director of the Center for Performing Arts (CPArts), which opened the Art Gallery with the aid of the Catholic Church. "We have before, exhibited in Colombo and shared the income with the artists, but that has still not been enough to compensate their efforts. We hope that through this gallery, we can open up more mainstream appreciation and buying of art work from the local population."

That however is not all that the art

gallery hopes to achieve. It was opened by the Archbishop of Colombo, Malcolm Ranjith, at which time his eminence had noted that the new gallery would serve as a place of dialogue, where the North and the South could interact.

Father Saveri, the founder Director of the CPArts, agrees. "CPArts started out in 1965 as a catholic organization to mobilize youths for social service, but it has since expanded into a multi-religious, multi-ethnic organization." He says that that expansion of consciousness is necessary for all Sri Lankans if they wish to move forward - that facet of celebrating diversity while remaining true to their roots.

"I gave a speech in Holland recently and afterwards an audience member asked me if I was a Buddhist," recalls the cassocked Catholic father, who on that day had happened to be wearing casual clothing. "If you truly practice what all religions preach, you will practice humanism, because that is the core message

of all faiths."

His work for Sri Lanka has taken him far and wide, yet his has always been a message of reaching out and peace rather than accusation and anger. In a 15 minute program his troupe presented to the United Nations in 2002, titled 'The cradle of war,' the feedback received was telling. "We find it interesting that you told a story without blaming any party." The mandate of CPArts is to reconcile divided factions however and not to reproach. According to Father Saveri, reconciliation is the biggest need of the hour, as it has been for a long time. He has used Art, the universal language in its various forms such as theatre and music to mend broken bridges for a long time now. This is the latest venture in a string of such ventures. A number of artists and academics from the South of Sri Lanka have already visited the North through CPArts' efforts and have also pledged their support to the new gallery and the upcoming artists of Jaffna.

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### Jaffna's First Art Gallery

Contd. from page 36...

Inside the gallery, the art is an eclectic mix covering the gamut of mediums used and themes explored, from the traditional to the modern.

A man in the throes of pain screams out on one side of the wall. The burnt and ravaged Jaffna Library (now re-built) casts a hauntingly mesmerizing spell from the other side. In between are portraits of people, colourful and intricate designs of contemporary art, and all sorts of 'meaningful art' with the meanings left

to the decipherment of the audience.

A perambulation of the gallery walls was certainly interesting if at times a little overwhelming. Quite a bit of the art work unsurprisingly, was about the war or aspects of the war. There were also however portraits, still life, and landscapes – some of which would not be out of place in a Colombo gallery (due to the universal themes) while others are obviously from the northern part of the country. Landscapes in which broken or towering palmyrah trees held sway were not a few. And the portraits of people would give away the fact too; a man with neatly

pronged vibhuti streaks on his forehead, a lady with hair neatly coiled in a bun and pottu on forehead, balancing a fruit platter in her hand... currently common everyday sights by the Jaffna roadside or in temples, but now they have been neatly captured - an ideal mix to showcase to the rest of the world, Jaffna's contemporary life.

The peninsula is rapidly changing. It is becoming increasingly harder to spot the shelled buildings and broken palmyrahs. Plush buildings of glass and steel are rapidly replacing them. And as Jaffna changes to embrace the world outside, its

artists will no doubt continue to reflect its changes. As is typical, they are the ones at the forefront of it. The gallery, newly opened is still a novelty to the average local. Some of them might be surprised by the contemporary art on display. However it's a beginning. To show the southern art lover as well as the northern one, what Jaffna's artists have to offer. And it would be a revelation to both factions.

Next time you are in Jaffna, make sure to drop by at Rakkah lane. It's worth a visit.





# PAVING THE MIDDLE PATH: WHY WE MUST EMPOWER MODERATE VOICES

By M.A. Sumanthiran M.P.

Whilst shame keeps its watch, virtue is not wholly extinguished in the heart; nor will moderation be utterly exiled from the minds of tyrants.

- Edmund Burke (1729-1797)

Recently in Parliament, I pleaded with my fellow MPs to listen to the voices of moderation. I appealed to them to do their best to prevent extremist forces on either side from destroying our future. Now I appeal to the members of the public to do the same. Do not for a moment underestimate the power that still resides in you, the reasonable-minded citizens of this country. Your leaders still fear the shame you might impose on them for extremist views.

During my short tenure in politics, I have observed a glimmer of hope. That glimmer does not emanate from the sparkling new streetlamps, the shiny new expressways, or the other glistening things that are presented to us as evidence of progress and development. Hope comes from the moderate and non-violent path that so many have chosen to follow. There are still some who choose to endure immeasurable suffering and humiliation without retaliating with violence or aggression. As long as such individuals remain in Sri Lanka, there is still hope.

## The false dichotomy

A false dichotomy of 'moderation' and 'extremism' has emerged to discredit reasonable demands for autonomy. We must, however, reflect on the meaning of these words and apply them only when appropriate. On the one hand, we must not demonise moderate voices merely because we disagree with them. On the other, we must not venerate extremist voices merely because they target those with whom we disagree. The real test of moderation lies in the manner of engagement. The true moderates are those who believe that, whatever their political aspirations, they must be pursued in a manner that does not undermine the rights of other individuals and communities; in a manner that expands the freedoms of those who are struggling, as well as those they are struggling against.

## Emblems of moderation

The ideal of true moderation is reinforced each time the widows and mothers of this country, overcome with grief for their

missing husbands and children, choose to protest with dignity rather than with malice. We have seen such emblems of moderation in the South and we continue to see them in the North and East. The Muslim men and women who endure daily indignities with quiet restraint undoubtedly reaffirm this ideal. The ideal is strengthened each time the displaced communities of Valikamam engage in Satyagraha instead of expressing their frustration through violence. Indeed, there is some measure

**“ I pleaded with my fellow MPs to listen to the voices of moderation. I appealed to them to do their best to prevent extremist forces on either side from destroying our future ”**

of hope left. I even witnessed it in Parliament last week when, amidst unruly interruptions, the Leader of the Tamil National Alliance chose to respond with temperance instead of retorting in kind. Despite incessant ridicule, he continued to appeal to reason in his speech. These acts of obdurate moderation are the dams that keep the virulent waters from flooding our fields. There is still hope, as long as a few of us remain committed to reasonable, non-violent and dignified means of resolving our differences. We are reminded that we can remain civilised peoples each time we choose to remain dignified in the face of extreme indignity.

Many take these voices of

moderation for granted. Some treat moderation as a sign of weakness. Others distrust it as mere posturing or pretence. However, I can tell you with confidence that, amidst immeasurable indignities, moderation is the hardest path to follow. As evinced by our own bitter history of violence, man is prone to violent retaliation when cornered. Therefore, to show restraint in the face of violence and ridicule is an extreme act of resolve. It is this middle path that is perhaps the straightest and narrowest.

## Empowering moderate voices

Reasonable-minded citizens are likely to be conscious of two truths: first, that moderation on all sides is essential for a peaceful and prosperous future; and second, that moderation is an arduous route to endure for those who are committed to embrace it.

So all reasonable-minded citizens have a patriotic duty to seek out and empower voices of moderation. These voices are softer than the loud, brash noises one hears from the extremists. One only needs to observe an hour of parliamentary proceedings to witness how moderate voices are being literally drowned out by the voices of extremism. However, the voices of moderation can still be heard all around us, provided we are willing to listen. They don't always speak the same language, nor do they follow the same religion. Yet they

are distinguished by their commitment to the truth and to a civilized and reasonable resolution of differences. These are the very

voices that must be amplified.

Since the end of the war, billions of rupees have been spent on paving roads in the hope of appeasing the people. The 2014 budget, which many moderate voices have criticised, continues this trend. Yet what is the actual return on such tokenistic investments? The pressures of a failing economy, increased corruption, and the breakdown in the rule of law now stand to tear the fabric of our society. Paving roads will not appease the people for much longer.

The need of the hour remains a 'paving' of another kind. Reasonable-minded citizens must now stand up for the voices of moderation. They must pave the middle path, so that many might tread on it knowing that a principled public supports them. Paving this path will cost us much less. And the return on investment will be plentiful, as it is the middle path that will ultimately bridge our differences.

## The power of the reasonable mind

The power of reasonable-minded citizens must not be underestimated, least of all by themselves. For they have the power to shame their leaders. They have the authority to call for adherence to the Middle Path, a precept that no political actor in this country would dare oppose openly. Reasonable-minded citizens must therefore rally around the voices that encourage an honest, dignified and moderate discourse.

How then, can ordinary citizens safeguard this country's future? Grandiose gestures may not be required. Simple acts that promote moderation may suffice: identify and discount irrational and extremist views in the media; question those who fail to substantiate their claims; criticise even those you support, hoping that it will better them; and condemn all violence, particularly aggression in response to peaceful expressions of dissent.

I assure you, indifference now will only spell disaster for the preservation of a shared future. The cliché often attributed to Edmund Burk has never been more pertinent, as we stand on the brink: 'the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.'

*(M.A. Sumanthiran is a prominent Sri Lankan Tamil human rights lawyer, politician and Member of Parliament representing The Tamil National Alliance)*



M.A. Sumanthiran M.P.



# MANNAR, SRI LANKA: THE TRAUMA HEALING NUN

By Thulasi Muttulingam

The elderly yet sprightly nun is hard to miss on the thoroughfares of Mannar, Sri Lanka. White habit spotlessly clean and wimple neatly pinned in place, she can often be seen whizzing by on her trusty black scooter to save yet another damaged soul, ravaged by war or the after-effects of war.

Sister Christabel became a novice of the Jaffna Holy Family Convent at the age of 18, when challenged by a classmate to take up service as a life calling. More than 50 years later, she is still going strong. "I was inspired by the nuns teaching at our school, especially our principal who was a European Mother Superior," says Sister Christabel. "I would actively take part in social service activities arranged by the school, but one day a classmate scoffed that once we left school, we'd forget all about it. I said I would not – and on thinking about it decided that family life would hinder such service, so I elected to become a nun."

She spent 25 years serving her ministry as a Mathematics teacher before the war intensified and demanded higher services of her. Becoming displaced within Jaffna in 1990, she stumbled upon Father Selvaratnam's counseling training for community elders, to combat the growing problem of war related trauma. Mental health at that time was a



taboo topic in Jaffna. People simply opted to lock up relatives who exhibited signs of mental ill-health and hushed up the matter. The war however has forcefully brought the need to address mental health in the open. Far too many people were succumbing to the pain and stress and their relatives realized that it was best to address the problem rather than brushing it under the carpet. Sister Christabel, who had intensively trained with Father Selvaratnam and then become one of his trusty coterie of counselors found herself at the heart of it.

"Due to the war, attitudes to seeking mental health treatment changed. Many people needed counseling and they realized it. People seek me from afar to counsel their near and dear because they realize the problem could get worse if not treated." According to her, two of the most common symptoms she sees are withdrawing into oneself and not being functional, and staring into space without registering anything for long periods of time.

"Concerned spouses or parents bring such people to me recognizing the problem, and the effects of counseling. Now they bring even the terminally mentally ill – whom we refer to the psychiatrists, as we can't help them on our own."

It's an uphill battle though. There are not enough counselors to meet the need and so the Sister, who trained extensively at the Institute of Anslam, UK, to be a psychotherapy trainer has been involved in also training more and more counselors to meet the demand. She founded an organization called Familian (Re: Holy Family Convent), through which she does a variety of psycho-social work for the affected of Mannar district. She has a Kilinochchi branch too founded in 1996, sponsored by Father Chandrakanthan from Canada in honour of his



mother, and thus named 'Annai Illam'. The father is a professor attached to the University of Toronto, as well as at St. Joseph's hospital and St. Michael's hospital, in their clinical ethics department. Currently, there are 15 staff counselors working under her, most of whom she has trained herself; 10 of whom have been with her for more than a decade.

The psycho-social service need is such that she and her staff also conduct 'befrienders' training for able village volunteers. Not enough people are developing as counselors, so they have resorted to training volunteers as 'befrienders' with basic counseling skills, to serve in their rural communities.

Alcoholism, says the Sister is the most rampant problem in Mannar

district now. Mannar has always been famous for its toddy and none appreciates it more than its own populace; particularly the male segment. "The problem with alcoholics is that they go irregularly to work, and these are mostly daily wage earners or fishermen. This leads to even more poverty than the rest of the community, family conflicts, health problems and so on. These days the latest fad is 'vadi' a type of alcohol they make from local resources including powdered iron. They boil a variety of materials together and then strain it, thus the name (vadi means strain / filter in Tamil). It is even more addictive than normal alcohol and the local youths are heavily addicted to it."

Where the alcoholism is too hardcore to be treated by home counseling, Familian has a partner. Father Vincent of CRADA (Center for Rehabilitation of Alcoholics and Drug Addicts) is another well-known figure in the community. He commands enough respect that he can drop by at any village on hearing of a hard-core alcoholic and order him in for residential rehabilitation at his center in Thirupumunai, Mannar. In Sri Lanka, where White Vans used for abductions are infamous, the Father's white van used for collecting alcoholics is a famous local joke. "Watch out, there's a White Van. Father Vincent's coming to get you."

Apart from alcoholism affecting most of the men, many others especially the women and elderly, are suffering from post traumatic stress or depression due to the war. "Those who find it the hardest to cope" says the Sister, "are those who are still not sure if missing relatives are alive or dead. They have no sense of closure, and are unable to move on with their lives."

Many parents are still trying day in and day out to find out what happened to their disappeared sons and daughters without much success. Others, who fled in the mass exodus of the last days, leaving dead bodies behind, are only now feeling the shock and



grief. Either way, they have to be counseled to pick up the threads of their lives and move on – No easy task.

And what are the problems affecting the youths? Some do suffer from PTSD but mostly, like youth the world over, they have other pressing problems too. And in a culture where 'love' is still a bad word, they have it tough.

"I was conducting a group counseling for youths where I was cautioning them about the problems of projections and over-hyped expectations leading to disaster in romance when one boy got up and demanded why he couldn't have heard it sooner," recalls the smiling Sister.

"This was at a school. He couldn't have been more than 18 and the advice was too late for him it seems." She says that most parents not condoning romantic relationships were giving rise to a number of hasty youthful elopements. And being typically youth, they did not consider the issues of livelihood and means to support themselves before embarking on such ventures, leading to tragedy. Either they stuck together and had children in extreme poverty or they split up, with the woman especially, often unable to fall back on her parents for support, because they had disowned her. Inter-caste and inter-religious marriages are still frowned upon within the community. Parents prefer to arrange their children's marriages as romantic relationships would not necessarily confine itself to caste and creed.

The flip side of this is that many with youthful exuberance do not get to interact long enough to find out whether they are compatible before eloping. Leading in a chain to a high rate of divorce and separation as well as extra-marital affairs.

The Sister is not sympathetic to the parents' rigidity but she does caution young people to be careful too. Extreme control from one end as well as extreme heedlessness of the future on the other, is leading to many broken families whom she has to help mend. She has a repertoire of a number of heart-breaking stories, in this regard.

But in this minefield of broken relationships and minds that she has to navigate, she still remains a cheerful person. She too was displaced and suffered during the war, but her call is to heal others, not be broken herself. And her white robed figure on her black motor-cycle can often be seen flying over many a village interior road, one her way to 'save the day'.





# Federal Reserve Tapering and Its Impact on the Markets

**Arun Senathirajah**  
MBA (Banking Mgmt)

On December 18th the Chairman announced the time had come to dial back its massive program of buying bonds with newly printed money (QE-Quantitative Easing). Investors responded euphorically, with blue-chip indexes soaring to records. Mr Bernanke said the program was “well on its way to meeting our economic objectives” of putting the economic recovery on a path to sustained improvement. Whether that’s true won’t be known until well after he leaves office on January 31st, but for now the market seems to agree.

### QE1, QE2, QE3 and QE Infinity

An understanding of Quantitative Easing is necessary to understand the Fed’s Tapering. Federal Reserve have implemented QE three times, thereby bought bonds or other financial assets from banks. The purpose is to pump more cash in to the economy without backing productivity. They did it with a view to provide the fuel for economic expansion by lowering borrowers’ costs. Higher loan growth, in turn, should make it easier to finance projects. These projects put people to work, thereby helping the economy to grow. In addition, the Fed’s purchases help drive up the prices of bonds by reducing their supply, which causes their yields to fall.

In the midst of the 2008 financial crisis,



addition, the Fed officially stated that it would keep short-term rates low through 2015. These moves reflect the Fed’s view that the economy still hasn’t reached the point of self-sustaining growth. Accordingly, the Fed has adopted what has been called ‘QE Infinity’, a plan to purchase \$85 billion of fixed-income securities per month, \$40 billion of mortgage-backed securities and \$45 billion of U.S. Treasuries. The current program has no set end date.

The Fed’s various QE programs have led to sharp criticism from across the economic and political spectrum. It helps banks more than the economy, since they

(QE). The decision to adjust the program is based on incoming economic data, and the economy has not yet become strong enough for the Fed to feel confident in reducing the level of stimulus. As a result, the Fed’s bond-buying program remains fully intact at a pace of \$85 billion per month. Tapering may impact the market and expected to be favorable for both stocks and bonds.

### Market Reaction to Tapering

While Bernanke’s tapering statement didn’t represent an immediate shift, it nonetheless frightened the markets. In the recovery that has followed the 2008 financial crisis, both stocks and bonds have produced outstanding returns despite economic growth that is well below historical norms. The general consensus, which is likely accurate, is that Fed policy is the reason for this disconnect. Once the Fed begins to pull back on its stimulus, the markets may begin to perform more in line with economic fundamentals – which in this case, means weaker performance. Bonds indeed sold off sharply in the wake of Bernanke’s first mention of tapering, while stocks began to exhibit higher volatility than they had previously.

Investors Cheer End of U.S. Fed stimulus program

Markets rose as U.S. Federal Reserve said it reduce stimulus, citing improving economy. Investors cheered the U.S. Federal Reserve’s decision Wednesday, December 18, 2013 to begin tapering its

massive bond purchase program in January, taking it as a sign the world’s largest US economy is finally on the mend. The announcement sent stock markets higher and long-term bond yields lower, which could translate into lower borrowing costs for consumers and businesses in Canada as well as the U.S. Citing falling employment and low inflation, U.S. Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke said the central bank would begin reducing its monthly bond purchases by \$10 billion (U.S.), lowering the total amount to \$75 billion (U.S.). But the central bank still to hedge its overnight interest rate to ‘near zero’ well past the time unemployment dips below 6.5 per cent, especially if inflation remains below 2 per cent

‘The economy is continuing to make progress. But it also has much farther to travel,’ Bernanke told a news conference in Washington after the Federal Open Market Committee released its decision. It represents a vote of confidence in the economy. It says the recovery is real. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 1.8 per cent to hit a new high, while the S&P 500 index also climbed. In Toronto, the S&P/TSX composite index closed up 1.17 per cent. The Canadian dollar however posted its biggest drop in eight weeks as the U.S. greenback gained against most currencies. While that’s good news for exporters, it makes imports more expensive. Yields on Canada’s benchmark 10-year government bond rose four basis points, or 0.04 percentage points, to 2.68 per cent. Falling unemployment and continuing low inflation allow the U.S. central bank to begin withdrawing the extraordinary stimulus, Bernanke said.

Yet most monetary experts have already given Mr. Bernanke high marks for his handling of the crisis. Where they must likely withhold judgment for years yet is on how he handled the aftermath. Did he pursue a sufficiently creative monetary policy to restore employment? Was he too aggressive, storing up financial imbalances or inflation in later years? Although markets and economic indicators agree for now it has to be continued for solid economic growth.



sis, slow growth and high unemployment forced the Fed to stimulate the economy through its policy of quantitative easing (QE1) in the interval from November 25, 2008 through March 2010. The program had little impact initially, so the Fed announced an expansion of the program from \$600 billion to \$1.25 trillion on March 18, 2009. With the rise of the European debt crisis, and renewed instability in the financial markets, the Fed moved in with a second round of quantitative easing (QE2) and involved the purchase of \$600 billion worth of short-term bonds. QE2 sparked a rally in the financial markets but did little to spur sustainable economic growth. In September 13, 2012, the U.S. Federal Reserve launched its third round of quantitative easing (QE3). In

can opt to strengthen their balance sheets by “keeping” the money rather than using it to increase their loan activity. By creating money, the Fed makes the U.S. dollar less competitive against foreign currencies. Increasing the money supply can create inflation. Since there is a delay between the implementation of Fed policy and the economic impact, inflation may quickly rise to levels that can’t be contained. Quantitative easing can create “bubbles” in asset prices.

### What is Fed Tapering?

Tapering’ is a term that exploded into the financial lexicon on May 22, 2013 when U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke stated in testimony before Congress that that Fed may taper - or reduce - the size of the bond-buying program known as quantitative easing

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## MANAGING YOUR MONEY

# More than a savings account



**David Joseph, M.A.(Economics), CFP®, CLU**

The federal government introduced the Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA) in 2009 and it was hailed as the single most important personal savings vehicle since RRSPs were launched in the late 1950's. There is a misconception that it is a savings account, but it is more than a savings account. Maybe, it should have been named Tax Free Investment Account. TFSA investments are the same as those available for RRSPs, including mutual funds, money market funds, Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GICs), publicly traded securities, and government or corporate bonds.

So it's easy to understand that in just a few years a TFSA has become a go-to savings option for many thousands of Canadians. Tax-free savings growth and easy, tax-free withdrawals at any time for any purpose – sounds great and it is ... especially when you take full advantage of all your TFSA benefits. To get the best upside from your TFSA, let's look inside it.

Every Canadian over 18 years of age is eligible to save in a TFSA. The annual TFSA dollar limit is indexed to inflation in \$500 increments and in 2013, the limit was increased to \$5,500, where it remains for 2014, and is expected to do so for the foreseeable future. You'll maximize the value of your investments held within a TFSA by making the most of all available

contribution room. But even if you don't use all of your contributions room every year, it will accumulate year after year, so that it can be used in the future.

If you have never had a TFSA account, you may have up to \$25,500 in unused TFSA contribution room. If you already have a TFSA account, your 2014 TFSA annual contribution room is calculated this way:

The annual dollar limit for 2014 of \$5,500.00.

\* Plus the amount of withdrawals from 2013 (excluding withdrawals of excess contributions, qualifying transfers, or other specified contributions).

\* Plus any unused contribution room from previous years.

Investments held within TFSAs are a very flexible way to save because any amount you withdraw from a TFSA is added to your contribution room in the following year. You can invest in your TFSA eligible investments at any time, up to your maximum contribution level. Here's how it works:

Say you make a \$15,000 tax-free withdrawal to renovate your home. You will be able to re-contribute the \$15,000 to your TFSA after January 1 of the following year without affecting your other available contribution room. So, If you make a withdrawal, the earliest you can 'earn back' your TFSA contribution room

is the first day of the next year after the TFSA withdrawal was made.

If TFSA contributions exceed the person's TFSA room, a 1% per month penalty will be assessed. These penalties are similar to those applicable to RRSPs. The 1% per month penalty will be assessed under Section 207.02 of the Income Tax Act. It applies to the highest excess amount for the month. The calculation considers all TFSAs held by the individual- it is not on a TFSA by TFSA basis. Note that there is no \$2,000 "cushion" as applies to RRSPs.

If the TFSA holds a non-qualified or prohibited investment, a one-time tax equal to 50% of the value of the investment will be payable by the owner of the account. The tax will be refunded to the owner when the TFSA disposes of the investment that is offside. The tax will not be refundable if it is reasonable to expect that the owner of the TFSA knew the property was prohibited or non-qualified when acquired (or would become non-qualified or prohibited).

A TFSA can be a good choice for both

short and long term financial goals – providing a ready source of emergency funds, a good way to save for everything from a new car to a down payment on a new home, adding to your retirement savings, and even splitting income with your spouse to minimize taxes.

There's no deadline with a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA), it's a great place to invest your anticipated tax refund, and it's a tremendously flexible way to achieve tax-free savings growth.

To be sure you're getting the most from your TFSA – and from every other element in your overall financial plan – talk to a professional advisor.

**Disclaimer:**

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# “NO SUN OUTLASTS ITS SUNSET, BUT IT WILL RISE AGAIN AND BRING THE DAWN.”

By Maya Angelou

His day is done. Is done

The news came on the wings of a wind, reluctant to carry its burden.

Nelson Mandela's day is done.

The news, expected and still unwelcome, reached us in the United States, and suddenly our world became somber.

Our skies were leadened.

His day is done.

We see you, South African people standing speechless at the slamming of that final door through which no traveler returns.

Our spirits reach out to you Bantu, Zulu, Xhosa, Boer.

We think of you and your son of Africa, your father, your one more wonder of the world.

We send our souls to you as you reflect upon your David armed with a mere stone, facing down the mighty Goliath.

Your man of strength, Gideon, emerging triumphant.

Although born into the brutal embrace of Apartheid, scarred by the savage atmosphere of racism, unjustly imprisoned in the bloody maws of South African dungeons.

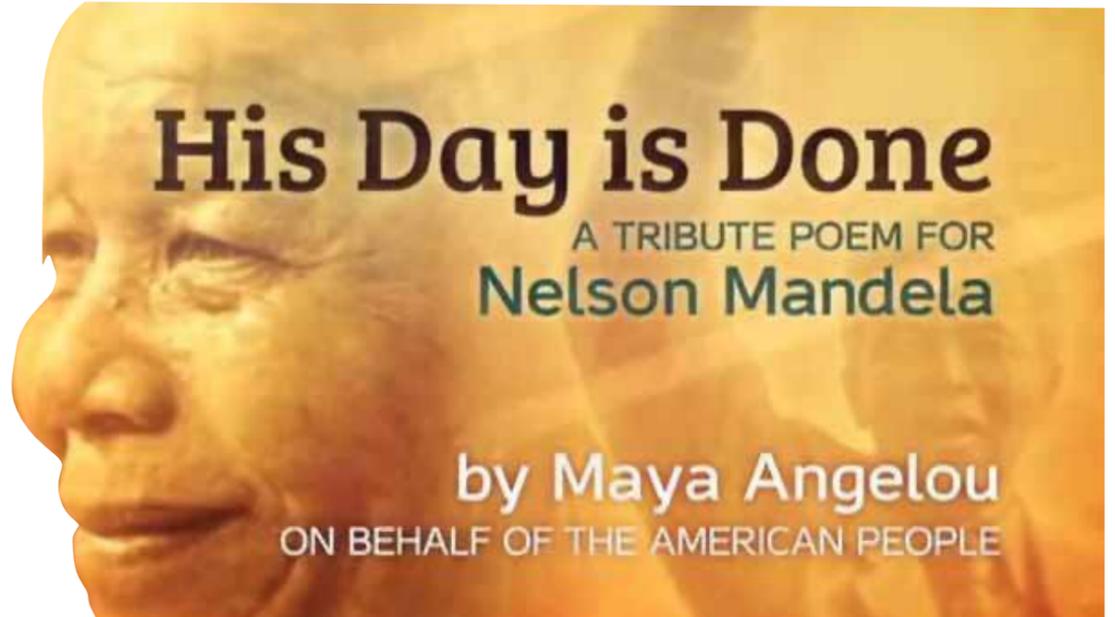
Would the man survive? Could the man survive?

His answer strengthened men and women around the world.

In the Alamo, in San Antonio, Texas, on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, in Chicago's Loop, in New Orleans Mardi Gras, in New York City's Times Square, we watched as the hope of Africa sprang through the prison's doors.

His stupendous heart intact, his gargantuan will hale and hearty.

He had not been crippled by brutes, nor was his passion for the rights of human beings diminished by twenty-seven years of imprisonment.



Even here in America, we felt the cool, refreshing breeze of freedom.

When Nelson Mandela took the seat of Presidency in his country where formerly he was not even allowed to vote we were enlarged by tears of pride, as we saw Nelson Mandela's former prison guards invited, courteously, by him to watch from the front rows his inauguration.

We saw him accept the world's award in Norway with the grace and gratitude of the Solon in Ancient Roman Courts, and the confidence of African Chiefs from ancient royal stools.

No sun outlasts its sunset, but it will rise again and bring the dawn.

Yes, Mandela's day is done, yet we, his inheritors, will open the gates wider for reconciliation, and we will respond generously to the cries of Blacks and Whites, Asians, Hispanics, the poor who live piteously on the floor of our planet.

He has offered us understanding.

We will not withhold forgiveness even from those who do not ask.

Nelson Mandela's day is done, we confess it in tearful voices, yet we lift our own to say thank you.

Thank you our Gideon, thank you our David, our great courageous man.

We will not forget you, we will not dishonor you, we will remember and be glad that you lived among us, that you taught us, and that you loved us all.

This poem with recital by its author **Dr. Maya Angelou** was produced and videographed by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Information Programs in December 2013-It is available on The You Tube: [youtube.com/user/statevideo](http://youtube.com/user/statevideo)



Nelson Mandela  
(July 18, 1918  
– December 5,  
2013)



Dr. Maya Angelou (b: Apr 4, 1928)



# Nelson Mandela's Long Walk comes to an end

## Mandela and Mahatma (Gandhi) cherished the same ideals and aspirations

By Siva Sivapragasam

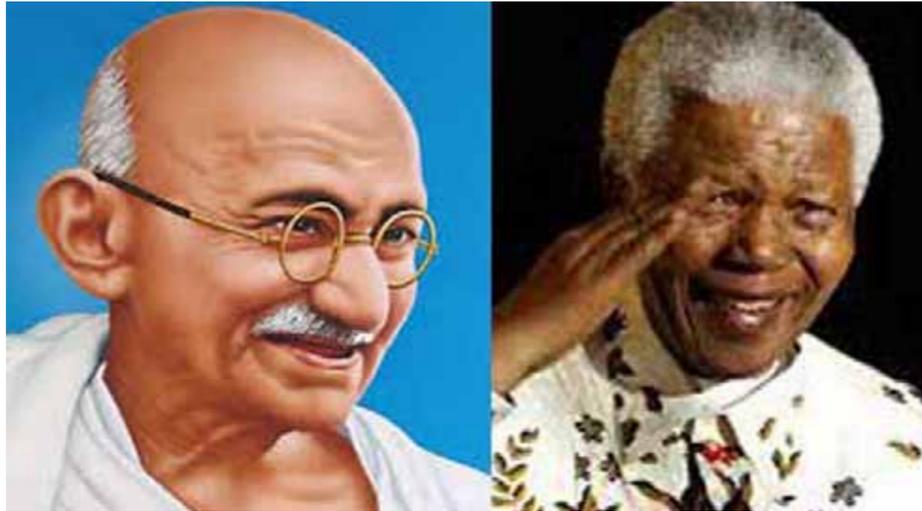
Nelson Mandela's death at a ripe age of 95 was not a surprise but a shock to the people of South Africa and the world at large.

Mandela was a father figure to his country and a great leader of liberation to other countries. He dedicated his life to the struggle of the African people fighting against both white and black domination. His dream was that of a free and democratic society in which all persons live in harmony and with equal opportunities. In his own words "My Lord, if it needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die".

Another freedom fighter who can be compared to Nelson Mandela for the identity of similar thoughts is Mahatma Gandhi. Both men cherished the same ideals and aspirations. Both believed that no one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. "People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite", said Mandela. Gandhi reflected similar thoughts when he said

"I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve.

But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."



"An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind." Both leaders upheld the values of integrity, peace and leadership. Humility was the keyword of success to both Gandhi and Mandela. As the famous Hollywood actor Morgan Freeman who produced and acted as Mandela in the film "Invictus" recounts

that when the film was shown to him Mandela's only comment was "Perhaps people will now remember me".

Mandela's actions not only moved the people of South Africa but had a profound influence in other parts of the world too. As the U.S. President Obama remarked in the funeral eulogy "Mandela moved a

nation towards justice, and in the process moved billions around the world". Nelson Mandela never wavered in his devotion to democracy, equality and learning. Despite terrible provocation, he never answered racism with racism. His life has been an inspiration to all who are oppressed and deprived, to all who are opposed to oppression and deprivation. After battling with lung infection Mandela passed away last month on 5th of December.

Mandela's grand daughter Nandi Mandela, in a farewell speech at the funeral, referred to her grandfather's younger days when he went barefoot to school as a boy in village Qunu where he herded cattle before eventually became president and a figure of global renown. "Go well, Madiba. Go well to the land of our ancestors, you have run your race." she commented.

On a misty and rainy Sunday morning, while military aircraft roared across the blue skies and the whole world mourned, a dedicated freedom fighter from prison to presidency was laid to rest and that ended his Long Walk to Freedom and an extraordinary glorious journey of ninety-five years.

## Sri Lankan Tamil novelist Thelivaththai Joseph has received the Vishnupuram Award for the year 2013



Thelivaththai Joseph receives Vishnupuram Award

The Vishnupuram Award for 2013 is an Annual Award presented by the Vishnupuram Literary Forum in Tamil Nadu.

The award has been instituted by readers of the famous Tamil Nadu writer B. Jeyamohan in the name of his masterpiece Vishnupuram. It aims to honour unnoticed Tamil writers.

Writer Indra Parthasarathi was the chief guest at the function while film director Bala, novelist Jeyamohan, writer Suresh Kumar Indrajit and V. Suresh of the Forum felicitated the writer. In his keynote address, Indra Parthasarathi expressed concern over the declining reading habit among the youth.

Joseph's collection of short stories ti-

tled Meenkal and his novel Kudai Nizhal were released at the event. Film Director Bala requested literary scholars and novelists to work and contribute for the betterment of Tamil films. Suresh Kumar Indrajit and V. Suresh reviewed some short stories and novels of Joseph and spoke about the literary importance of his works. Jeyamohan spoke on literary trends and the writings of Thelivaththai Joseph.

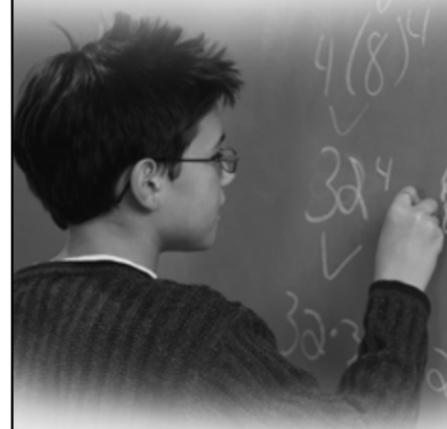
Thelivaththai Joseph was a novelist from Sri Lanka who has written several short stories and novels with special emphasis on the plantation Tamils and his writings have appeared regularly in the Tamil media in Sri Lanka.



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# Sri Lankan Accountants Association of Canada hosts 11th Annual dinner dance



President, Kandiah Mathitharan, CGA, CPA(USA) addressing the 11th annual dinner dance participants



Secretary Rajan Tharmarajah, CGA, CA(Sri Lanka) delivering the vote of thanks.



Kuna Rajaratnam, CGA, master of the ceremony drawing one of the door -prize winners with Ken Kandeepan CMA, Raj Rajasri CGA, and Walton Rajah CGA assisting



Janani Sivasudan, CGA manning the entrance assisted by Andrew Rajasingham CGA, Niroshan Ramachandran , CMA, and Valayini Rajasingham CGA



Children singing the national anthem.



Participants dancing to the music by DJ Chamil



Section of the crowd who attended the dinner dance



Ari Ariaran CGA, past president helping the MC to draw the winning ticket for the door -prize



Chamil & his wife manning the DJ music at the dinner dance with SAAC back-drop

# NEETHAN SHAN NOMINATED TO REPRESENT ONTARIO NDP IN SCARBOROUGH ROUGE RIVER



Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath

Neethan Shan, Ontario NDP candidate for Scarborough Rouge River



Andrea Horwath with Neethan Shan

[Scarborough, ON] Ontario NDP members have nominated Neethan Shan as their candidate to represent the party for the riding of Scarborough Rouge River in the upcoming provincial elections in Ontario. Hundreds of supporters had gathered at the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto on Sunday, December 15th, 2013 at 2:30pm to take part in the nomination meeting.

Neethan Shan, currently the president of the Ontario NDP, ran in the 2011 provincial election in the same riding and came within only about 6 percent from unseating the incumbent. During the same election, the Ontario NDP had seen a great increase in its vote, from 14% in 2007 to 36% in 2011.

Neethan Shan has been an active community leader in Scarborough, serving in various capacities including as a youth worker, teacher, manager, executive director and media producer. He has been a strong advocate for social and economic

growth of all segments of the diverse communities in Scarborough. Please find a short profile of his attached to this release.

The Scarborough Rouge River Ontario NDP Riding Association was delighted to have the Ontario NDP leader, Andrea Horwath, attend the nomination meeting to offer her remarks.

**For media enquiries:  
416 824 3399**

### Profile of Neethan Shan:

Neethan Shan is currently the president of Ontario New Democratic Party and was elected to this position in April 2012. He is a strong advocate for meaningful education, health and employment opportunities for all sections of our society.

Neethan began his work as a youth outreach worker in Malvern. Later at a very young age of 22, he took up a challenging Executive Director role at a social service agency, CanTYD. Later, he became a manager for youth programs in Malvern, where he developed and implemented

over twenty programs in many schools.

Neethan graduated from University of Toronto with Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Education. He has also completed M.Ed degree at OISE/UT in the field of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education. He currently works as the Executive Director of Council of Agencies Serving South Asians. He also represented a very diverse population in Markham as a Public School Trustee in York Region District School Board from 2006 to 2010.

Neethan's other involvement in the social services sector includes his roles with Parent Action on Drugs, Youth Gang Work Group (City of Toronto), Malvern Community Coalition, Community Use of Schools Council, Scarborough Youth Task Group, Tsunami Relief Coordinating Committee and many more. He also

produces and hosts interactive talk shows on social issues in Canadian Multicultural Radio CMR FM 101.3 and Tamil Vision International (TVi). He was also a Project Director, at Boreal Institute for Civil Society (an Institute affiliated with University of Toronto through Munk Centre for International Studies).

He received many awards including Race Relations Award from Urban Alliance for Race Relations and Vital People award from Toronto Community Foundation.

Neethan Shan lives in the Morningside Heights neighbourhood in the riding with his wife, Thadsha and two year old son, Ellalan.



Part of the audience



# CSLA Annual General Meeting News



Seating L - R: Vyvette Alles, Dianne Ragell, Gillian Vasagam, Rozanne Ragell Cruz  
 Standing L - R: Riyaz Rauf, Ackiel Ousmand, Tissa (Ananda) Weerasekera, Zaharan Burah, Sujeewa Kandumulla, Indran Rajanathan.  
 Absent: Rajkumar Parameswaran, Udaya Ariyaratne, Elanko Ratnasabapathy, Zafran Hilur

The Canada Sri Lanka Association of Toronto (CSLA) held its Annual General Meeting on December 1, 2013. It was one of the best attended AGM's in over a decade. There was a lively expression of ideas and greater support from the community. The meeting was followed by a social and dinner.

The CSLA, inaugurated in 1968, is the first association formed by Sri Lankan immigrants in Toronto. It was originally named the Ceylon Recreation Club. Later the name was changed to Canada Sri Lanka Association of Toronto. It is a non-political, non-racial, non-religious association dedicated to providing cultural, social and sporting activities to the community at large. Over the years this Association has attempted to unite all the ethnic communities of Canadian-Sri Lankans using sporting events.

This Association has kept the traditions of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year alive in the community by organising the

Sri Lankan New Year Celebrations every April.

Presently this Association runs a community gym every Thursday evening in Scarborough, where members play volleyball and badminton.

We are happy to announce the new Board of Directors of the Canada Sri Lankan Association.

Dianne Ragell	President
Ackiel Ousmand	Vice President
Rajkumar Parameswaran	Treasurer
Gillian Vasagam	Secretary
Tissa Weerasekera	Social Secretary
Riyaz Rauf	Asst. Social Secretary
Indran Rajanathan	Sports Secretary
Udaya Ariyaratne	Asst. Sports Secretary
Elanko Ratnasabapathy	Public Relations
Rozanne Ragell Cruz	Membership Secretary
Sujeewa Kandumulla	Membership Secretary
Vyvette Alles	Membership Secretary
Zafran Hilur	Membership Secretary
Zaharan Burah	Membership Secretary

# “Be ye guided by the signs of the times”

- X'Mas Service Message

By: JJ Atputharajah



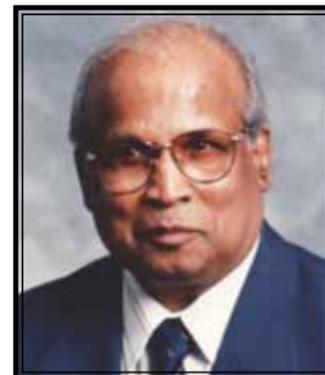
Speaking at the Christmas Day service at the Tamil Christian Church at Scarborough Pastor Vinson Samuel asserted that Christians should be guided by the signs of the times. We live in a world of changes. We should be guided by the current developments and fashion our lives accordingly. The recent weather disasters indicated the changes in the nature of weather interpreted as due to global warming. God speaks to us through natural happenings. The wise men who wanted to visit the child Jesus were guided by the stars. They journeyed long distances to go and worship the God-child Jesus. We should be able to go distances in our search for God and his immaculate wisdom.

Christianity is not churchianity. A Christian's life should be fashioned by the character and quality of Jesus's life-not just a mechanical attendance at church

without any fruitful deeds in the service of the Lord and Master Jesus Christ. The service was attended by a large number of devotees from the length and breadth of the GTA. There were also some who have come from far off climes of Australia, Sri Lanka and the US. The service was enriched by excellent lyric singing in Tamil rendered to the accompaniment of traditional music. The popular numbers like 'theena thayala thirumanuvela', 'Anpin theivam parinile', 'Joy to the World' were sung with reverential zeal and exuberance by a rejoicing congregation.

Expatriate Tamils were able to enjoy a spiritually uplifting worship experience which gave them nostalgic memories of their life in their traditional homelands of Sri Lanka. It is very gratifying to note that a large number of worshippers attended the service in spite of the deplorable weather conditions.

## OBITUARY



### Sangarapillai Kanapathypillai

(August 20, 1929 - December 13, 2013)

Sangarapillai Kanapathypillai - Retired Director of Government of Sri Lanka General Treasury, Colombo - Passed away peacefully at home in Markham on December 13, 2013. Beloved husband of Neelampikai Ammal, father to Balakumaran, Baheerathy, Sivasakthy and Thirukumaran. Father-in-law to Shiranee, Kumar Sriskanda, K. Sivarajah and Nalene. Grandfather to Harshini, Varun, Anushini, Vishalini, Praveen, Harrish, Danesh and Amarnath, and great-Grandfather to Avandhi. Predeceased by his parents Sangarapillai and Katpagam of Madduvil North and parents-in-law Murugesu and Visaladchy of Kalvayal, Chavakachcheri. After performing Hindu rites, cremation of remains took place in Toronto on December 17.

Contact: Bala (647) 328-5204

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# GOOD SHEPHERD CHILDREN'S HOME, MANKULAM

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Raymond Rajabalan

“ LIFE IS ABOUT BRINGING HOPE TO THE HOPELESS AND BREATHING LIFE INTO PEOPLE'S LIVES. IF YOU WANT THE WORLD CHANGED, THEN UNDERSTAND THAT CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU. JUST ONE SMALL OR ONE LARGE ACT OF GENEROSITY CAN IMPACT LIVES

- Benjamin Gresham

After nearly six years, I had the opportunity of visiting Sri Lanka last year, November 2013. Apart from meeting my relatives and friends, the highlight of my journey was a visit to the Good Shepherd Children's Home in the town of Mankulam.

Mankulam is located in northern Sri Lanka, about 3.5 hours drive south of City of Jaffna. A Major road A9 and a railway line connecting North and South of Sri Lanka goes through Mankulam. Mankulam is also located a few hours drive south of Kilinochchi and another few hours drive north of Vavuniya. Highway A34 connects



Mankulam to eastern coastal City of Mullaitivu.

When we visited the Good Shepherd Children's Home located along Mullaitivu Road, we were pleasantly surprised by the variety of joyful emotions expressed by the 60 young children - both Christians as well as Hindus - who are being looked after with great care and compassion by a dedicated team led by a devoted nun Sr. Mary Rajesh.

Though deprived of parental love, these innocent children having faced numerous trials during the civil war impressed us by their variety of talents. We were amazed by the dedication and service of the nuns and dozens of care takers who amidst trying conditions are determined to mould the lives of these children and train them to be productive members of the society.

As soon as we entered the spacious compound of the Children's Home, we were surprised to see the meticulously maintained garden with a variety of colourful flower plants and fruit trees, which obviously contributed to the peaceful atmosphere. The verdant vegetation within the compound was a clear indication of the dedication of the nuns who manage this organization. On seeing our group, the children came rushing and surrounded us and we all were overwhelmed by their pleasant response. Once we were introduced to the children by Sister Mary, the children who had just returned from school had their lunch in a meticulously set up dining hall. After a short interval, the gleeful children gathered around us in and in the presence of Sister Mary Rajesh entertained us with variety of dance performances and some of them recited very meaningful poems that portrayed the sufferings they had undergone during the recent years.

Some of the children then displayed some beautiful hand crafted items and we were truly impressed by their creativity and talents.

The love and reciprocation we received from the children was amazing. Even though it was our first visit to this Children's Home, we soon felt at home and we enjoyed every moment of our stay. The way these children mingled with us and posed for photographs was a great experience. The children were happier than anyone could imagine. It was one of those moments that reminded us of the power of human spirit and hope.

The children then bombarded us with a variety of very intelligent questions wanting to learn about so many things, especially about the life in West. After a few hours, we left the Children's Home promising Sister Mary Rajesh and the children that we will return the following day. The next day afternoon we once again visited the Home and that day being the birthday for two of the children, we shared birthday cakes and sweets with all of them.

We had a pleasant discussion with the children and at times we were mesmerized by their intelligence. We then inquired us about their immediate needs from Sr. Mary Rajesh. She explained in detail the difficulties she faces in running the home and looking after 60 young girls. She explained to us that it was mainly due to the donations from expatriate community that so far she has been able to manage to run the home as effectively as possible. We saw for ourselves the audited financial statements that indicated a very efficient administration of the funds and were convinced that more funds are needed to meet the growing needs of the Home.

We understood the enormous nature of running such an organization and after providing some donation we promised Sister Mary to do our best once we return to Canada. Already some here have come forward to help the Children's Home in whatever possible way.

This definitely is a worthy cause and Lord God will abundantly bless all those who help those who are in need. Those who would like to know more about this noble institution can contact the administrator of the Home Sr. Mary Rajesh at her email address [frjames2010@gmail.com](mailto:frjames2010@gmail.com)



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Jaffna, Sri Lanka born Member of the Canadian House of Commons, Rathika Sitsabaiesan is currently in her place of birth on a private visit, according to Sri Lankan media reports on Dec 30, 2013. Rathika Sitsabaiesan MP is seen here with Chairman of the Valikamam North Local Authority, Somasundaram Sugirthan at the Nallur Kandaswamy temple (pic: Vigneswaran Kajeepan-MTV)

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# Third Annual Silverbells Gala

The third annual Spirit of Christmas dinner gala organized by Silverbells was held on Saturday December 7th 2013 at the newly opened Markham Convention Centre in Scarborough. Popular singer from Sri Lanka Corrine Almeida performed as special artist with the support of Sampath and the Showcase band. Songs from all three languages were performed by Corrine, Sampath and Roshan. Pallu Designer Sarees had a fashion show featuring their latest designs. Gala organizer Elanko Ratnasabapathy thanked all performers, guests and sponsors for the tremendous support given at this year's sold out event. (Pictures by: Gnane Gnanendran)





## Milad-Un-Nabi - Holy Prophet's Birthday, January 13-14



### Guiding Light:

Muslims throughout the world will celebrate the Holy Prophet's Birthday during January 13-14 in 2014.

Allahuma salli ala Muhammadin wa Aal-e Muhammad: O God! Shower thy blessings on Muhammad and the descendants of Muhammad.

Milad-un Nabi or Maulid (Mawlid) is the birthday celebration of our beloved Prophet Muhammad and is celebrated by Muslims as Eid-e Milad. Prophet Muhammad was born in Arabia in the city of Mecca on the 12th day of Rabi-ul-Awwal, which was Monday the 20th day of April, 571 A.C.

The occasion is celebrated by remembering the favours bestowed on the ummah (community), the first is the revelation of the Holy Quran with its instructions, the second, the institution of an Everliving Guide who would advise the mu'mins (believers) according to the needs of the time.

On this day every year, believers gather to recite special prayers for thanksgiving to Allah for sending Prophet Muhammad as a mercy to all nations, and speeches and lectures are made about the seerat (life) and instructions of the Holy Prophet.

Poetry in the form of naats are recited and after the prayers, sweets are distributed and perfume is sprinkled or applied on everyone.

As early as the late eleventh century, and generally from the twelfth century on, the veneration of the Prophet assumed a visible form in the celebration of the maulid, his birthday, on 12 Rabi' ul-awwal, the third month of the Muslim lunar year.

This day is still celebrated in the Muslim world.

The number of poems written for this festive occasion in all Islamic languages is beyond reckoning. From the Eastern end of the Muslim world to the West the maulid is a wonderful occasion for the pious to show their warm love of the Prophet in songs, poems, and prayers.

It seems that the tendency to celebrate the memory of Muhammad's birthday on a larger and more festive scale emerged

first in Egypt during the Fatimid Era (969-1171). This is logical, for the Fatimids claim to be the Prophet's descendants through his daughter Fatima.

The Egyptian historian Maqrizi (d.1442) basing his account on Fatimid sources. It was apparently an occasion in which mainly scholars and the religious establishment participated.

They listened to sermons, and sweets, particularly honey, the Prophet's favourite, were distributed; the poor received alms."

Prophet Muhammad lived among his people and taught them about the belief in one God, ethics in everyday life and the importance of education in leading an exemplary life.

In this regard, some of his famous sayings are "Seek knowledge even unto China", "acquire knowledge, for he who acquires it performs an act of piety; he who speaks of knowledge, praises God: he who seeks it, adores God." He also declared: "The ink of the scholar is more precious than the blood of the martyr."

Islam by its very nature is dynamic and not rigid and spiritual faith should advance with along with material progress. The Muslim World should make the Prophet's life the beacon light for achieving a truly modern and dynamic Islamic society.

The Holy Prophet's life gives us every fundamental guideline that we require to resolve the problems as successfully as our human minds and intellects can visualize.

His example of integrity, loyalty, honesty, generosity, both of means and of time his solicitude for the poor, the weak and the sick, his steadfastness in friendship, his humility in success, his magnanimity in victory, his simplicity, his wisdom in conceiving new solutions for problems which could not be solved by traditional methods, without affecting the fundamental concepts of Islam, surely, all these are foundations which correctly understood and sincerely interpreted, must enable us to conceive what should be a truly modern and dynamic Islamic society in the years ahead.

(Via - amaana.org)

Full text of the press release from the Baha'i International Community regarding the latest Resolution for the United Nations regarding the on-going persecutions of the Baha'is in Iran.

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## UN General Assembly again expresses "deep concern" over continuing human rights violations in Iran



### UNITED NATIONS

The UN General Assembly today expressed "deep concern at serious ongoing and recurring human rights violations" in Iran, showing that the international community will not be swayed by mere promises of improvement.

By a vote of 86 to 36 with 61 abstentions, the Assembly approved a powerfully worded resolution that, while welcoming recent promises by Iran's new president to improve human rights, nevertheless cited alarm over unjustified executions, the use of torture, limits on freedom of assembly and expression, and ongoing discrimination against women, ethnic minorities, and religious minorities, including members of the Baha'i Faith.

"We welcome the fact that the international community clearly prefers action instead of words, and the world has thus made it clear by this vote today that it expects Iran to live up to the new promises it has made, as well as its commitments under international law," said Bani Dugal, the principal representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations.

"Iran has not changed its ways yet. This is certainly true for Iranian Baha'is, who see no let-up in the ongoing, systematic persecution that has been directed by the government since 1979.

"As the catalog of violations in this resolution makes clear, neither has Iran relented in its oppression of millions of other Iranian citizens who only desire to share in the fundamental freedoms that enjoyed by the citizens of most other countries," she said.

Among other things, the resolution expresses "deep concern" over Iran's continued use of torture and its high rate of executions, noting the "high frequency of the carrying out of the death penalty in the absence of internationally recognized

safeguards."

The resolution also noted "widespread and serious restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly, freedom of association and of opinion and expression," the "systematic targeting and harassment of human rights defenders," and "pervasive gender inequality and violence against women."

On the question of discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities, the Assembly expressed concern about discrimination against "Arabs, Azeris, Balochis and Kurds and their defenders," along with ongoing "severe limitations and restrictions on the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief" affecting "Christians, Jews, Muslims, Sunni Muslims and Zoroastrians and their defenders."

The resolution devoted more than one paragraph to the situation facing Iranian Baha'is, noting their "continued persecution" including "targeted attacks and murders, without proper investigation to hold those responsible accountable, arbitrary arrests and detention, the restriction of access to higher education on the basis of religion, the continued imprisonment of the leadership of the Iranian Baha'i community, the closure of Baha'i-owned businesses and the de facto criminalization of membership in the Baha'i faith."

Ms. Dugal noted that more than 100 Baha'is are currently in prison, held solely for their religious beliefs. The resolution was put forward by 47 countries. It also calls on Iran to better cooperate with UN human rights monitors, such as by allowing them to make visits to Iran, and asks the UN secretary general to report back next year on Iran's progress at fulfilling its human rights obligations. Today's resolution was the 26th such resolution by the General Assembly since 1985.



# The United Nations Day for Human Rights, December 10th – Commemorated by Ajax Baha'i community

A community forum, that included a performing arts concert titled: "Peace and Community Harmony" – Towards A Global Society, was staged by the Baha'i community of Ajax, with the support of community partners, on November 23rd at the picturesque lake-side setting of the Caruthers Marsh Pavilion in south Ajax.

The Forum, which was attended by 65 people, featured 22 guest speakers! – 5 were children, 6 were junior youth, (9-12 years of age), and 5 were youth. Organizers also used the Forum to celebrate their annual "Unity in Diversity Week," which has been staged in Ajax, and proclaimed by the Town of Ajax, since 1992. The event is also recognised by the Government of Canada. The "Peace and Community Harmony," – Towards a Global Society, concert series, has been staged since 2002.

This article, attempts to capture the spirit, unity and knowledge exchange that all guests, speakers and performers, contributed to and experienced at the Community Forum. The Forum created, according to several comments received by organizers, "a unique and positive learning environment through prayer, inspirational readings, speeches, cultural perfor-

mances, displays, literature and social interaction - heightened awareness for unity in diversity, and a greater understanding for human rights, and the need to get involved."

The Forum started with prayers for peace and inspirational readings read by the following children. Madison Browne, from Club Carib of Oshawa, Abteen Moslehi, and Ibeen Moslehi, Yalda Baghei, from the Ajax Baha'i community, and Shajhi Rajasingham, from the Tamil Academic and Cultural Society of Durham. This was followed by an overview of the goals and objectives of "Unity in Diversity Week," and a historical account of December 10th the United Nations Day for Human Rights. The overview was given by 4 junior youth. Maya Preston, Olivia Goricane, Shajhi Rajasingham, all students at William Dunbar Public School in Pickering, Shamim Shams, from Southwook Park public school in Ajax, and Kiara Browne, from Club Carib in Oshawa. Extracts from their presentation - summarized.

"Unity in Diversity Week, 18th -14th November. The main purpose of Unity in Diversity Week is to help build positive relations amongst all Canadians, to strengthen equality of

all people, to promote the eradication of all forms of prejudice in communities across Canada, and to work to develop harmonious inter-personal relations of the global society. This means recognizing and appreciating diversity in its broadest sense including, race, ethnicity, gender, age, class, religion, differences of ability, and disability, mental health, temperament, education, neighbourhood, wealth and economic condition."

The "United Nations Human Rights Day, December 10th. On December 10, 1948 - 65 years ago, the member states of the United Nations in a resolution of the General Assembly, adopted a set of ideals and principles entitled, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Their goal was to establish a list of "equal and inalienable rights of all the members of the human family" and to recognize those rights as the "foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world." All human beings are born free and equal in human rights and dignity. They are endowed with reason and conscious, and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." The emcees for the Forum were, Kassra Bahaegi, and Haifa Behbahani, from the Durham Region

Baha'i community. Concert performers included, Trishney Singh, classically trained Indian dancer. Haifa Behbani, singer. Dancers, from the Tamil Fine Arts Academy of Durham Region.

All adult guest speakers, spoke on the same two topics – what does unity in diversity mean to you? How would you promote more awareness for human rights? Speakers were.

Alyssa Esparaz, Dunbarton high school student, and recipient of the 2013 YMCA Peace Medallion Medal. Soroush Shams, Sinclair public school student. Chris Alexander, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Raveena Rajasingham, board member, of the Tamil Academic and Cultural Society of Durham Region. Cecil Ramnauth, volunteer with the Sankat Hanuman Mandir & Cultural Centre. Allison Hector Alexander, Diversity Officer, at Durham College, and for the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. Ron King, member, B'nai Shalom V'Tikavh synagogue.

**By: Roland Rutland,**  
Member Local Spiritual Assembly  
of the Baha'is of Ajax.  
Coordinator, External Affairs,  
Baha'i communities of  
Durham Region.



Roy Browne Club Carib of Oshawa. Dr. Bromley Armstrong, Canadian human rights icon. Dinesh Kumar, director, Rouge Valley Health System Foundation - guests.



Hon. Chris Alexander, MP, Minister Citizenship and Immigration, speaker



Abteen and Ideen Moslehi, - speakers.



Farah Doukht, Don Ibokway, members, Whitby and Oshawa Baha'i communities - guests.



Soroush Shams, Alyssa Esparaz, guest speakers



## 2013 HIGHLIGHTS OF DURHAM TAMIL ASSOCIATION

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TEAM DTA Youth @ DTA's Christmas Party



Kolam Activity enjoyed by kids - 20 Jan 2013



MP Chris Alexander with the Welcome Team at DTA's Pongal



Couples enjoying games during DTA's Harmony Dinner



Cute kids of DTA singing Carols @ the Christmas Party



Children enjoying Dice Picking Game at Annual Sports



DTA SPORTS & BBQ 2013



DTA's Halloween 2013



CRAFT ACTIVITIES DURING DTA'S EASTER EGG HUNT - 30 MARCH 2013



Cute kids of DTA @ the Christmas Party



The Proud Moment for DTA children & youth at the annual youth festival night 2013



DTA'S FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY



DTA Donated \$ 3415.00 to ANBU ILLAM in Mullaitivu @ Thai Pongal - 20 Jan 2013



MP Chris Alexander, Councilor Doug Dickerson, Councilor Peter Rodrigues & Sharon Alipanopoulos of Canadian Cancer Society receiving a cheque for \$ 2141.25 from TEAM DTA Youth who raised this money through daffodil fund raising campaign



DTA Raised & Donated \$5000 to Rouge Valley Hospital Foundation

DTA'S VOLUNTEERING INITIATIVES - YEAR 2013



DTA booth during Canada Day celebration in Pickering & Ajax- 2013



Ben Earle- CDCD, Tracey Vaughan-Recreation Director of Ajax, Waseem Sheikh-CDCD, Josh Suresh-President of DTA with Saranya Suresh, Bhaviyaa Jeyaruban, Harini Kirupatharan & Ashley Kugaraj during Inclusive Durham



Members of DTA at Canadian Blood Services supporting Blood Donation Campaign



The Clean Up Team of DTA after Relay For Life on 1 June 2013



### DTA'S VOLUNTEERING INITIATIVES - YEAR 2013



TEAM DTA Youth volunteers proud to pose with some of the second world war sailors during *Sail-A-Bratton* - July 2013



TEAM DTA Youth volunteers with MPP Tracy Mac Charles, MPP Cornelli Chisu, Dr. Mahbub Hasan of CASSA & Uma Suresh during Toronto Mela



TEAM DTA performers in JAM Festival with Chocolate Margaret & Shireen Whitmore



TEAM DTA Youth with Shireen Whitmore at the JAM Festival - June 2013



Tamara McKee with TEAM DTA @ Stiletto's for the Cure - 7 June 2013



TEAM DTA Youth with Ajax Mayor Steve Parish and Margaret Campbell @ the Fall Festival



TEAM DTA Youth volunteered at the Pickering Courtyard's Easter Egg Hunt - 30 March 2013



TEAM DTA Youth volunteered at the Pickering Courtyard's Easter Egg Hunt - 30 March 2013



Whitby Councillor Pat Perkins, Councillor Lorne Coe, Sharon Alipanopoulos, DTA's Uma Suresh, Thurga & Duja during Taking Steps Against Breast Cancer



Performers & Parents of DTA along with Charlene Johnston of Ajax Library & Multicultural Groups in Asian Heritage Month



TEAM DTA with MPP Joe Dickson & Esther Enyolu - Executive Director of WMRCC @ International Women's day - 7 March 2013



MP Chris Alexander with TEAM DTA during the opening ceremony of Audley Rec Centre - 8 June 2013



TEAM DTA getting ready for the Ajax Home Week Parade



DTA'S VOLUNTEERING INITIATIVES - YEAR 2013



Tracey Vaughan, Robert Gruber & Stacey Toole with Murali, Aarna & Uma Suresh in DTA's booth @ Taste of Ajax



DTA Youth with Joy Tan & Meena Rattan during CDCD's Leadership Training - 3rd July 2013



Team DTA youth with MP Chris Alexander & Councillor Iorine Coe @ mentorship symposium - feb 16 2013



Dancing damsels posing with sashi bhatia & uma suresh @ Indian Independence day celebration



10 Outstanding DTA Youth awarded by Hon.Minister Chris Alexander for their selfless contribution to the community



DTA's youth receiving appreciations from Mayor of City of Pickering Dave Ryan



DTA's Abhishek Ravi with EDAC of Town of Whitby



DTA's youth awarded by Mayor of Town of Ajax Steve Parish



Mr.Martyn Beckett, Mr.Joe Allin , Mr.Chris Braney & Mr.Barry Bedford of DDSB presenting the official poster proclaiming January as TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH to the DTA Executive Committee Members of



DTA's Uma Suresh & Hema Chandra at IDI's Iftar Dinner



Dignitaries with performers of DTA @ South Asian Heritage Month



DTA with other community groups @ the Multi Faith Thanks Giving Dinner



# Christmas celebration within the Tamil Community a success

Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region celebrated its annual Christmas celebration on the 21st of December at the Christ Lutheran Church Hall in Waterloo. A large number of members and their family attended the event.

Addressing the gathering, the President Mrs. Rajivi Nadarajah emphasized the role of the association as a catalyst that unites the cultural, social and religious diversity among the Tamil community in the Waterloo region and City of Guelph. She further stated 2014 will be a mile stone in the history of Waterloo as

the association would be celebrating its 25th Anniversary.

Mrs. Vinoba Chenthil, an executive member hosted the event. She highlighted in her speech to thank the parents of the students of the Waterloo region Tamil language class and their teacher Mrs. Kumanamar for presenting the Tamil Nativity drama program and Carol service. Concluding the message she wished the gathering a merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

The event ended up with games, dinner and the arrival of Santa Claus.





# Educational app startup gets teachers' backing

By Terry Pender

KITCHENER — The organization representing 160,000 Ontario teachers is distributing an app developed by a local startup that simplifies lesson planning, scheduling and collaboration for front-line educators in elementary and secondary schools.

It is a huge boost for Kitchener-based startup Vetica.

The web and iPad app, called Planboard, was developed by William Zhou, Suraj Srinivas and Ryan McKay-Fleming. The trio launched Vetica in February 2012, and has since worked out of the University of Waterloo's tech incubator in the Communitech Hub in the Tannery building.

After 22 months of hard work, Vetica had about 25,000 teachers using its product, mostly in North America, but also in several other countries. The deal with the Ontario Teachers' Federation could see the number increase significantly and quickly.

"The partnership with the teachers' federation lends a lot of credibility to us in Ontario and around the world," said Srinivas.

The federation loaded the app with 250 sample lessons that can be quickly changed by individual teachers for their own classes. The Ontario curriculum is built into the app as well. The teachers' federation is offering training sessions to its members.

Ian Pettigrew of the teachers' federation said Planboard is an excellent way for the organization to support front-line teachers. "It is technology that supports teachers, does not supplant them," he said. "We recognize the landscape in our classrooms and the preparation that goes into the lessons are changing."

Srinivas said that "it is great satisfaction to know that we put together something that is at that level where we have someone as influential and respected as the teachers' federation say, 'Yeah, we will throw in our lot with you.'"

Not long after Vetica was founded, the startup received funding to work with the faculty of education at Brock University in St. Catharines. That led to changes in the app to meet the needs of classroom teachers. Then for several frustrating months, Vetica worked to sell its product directly to teachers. That did not y.

"Teachers are pretty strapped for cash," Zhou said. "They are spending out of pocket for classroom expenses already."

There are several different parts to Planboard — lesson planning, a resources bank that archives all material created by teachers at a school or within a board, and a secure private network for chatting and collaboration.

"When they are happy with a lesson plan, they click on publish and it goes into the resources bank," Srinivas said.

In the fall of 2012, Srinivas was online chatting with a teacher in Texas who was crazy about the product. He bought 70 licences. At first Srinivas thought he was



Vetica founders (from left) Suraj Srinivas, William Zhou and Ryan McKay-Fleming developed Planboard, an app that simplifies lesson planning and scheduling for teachers. Philip Walker, Record staff

being pranked by his co-founders, but the deal was legit.

It caused the founders to change their business model in March of this year. They offered Planboard to teachers for free, but sell the other parts of the app — the resources bank and social network. This new model works much better than the old.

Srinivas likens the new approach to giving away blackboards for free, and selling the chalk. "We realized that giving away this feature product, allowing teachers to save time on their planning, they can become our champions," Zhou said.

Principals would not listen to some-

one from Vetica, but they do listen to their own teachers.

Sales started a steady climb and the team at Vetica started paying themselves a salary. "So we are doing well," Srinivas said.

Vetica is now rolling out Planboard with the Niagara District School Board. About 150 teachers in Waterloo Region are currently using Planboard.

The startup, which hired Zoe Share, a former kindergarten teacher, to work on sales and marketing, said the plan now is to grow the business one school board at a time.

tpender@therecord.com

## Kreyonic: Sri Lankan-based app for children finds a home in Kitchener

By Terry Pender

KITCHENER — Using three small plush toys — a cow, a rabbit and a duck — young children enter a magical world on their parents' tablets and learn about rational thinking, problem solving, numbers, colours and shapes along the way.

Welcome to Qboo — the brainchild of a startup called Kreyonic, which has roots on the other side of the globe.

Lahiru Lakmal Priyadarshana and his co-founders, Dasun Priyankara Kulathunga and Amani Soysa, developed the educational game in Sri Lanka. The startup scene in Sri Lanka is just emerging, so they searched the world for a program to help them bring their ideas to market. They found the Hyperdrive program in the Communitech Hub in the Tannery building in downtown Kitchener.

"We read about them, seemed very interesting, so we sent in an application," Priyadarshana says.

Kulathunga and Priyadarshana have special visas that give technology entrepreneurs landed residency status in Canada. Soysa is in Sri Lanka applying for her visa. All three plan to remain in Canada and build their company.

These special visas are viewed as a competitive advantage for Canada's technology sector. Getting into the United States can be notoriously difficult for immigrants, even highly educated, high-tech entrepreneurs.

Priyadarshana and Kulathunga moved 15,000 kilometres to downtown Kitchener in August, incorporated Kreyonic in September and made their pitch to investors during the Hyperdrive Demo Day in October.

Kreyonic raised \$50,000 on that day in October. In November, it started a crowdfunding campaign on Indiegogo to raise \$25,000 for the first run of 1,000 games. As of Monday, it had raised just over \$2,500.

The company is seeking another \$125,000 from investors.

"We got a lot of interest," Priyadarshana says. "We see a lot of potential in this."

The crowdfunding money will be used to produce the first 1,000 games. Kreyonic will gather feedback from the initial customers and refine the product before mass production.

Priyadarshana and his partners were doing custom solutions for companies in Sri Lanka that included touch-sensitive



Dasun Priyankara Kulathunga (left) and Lahiru Lakmal Priyadarshana came to Kitchener from Sri Lanka to launch their startup, Kreyonic, which has developed an educational app that interacts with plush toys.

walls and tables. But they always wanted to come up with their own product.

Inspiration came when Priyadarshana watched his young nephews playing with iPhones and iPads.

"Whether we like it or not, children already have access to these devices," he says.

"It is too easy for parents just to hand over their smartphone so they have time to do other work. So these devices act as a temporary babysitter sometimes. Most of the time, children play games on these devices, even though they are not educational games."

The Qboo app takes children ages three to six into a magical world. Three plush cubes, made to look like farmyard animals, interact with a tablet app when the toy is placed on the tablet screen. The app offers different stories the children must work through with the stuffed animals.

The first story is about a birthday party. The characters prepare a birthday party the night before the big day. When they wake up, some party favours have disappeared — either the birthday cake, the presents or the balloons. The missing items change every time the game is played.

"So it gives them a new experience each time they play," Priyadarshana says. "The animals have to go on an adventure to find the balloons."

On the way, they meet monsters and obstacles. The cow, rabbit and duck each have unique qualities that help them overcome challenges. The rabbit is great at jumping over holes. The duck swims across pools of water. The stalwart cow is called on to deal with monsters.

"They have to choose the correct character based on the situation," Priyadarshana says.

tpender@therecord.com



**WHITBY**  
ONTARIO • CANADA



Regional News

# WHITBY MAYOR PAT PERKINS ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR YOUTH IN THE PERFORMING ARTS

Town of Whitby Mayor Pat Perkins announced funding for youth in the performing arts through financial assistance from The Association in Support of the Whitby Performing Arts Centre.

“This funding will help shape the future of the performing arts by exposing Whitby’s youth to numerous artistic endeavours,” says Mayor Perkins.

“Grants to three community organizations—the Optimist Club of Brooklin, Whitby Courthouse Theatre and Whitby Chamber of Commerce—will provide enhanced opportunities to Whitby’s young people to achieve their dreams of participating in the performing arts.

“Creating opportunities for our youth to participate early on in the performing arts will shape their lives in a way that grows their appreciation for arts and culture.

“An annual grant to the Optimist Club of Brooklin and the Whitby Courthouse Theatre will go to enrich our youth, giving them the skills such as self-confidence, creative thinking, motivation, commitment, collaboration and teamwork.

“Bursaries to Whitby youth who wish to pursue the performing arts in their post-secondary studies will be channeled through the Whitby Chamber of Commerce, possibly as a component of their annual Peter Perry and Business Achievement Awards program.

“This investment in our youth is truly an investment in the arts and cultural assets of the community, which is an essential pillar of why Whitby is the Community of Choice for families and business,” says Mayor Perkins.

The Town of Whitby already supports performance-based youth initiatives such as Whitby Idol, Whitby Film Fest and Whitby’s Got Talent, all programs that run through the Town’s Youth Section in partnership with the Whitby Youth Council.

The Association in Support of the Whitby Performing Arts Centre

**WHITBY**

Platinum Level Youth Friendly Community

[www.whitby.ca](http://www.whitby.ca)

is a federally incorporated not-for-profit organization run by an independent community-based volunteer Board. The funding for the organization flows from Mayor Perkins’ Annual Gala for the Performing Arts Centre.

For more information, please call 905.430.4300 x2203 or email [mayor@whitby.ca](mailto:mayor@whitby.ca).

**Now Hiring**

Join the Town of Whitby! For Summer Student Camp Employment Program Job Posting and Application Addendum Form, please visit [www.whitby.ca/employment](http://www.whitby.ca/employment). Deadline for applications: January 20, 2014.



## January Events

[www.whitby.ca/calendar](http://www.whitby.ca/calendar)

Event Name	Location	Date	Time
Newcomers Welcome Program for Seniors	Whitby Seniors' Activity Centre, 801 Brock Street South, Whitby	Thursday, January 2, 2014	1:00-3:30 p.m.
Special Meeting of Council	Whitby Municipal Building, 575 Rossland Road East, Whitby	Monday, January 6, 2014	5:00-6:00 p.m.
Planning and Development Committee Meeting	Council Chambers, Whitby Municipal Building, 575 Rossland Road East, Whitby	Monday, January 6, 2014	7:00 p.m.
Newcomers Welcome Program for Seniors	Whitby Seniors' Activity Centre, 801 Brock Street South, Whitby	Thursday, January 9, 2014	1:00-3:30 p.m.
Special Meeting of Council—Budget	Council Chambers, Whitby Municipal Building, 575 Rossland Road East, Whitby	Thursday, January 9, 2014	7:00 p.m.
Special Meeting of Council	Whitby Municipal Building, 575 Rossland Road East, Whitby	Monday, January 13, 2014	6:00-7:00 p.m.
Operations Committee Meeting	Council Chambers, Whitby Municipal Building, 575 Rossland Road East, Whitby	Monday, January 13, 2014	7:00 p.m.
Newcomers Welcome Program for Seniors	Whitby Seniors' Activity Centre, 801 Brock Street South, Whitby	Thursday, January 16, 2014	1:00-3:30 p.m.
Youth Dance	Heydenshore Pavilion, 589 Water Street, Whitby	Friday, January 17, 2014	7:00-10:00 p.m.
Wendy's Free Public Skate	Wendy's Arena 2, Iroquois Park Sports Centre, 500 Victoria Street West, Whitby	Saturday, January 18, 2014	2:15-3:15 p.m.
Special Meeting of Council—Budget	Council Chambers, Whitby Municipal Building, 575 Rossland Road East, Whitby	Monday, January 20, 2014	7:00 p.m.
Management Committee Meeting	Whitby Municipal Building, 575 Rossland Road East, Whitby	Tuesday, January 21, 2014	2:00 p.m.
Newcomers Welcome Program for Seniors	Whitby Seniors' Activity Centre, 801 Brock Street South, Whitby	Thursday, January 23, 2014	1:00-3:30 p.m.
Planning and Development Committee Meeting	Council Chambers, Whitby Municipal Building, 575 Rossland Road East, Whitby	Monday, January 27, 2014	7:00 p.m.
Newcomers Welcome Program for Seniors	Whitby Seniors' Activity Centre, 801 Brock Street South, Whitby	Thursday, January 30, 2014	1:00-3:30 p.m.
Youth Dance	Heydenshore Pavilion, 589 Water Street, Whitby	Friday, January 31, 2014	7:00-10:00 p.m.

**WHITBY**  
ONTARIO • CANADA

# Happy New Year!

from Mayor Perkins and Members of Council

### Stretching Your Recreation Dollar

The Town of Whitby applies to and receives grants in order to offer additional programs and services at no additional cost to the taxpayer. The Parks and Recreation Division is pleased to offer the following programs as a result of partnerships and grant opportunities:

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	PARTNERS	CONTACT
<b>Grade 5 Action Pass</b> September 2013 – August 31, 2014	This action pass is available for all students in grade 5. The pass allows students free unlimited access to drop-in public skate and gym programs across the Region. Check municipal schedules for eligible programs.	Durham Region Health Department and Durham Region Municipalities	Email: <a href="mailto:parks.rec@whitby.ca">parks.rec@whitby.ca</a> Phone: 905.430.4310
<b>Swim to Survive</b> January 2014 – June 2014	All grade 3 students participate in three swimming lessons that teach three basic skills needed to survive an unexpected fall into deep water. This program enhances children’s safety around the water.	Lifesaving Society	Email: <a href="mailto:swim@whitby.ca">swim@whitby.ca</a> Phone: 905.666.1991
<b>After School Programs</b> September 2013 – June 2014	Programs offered to school-age residents after school focused on physical activity, healthy eating and nutrition, wellness and personal health education.	Provincial Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport	Email: <a href="mailto:youth@whitby.ca">youth@whitby.ca</a> Phone: 905.655.2010
<b>Summer Playground Program</b> July 2014 – August 2014	This program is a free drop-in style program offered in local community parks over the summer months. The program provides activities for children and encourages friendship, physical activity and creativity in a safe and positive environment.	Provincial Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport	Email: <a href="mailto:parks.rec@whitby.ca">parks.rec@whitby.ca</a> Phone: 905.430.4310



## FLATO MARKHAM THEATRE LAUNCHES TAKE YOUR SEAT CAMPAIGN

Individuals and businesses invited to support live arts in Markham

The Flato Markham Theatre is launching its Take Your Seat campaign, which offers individuals, groups and businesses the opportunity to become a permanent part of the Flato Markham Theatre by naming a seat or box in its intimate, state-of-the-art, highly accessible performance hall. The Theatre plays a vital role in the community as a premier performing arts venue that attracts world-class live theatre, concerts, comedy shows and family entertainment from across the globe. It is also an important space for cultural events, educational opportunities and community groups.

Boasting excellent sightlines from all 527 seats, Flato Markham Theatre underwent renovations this summer to give this almost 30-year-old landmark a facelift, and more importantly, enhance accessibility for its patrons. The renovations include versatile new seating that better accommodates mobility devices such as wheelchairs, along with new lighting and extra handrails.

"I'm extremely proud of the local, national and world-class talent hosted at Flato Markham Theatre," said Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti. "Our commitment is to entertain, educate and engage residents and visitors through live arts and culture in our state-of-the-art performance hall. This new program is a great way to celebrate resident and business contributions to our theatre."

Among the theatre's many supporters is Flato Developments, which provided an important theatre endowment last year.

"I invite individuals, groups and businesses to join me by taking a seat, or box, at the Flato Markham Theatre," said Flato Developments

President Shakir Rehmatullah and Honorary Chair of the Take Your Seat Campaign. "Each donation will help to sustain the growth of performing arts in Markham. Your generosity and commitment to the arts will be recognized by theatre audiences for generations to come."

Over 125,000 guests attend more than 300 events each year at the Flato Markham Theatre. Through Markham Theatre Discovery, the Flato Markham Theatre offers comprehensive educational and community outreach initiatives, including student matinees, youth camps and artist residencies. Last year, those programs provided opportunities to 35,000 children, seniors, families, and others from



all walks of life. The theatre also provides service to more than 100 community organizations, promoters and corporations producing over 250 events and performances each year.

The Flato Markham Theatre Take Your Seat campaign enables donors to give a tax deductible gift at one of three distinct levels and choose the location of their seat or box from those not yet reserved. Anyone interested in becoming a Take Your Seat campaign donor can do so by visiting the 'Take Your Seat Campaign' page at [www.markhamtheatre.ca](http://www.markhamtheatre.ca), emailing [asmithko@markham.ca](mailto:asmithko@markham.ca), or calling 905-415-7537, ext. 5700.

Culture is a vital part of a vibrant and liveable community. To learn more about the City of Markham's long-



term strategic management and development of its civic cultural assets, including the Flato Markham Theatre, read the City of Markham Culture Policy and Plan.

### About Flato Markham Theatre:

Flato Markham Theatre is a jewel in the crown of the Markham community located only 30 minutes from the downtown core. The intimate, 527-seat, state-of-the-art performance facility provides patrons with unforgettable access to a host of internationally acclaimed artists and productions through its annual Diamond Series Season presented by Weins Canada. Illuminating the central theme that live arts in Markham matters, the season features the best of classical, jazz, world music, dance, comedy, pop artists, and family

entertainment. Flexible ticket package options, student discounts (EYE GO to the Arts/UGO) and complimentary parking are available.

### About Markham:

Markham, a municipality with more than 330,000 residents centrally located in the Greater Toronto area, is home to 400 corporate head offices and 900 high tech and life science companies. Founded in the 1790s, today Markham is Canada's most diverse community, and enjoys a rich heritage, outstanding community planning and services, and a vibrant local economy. Canada's newest urban city as of July 1, 2012, Markham has received the Excellence Canada PEP III Integrated and Accessibility Awards, and multiple heritage and environmental awards.

## THE CITY OF MARKHAM HAS A NEW OFFICIAL PLAN

The new Official Plan sets out a long term vision for the continued development of Markham as a vibrant, liveable urban city.

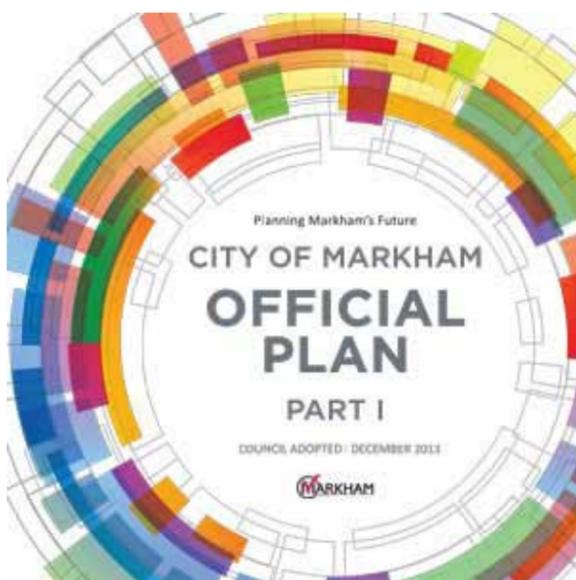
Notice of Council Decision on Markham's New Official Plan  
On December 10, 2013 Markham Council adopted a new Official Plan. The Markham Official Plan, Part I, provides a vision for growth in Markham over the next 20 years, based on the principles of protecting natural environment and agricultural lands, building healthy communities, increasing travel options and maintaining a strong economy. On December 20, 2013 the new Official Plan was forwarded to York Region for approval.

Additional information about the Official Plan Review and past

consultation and background studies is available on our website.

Send your comments and questions to [officialplan@markham.ca](mailto:officialplan@markham.ca) or contact Margaret Wouters, Sr. Manager, Policy & Research

(905) 477-7000, ext. 2909.



## CWHL and Markham team up for Clarkson Cup

### City to host prestigious championship for two more years

The Canadian Women's Hockey League and the City of Markham today announced that the Clarkson Cup will return to Markham in 2014 and 2015. The city hosted the 2013 Clarkson Cup to great fanfare and today's announcement is a testament to the broad and growing appeal of this world-class professional hockey championship.

Known as the Stanley Cup of women's hockey, the Clarkson Cup will take place at the Markham Centennial Community Centre from March 18-22, 2014. Presented in partnership with lead sponsor Scotiabank, the tournament will feature the top four CWHL teams competing for a chance to hoist the six-year old trophy. As the 2013 reigning champions, the Boston Blades will look to defend their title this season.

"Last year's Clarkson Cup tournament was a great success on so many levels," said Brenda Andress, Commissioner of the Canadian Women's Hockey League. "We smashed through attendance records, made a lasting connection with fans and proved that the state of women's professional hockey is alive and well."

As hosts, the City of Markham has demonstrated its shared commitment to growing our game and ensuring the Clarkson Cup continues to showcase the very best in women's hockey," added Andress.

According to the Ontario Women's Hockey Association, more than 2,500 women and



Clarkson cup announcement

girls play minor hockey in Markham and that number continues to grow each year.

"This tournament is a great inspiration for everyone who plays the game and we're thrilled at the opportunity to extend our partnership with the CWHL," said Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti. "Professional women hockey players serve as important role models for young women and we welcome the opportunity to help grow competitive sport participation by young women right here in Markham."

"As longtime supporters of Canadian women's hockey, Scotiabank is proud to help bring the Clarkson Cup to Markham," said Peter Branov, Scotiabank Manager of the Main Street Markham Branch. "This tournament is an exciting showcase of incredibly talented female athletes and an inspiration to all minor girl hockey players from communities across the country. It shows young athletes how much can be achieved through team work and dedication."

# New Executive Board Elected at Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce

The Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce held its Annual General Meeting on December 2 at the Princess Banquet Hall. The new Executive Board for 2013/2014 was elected and well known Entrepreneur and Engineer Sinnadurai Jeyakumar became the new President.

Speaking to the audience the President elect assured that he will steer the Chamber to benefit the core small-business community and entrepreneurs towards strength and in ensuring a prosperous future for all. He thanked the previous boards, members and well wishers

of the Chamber in enabling the growth of the organization.

The members of the new Executive Board were announced at the meeting and they are:

- President: Sinnadurai Jeyakumar
- Executive Vice President: Santha Panchalingam
- Vice President Internal Affairs: Sivan Ilanko
- Vice President Finance: Dilani Gunarajah
- Vice President Membership: Ajith Sabaratnam
- Vice President Community Relations: Akila Senthil

Director: Nimal Vinayagamoorthy

Director: Sujan Shan

Director: Guna Thuraisingham

Announcement was also made that the Annual Canadian Tamils Chamber of Commerce Awards Presentation will be held on April 5, 2014.

For further information, please contact

– Jeyakumar: 416-816-4970

Photo Courtesy: Tamil Mirror



President - Sinnadurai Jeyakumar



Exec. Vice-President - Santha Panchalingam



VP, Internal Affairs - Sivan Ilanko



VP, Finance - Dilani Gunarajah



VP, Membership - Ajith Sabaratnam



VP, Community Relations - Akila Senthil



Director - Nimal Vinayagamoorthy



Director - Sujan Shan



Director - Guna Thuraisingham

## CONDO UNITS FOR SALE / LEASE



For Lease: 300 Front St - 1 b/r available immediately - \$1,550



For Sale: Kennedy & Eglinton 2 b/r plus den, 2 full w/r plus parking & locker - \$244,900



For Sale: Kennedy & 401 2 b/r, 2 w/r plus parking \$274,900

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Broker of Record  
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# Celebrates 1st Awards Night

Life 100 Insurance & Investments Inc. celebrated its glittering 1st Awards Dinner Night on Sunday, Dec 29th at Viva City Banquet Hall. President and CEO of the company, Sritharan Thurairajah, a successful MDRT producer started this new venture about an year ago, so that he can reach out with new and experienced agents in hiring and training towards becoming more successful as a career in the Insurance Industry. He delivered an enthusiastic speech to motivate his agents and also thanked all the invited guests, his office support staff, agents and their families for the support extended during the 1st challenging year. Some of the photos taken during the event can be seen here along with the list of award winners

Photo Courtesy: e-Kuruvi



President  
Sritharan Thurairajah



MC  
Gajan Mahan



Award Presenter  
Ken Kirupa



Address By  
Gary Anandasangaree



Top Producer 2013  
AMOS RAM



Top Producer 2013  
1ST Runner Up  
GUNA SELIAH



Top Producer 2013  
2nd Runner Up  
EMMANUEL MARIANESAN



Top Producer 2013  
3rd Runner Up  
ANUJA KUMARASAMY



Top Rookie 2013  
MANGA VIMALATHAS



Top Rookie 2013  
SARA ARJUNA



Award of Appreciation 2013  
THILEEPAN RAMANATHAN



Award of Appreciation 2013  
RAKURAKAVAN PATHMANATHAN



Award of Appreciation 2013  
VAYKUNTHAN VARATHARAJAH



Award of Appreciation 2013  
S RAVICHANDRADEVA



Award of Appreciation 2013  
NIRUBAN NAKEENTHIRAN



Award of Appreciation 2013  
MICHAEL WILLIAMS



Award of Appreciation 2013  
JANARTHANAN RAJALINGAM



Life 100's Admin Staff

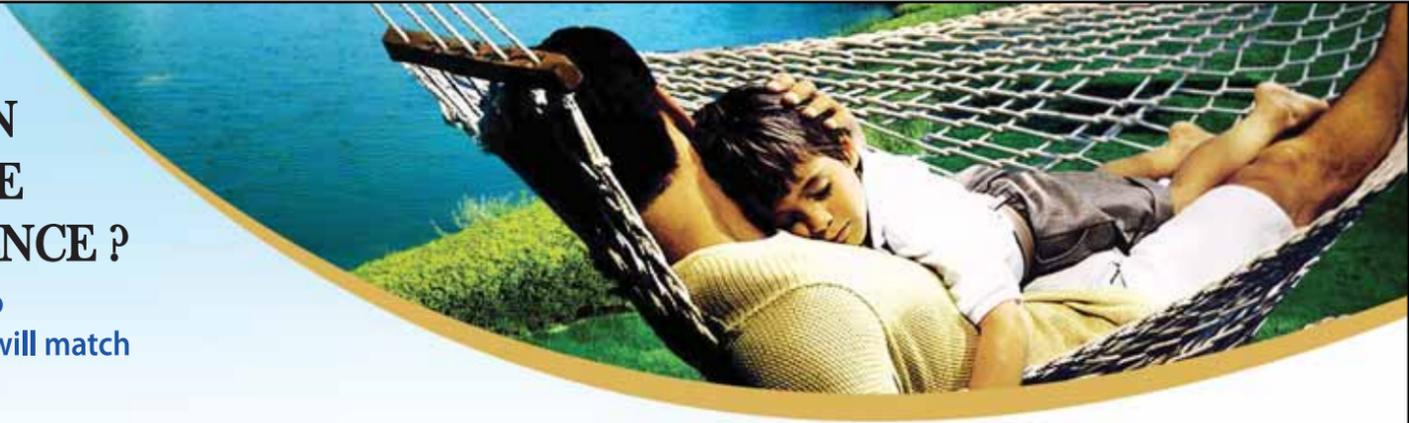


YLP Team With Sivan Ilanko



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