



# Newsletter

**VISAKHA VIDYALAYA OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION**  
**133, Vajira Road, Colombo 5 [www.visakhav.org](http://www.visakhav.org)**

May 2016

Dear Members,

With the year of centennial celebrations just seven months away, the VVOGA together with the school is geared up to welcome this milestone in style.

A 'commemorative stamp' is on the cards to be issued to mark the centenary celebrations of Visakha Vidyalaya and the 'Centenary Souvenir' will also be published capturing significant events and personalities in the history of the school.

16<sup>th</sup> of January 2017 will be marked with an alms giving for 100 priests whereas the Founder's Day pirith and alms giving will take place on 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> March. The much awaited 'Visakha Walk' will be in February and planting of 100 trees to give back to nature that gives us so much is also scheduled in the events calendar of the school.

An educational exhibition in view of the 100 year celebrations will be held in February whereas the 'Visakha Centenary Carnival' is scheduled for April. Past Visakhians will be treated to a gala Centenary Banquet in August and of course the legendary '*Visakha Geetha Natakaya*' will be staged in October 2017.



Apart from helping a school in a remote area, a poster and essay competition will be launched at school level to mark the centennial year celebrations of Visakha Vidyalaya.

Joyous news for the current and former Girl Guides of Visakha as the opportunity to rally around the 'Centenary Camp Fire' is theirs, in the coming months. Await our next issue of the VVOGA newsletter for more details on these exciting events to unfold.

Don't forget that Visakha Centenary Dinner Dance in October 2016 will precede all this events. Come join us !

## DINNER DANCE KICKS OFF VISAKHA CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

The Old Girls' Association of the school is poised to kick off the centenary celebrations with a fabulous Dinner Dance on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The dance will be held at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel and is intended to raise funds to support and maintain the English stream at Visakha.

With more and more students opting to study in English at Ordinary and Advanced Levels, the demand for trained teachers and teaching resources is ever increasing. The OGA has been facilitating the English stream since 2008.

The scope of the English Education fund has widened considerably since then, and today Rs. 2 million is required to maintain the programme for one year.

Dear Ladies ! Let's get together and contribute towards this worthy cause. Your donations/ contributions are most welcome. To know more about the project get connected with ;

**Chandima ☎ 0773 280 901**  
**<[chandima.karu@gmail.com](mailto:chandima.karu@gmail.com)>**

**Renuka ☎ 0777 289 389**  
**<[renukadharmadasa@yahoo.com](mailto:renukadharmadasa@yahoo.com)>**

## TIME TO REFLECT



From a very young age we learn to compare, first colours and shapes then concepts; "me" & "you". Once formed it's a tedious habit to put brakes on.

True, there may be times when drawing a comparison is appropriate; for instance when we sport a genuine urge within us to make things better. In such instances comparison becomes a key tool in our kit for gauging progress and benchmarking. But honing the habit of comparing as a lifelong practice and applying to all aspects of life, is only a means of undoing whatever good that we do and opening a Pandora's Box.

But it's hard to resist. Our minds by now are hardwired to latch on to whatever data to first compare then judge. We tend to forget that our mental comparisons are inaccurate yardsticks and that comparing the worst we know of ourselves with the best we assume of others or our strengths with someone else's Achilles' heel falls short of accuracy by a large margin.

Comparison reinforces superiority complexes or subtle feelings of inferiority and either of these scenarios of 'I win - you lose' or vice versa leaves us in a constant undercurrent of unease and tension.

In this rat race, we unwittingly pass on this toxic legacy to our children. While we worry intensely about the possibilities of our loved ones developing food poisoning via contaminated food, we care much less about what we let them have as food for thought.

It's time to keep the urge to compare in its place. Otherwise we run the risk of being plagued by the "not good enough" syndrome throughout this short lifespan of ours.

In fact, the game of comparison clutters up our heads in such a way that we have to spend significant mental resources in order to tap into who we truly are, and what's most important in our lives beyond the exterior.

We often strive to move mountains and shift continents in order to make a difference. Yet, what if only a little bit of a shift in our mindset is all that is needed?

In this month fit for quiet contemplation, why not unveil our minds from the cloud of comparison and make room for a fresh perspective. You don't have to look far for inspiration, go out to the garden and look around;

*"A flower does not think of competing with the next flower, it just blooms".*

Editor - Thamarasi Mahawattage

## UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2016

- |                          |                          |         |                      |            |             |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------|----------------------|------------|-------------|
| • AGM                    | June 25 <sup>th</sup>    | 3.00 pm | - Jeremias Dias Hall | ☎ Darshi   | 077 3084142 |
| • Esala Sil              | July 19 <sup>th</sup>    | 6.00 am | - School Bo-maluwa   | ☎ Visakha  | 076 8691555 |
| • Pulimood Oration       | July 23 <sup>rd</sup>    | 5.15 pm | - Jeremias Dias Hall | ☎ Shanta   | 077 6851348 |
| • Centenary Dinner Dance | October 29 <sup>th</sup> | 9.00 pm | - Cinnamon Grand     | ☎ Chandima | 077 3280901 |

## SUBCOMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Newsletter Subcommittee - We wish to thank the members who've switched to the e-newsletter and request the other members too to exercise the option of receiving the VVOGA newsletter by email.

Send your OGA No/Name & Email Address to <oga@visakhav.org> to receive your e-newsletter.

- Secretariat Subcommittee - If you wish to volunteer for photocopying duties & secretariat duties during school hours, please contact Punsirini ☎ 0777 222 988 <punsirini@yahoo.com>

## DIFFERENT PATHS, DIFFERENT DESTINATIONS BUT ONE THING IN COMMON-THESE OLD GIRLS ARE DOING US PROUD

### First ever lady principal of Sri Lanka Law College

Mrs. Padmini Indira Senaratne Samarasinghe, a past Visakhian and President's Counsel assumed duties as the first ever lady principal of Sri Lanka Law College on November 9, 2015.



She earned her LL.B. at the University of Colombo and her LL.M. at the Monash University in Australia. She also holds a Post Graduate Diploma in International Law and Organization for Development, from the Institute of Social Studies, the Hague and a Diploma in Commercial Arbitration from the Institute for the Development of Commercial Law and Practice.

She joined the Legal Draftsman's Department as an Assistant Legal Draftsman and retired as the Head of the Legal Draftsman's Department in December, 2012.

She is a former President of the Women Lawyers' Association of Sri Lanka and member of the Executive Committee of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka. While we wish you all the best for your tenure of office, our heartiest congratulations for creating history.

### Sri Lankan representative at Asian Games

Mrs. Janaki Fernando nee Jayawickrama, a past Visakhian has been selected to represent Sri Lanka at the Asian Games 2016. She will be representing our country in Athletics in 60 to 70 age group at the Asian Games in May 2016 in Singapore.



Based on Janaki's excellent performance in the over 65 years age category at the Sri Lanka Masters Athletics Annual Championship held in May last year, she was chosen to represent Sri Lanka in '2015 Masters Athletics Open Championship' organized by the Udupi Masters Athletics Association - India. At the said Open Championship held in the Karnataka State in India in October 2015 she secured Gold, Silver and Bronze medals in Javelin Throw, Shot Put and Discus Throw respectively.

Our Congratulations, Janaki and wish you the best of luck to do our country proud at the Asian Games too.

### Recipient of French national honours

Dias House captain of 1969, Mrs. Yasmin Rajapakse (nee Boteju), was recently conferred the French Government honour 'Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres' (Chevalier in the Order of Arts and Letters)".



On behalf of the French Government the above title was conferred on her by Jean- Marin Schuh, the French Ambassador to Sri Lanka.

This prestigious title is conferred on "persons who have distinguished themselves by their creativity in the field of art, culture and literature or for their contribution to the influence of arts in France and throughout the world."

Yasmin, who produced and presented the weekly "Bonsoir" TV programme from 1985-2005 recalls that during the twenty years of work she discovered the rich heritage that was available for her to work to culturally link France and Sri Lanka. Heartiest congratulations to you, Yasmin on receiving such honours in the international arena.

### World Women Leadership Congress awardee

A past Visakhian and the Managing Director of Diligent Group Sri Lanka and Qatar Trading and Contracting WLL, Qatar, Mrs. Nishani Jayasinghe Ranaweera, was felicitated with the "World Women Leadership Achievement Award" at the World Women Leadership Congress 2016 held in India in February.



Nishani who holds a MBA from the University of Western Sydney, Australia is an Associate Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka (ACA), an Associate Member of the Society of Certified Management Accountants of Sri Lanka (ASCMA) and an Associate Member of the Institute of Professional Financial Managers (AIPFM) (UK).

The objective of the WWLCA is to showcase women Leaders, organizations, talent and professionals from different parts of the world. Our warm wishes and congratulations to you, for reaching such heights.

***"Mother Visakha has always transformed us into brilliant and well respected ladies who are all rounders and who excel in whatever field we set our minds to, while always reminding us to retain our moral principles and humility..." - Sachitha Gunawardena (2003 Batch)***

## APPRECIATIONS

### MRS. EILEEN SIRIWARDENA, A PAST PRINCIPAL, AUTHOR & EDUCATIONIST



It is with profound sadness we record the passing away of Mrs. Eileen Siriwardena at the age of 87. Having begun her professional career as a teacher, she later on served as the principal of Visakha Vidyalaya, Colombo from 1983 - 1987. One of the projects during her tenure was the construction of the sports pavilion by the Old Girls' Association.

She was also responsible for the extension of the school Bo-maluwa to include an area for meditation to help the young Visakhians to develop spiritual values.

Being a writer, the service she rendered to the progress of the Arts section of the school is noteworthy and is remembered with gratitude. She encouraged her students also to write and to engage in creative writing. During her period as the head of the school, various events in the school calendar such as the 'Science Day' and 'Kala Ulela' were held on a grand scale.

She was a prominent educationist and talented author whose novels 'Delowak Athara' and 'Ahasin Polowata' were even adopted as films. Equipped with the command of both Sinhala and English, Mrs. Siriwardena has authored many popular books, including 'Kshema Bhumiya', 'Balan Harimi Kadathurawa' and 'Weralen Sayurata'.

She also translated challenging literary work from English to Sinhala, including T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets. She was the recipient of the D.R. Wijewardena Award for the best unpublished novel in 1984. She was conferred the title 'Kala Keerthi' in 1989 for her contribution to the field of Arts in Sri Lanka.

Following her retirement, she offered her services in the capacity of a consultant to many state institutions. Mrs. Eileen Siriwardena who served the nation as an educationist and an illustrious author passed away at her residence on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

May she attain the supreme bliss of Nirvana!

### PUNYAKANTHI DE SILVA, A PAST VISAKHIAN & A GREAT PHILANTHROPIST

Mrs. Punyakanthi de Silva (nee de Soysa), was a much loved and respected person who passed away on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2013, aged 68 years. Punyakanthi was a devout Buddhist and a great philanthropist. She was a great benefactor to our organization, "Success - Colombo". She contributed lavishly to the restoration of Buddhist places of worship in the North and East, in the former threatened villages of Sri Lanka in Weli-Oya, Trincomalee, Vavuniya and Ampara.

She was a silent donor to many Buddhist organizations as well. She was also an active committee member of the De Soysa Maternity Hospital, donated by her maternal great uncle the late Sir Charles de Soysa. She personally funded the air conditioning of the labour room of this premier maternity hospital.

Punyakanthi always shunned the limelight and publicity. She sat in the shadows and helped whatever charity that asked for help or any other organisation she found that needed help. It was after much persuasion,

that she finally agreed to be the chief guest at the annual general meeting of "Success - Colombo" in 2009.

She looked after her aunt, Mrs. Chandra de Soysa past vice principal of Visakha Vidyalaya, with great devotion until her death, well into the eighth decade of life.

Punyakanthi married Chanaka de Silva, a champion athlete and former head prefect of Royal College and was blessed with Anjalee, their only offspring. Anjalee became head prefect of Visakha Vidyalaya in 1988.

Punyakanthi was a great benefactor to her "alma mater". She lavishly contributed more than her mite whenever urgent funds were needed for Visakha.

Dear Punyakanthi, your dear parents could not have selected a better name for you, because you performed "punya" or good deeds all your life. May your journey in sansara be short. May you attain the supreme bliss of Nirvana!

Anula Wijesundere (nee Samaranayake)

## OBITUARIES

- As we are getting ready for the centenary celebrations, we are saddened by the demise of Ms. Sumana Saparamadu, journalist, editor and a stalwart of the VVOGA, Chairperson of the Organizing Committee of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the school, who passed away on 14th April 2016. Please note that we will be featuring this loyal Old Girl of our school in the next issue.
- Also it is with deep sorrow that we record the passing away of Mrs. Sunanda Alwis Ranawaka, an active past Visakhian who served in the VVOGA EXCO, Dhamma School at Visakha Hostel and as a teacher at Visakha Nursery.

***'As brief as our lives are, nothing will remain with us forever'***



## VISAKHA VIDYALAYA OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION Notice of the Annual General Meeting 2016

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Visakha Vidyalaya Old Girls' Association will be held **on Saturday, 25th day of June 2016 at 3.00 pm** at the Jeremias Dias Hall, Visakha Vidyalaya, 133, Vajira Road, Colombo 5 for the purpose of inter alia electing new members for the Executive Committee 2016/2017 and Auditors for the Association and to adopt resolutions as necessary.

Nominations in the relevant format need to be completed and sent by Registered Post to the VVOGA Secretariat (at the above address) latest by **Friday the 10th day of June 2016 by 3.30 pm**.

The nomination list would be on display at the OGA Secretariat **until Friday 17th June 2016**.  
The final date for the objections to the nominations (if any) would be **Saturday 18th June 2016**.

Voting will be open **until 5.00 pm** on the day of the AGM.

### Agenda for the AGM

1. Religious observances
2. Welcome address by the President
3. Reading of the Notice of the Meeting by the Secretary
4. Condolences
5. Excuses
6. Reading & adoption of minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting & matters arising from the minutes
7. Election of Office Bearers & Members of the Executive Committee
8. Tabling & adoption of the Secretaries' Report
9. Tabling & adoption of the Statement of Accounts by the Treasurer
10. Appointment of Auditors
11. Tabling & adoption of the Statements of Accounts of any Trusts or Affiliations of the Association by invitation
12. Consideration of any resolutions which are in order - discussion, voting & passing of resolutions
13. Vote of thanks
14. School song

### NOMINATIONS FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2016 / 2017

Nominations are invited from the general membership to serve on the Executive Committee of the Visakha Vidyalaya Old Girls' Association. Nominations should be sent on the prescribed form (appended herewith).

The Executive Committee of the Visakha Vidyalaya Old Girls' Association comprises of the following;

<b>President</b>	- Principal of Visakha Vidyalaya (Ex officio)
<b>Vice Presidents</b>	- Two posts
<b>Joint Secretaries</b>	- Two posts
<b>Treasurer</b>	- One post
<b>Assistant Treasurer</b>	- One post

<b>Committee Members</b>	- Total 30
60 yrs & above	- 02 positions
Above 40 yrs & below 60 yrs	- 10 positions
Above 30 yrs & below 40 yrs	- 14 positions
30 yrs & below	- 03 positions
Staff member	- 01 position

***The criteria for eligibility & non eligibility as per the VVOGA constitution are as follows.***

#### **Eligibility**

- Any past pupil who has been a member of the Association for a minimum period of five (05) consecutive years ending on the 31st March 2016 shall be eligible for election to the Executive Committee.
- Members who have served on the Executive Committee for a period of two (2) years or more and are of high integrity and efficient are eligible for nomination as Office Bearers. However, the maximum number of occasions as Office Bearer is 06.

#### **Non-eligibility**

- No member whose daughter's application is to be submitted for admission to any grade of Visakha Vidyalaya for any particular year, shall be eligible for election to the Executive Committee for the one (01) year immediately preceding the year of submission of such application for admission and until the admission process is complete.

*Eg : No member whose daughter's application is to be submitted in 2017 shall be eligible for election to the Executive Committee 2016/2017 and until the admission process is complete.*

- No member of the Association shall be elected a member of the Executive Committee for more than three (03) consecutive years. (This does not apply to Office Bearers).
- No member who has been elected an Executive Committee Member or an Office Bearer in a Past Pupils' Association of another school; shall be eligible for election to the Executive Committee of the Visakha Vidyalaya Old Girls' Association for that particular year.
- No member may be elected an Office Bearer of the Association on more than six (06) occasions.
- An Office Bearer on being elected to such office each year could hold a particular office for a maximum period of two years. However, in the absence of nominations for a particular office in any given year, such a member who has held such office for more than two years may be appointed to continue in such office for one more year.
- Those who qualify to serve on the Executive Committee should send in their nominations in the attached format.

By order of the Executive Committee, Visakha Vidyalaya Old Girls' Association

**Renuka Dharmadasa / Darshi Neelawathura Bandara**

Honorary Joint Secretaries, 2015/2016

Visakha Vidyalaya Old Girls' Association

# NOMINATION FORM

## VVOGA NOMINATION FORM

### ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2016/2017

#### PROPOSER :

I propose the name of \_\_\_\_\_

(Name as used in Full. Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

For the Office of \_\_\_\_\_ /as Executive Committee Member for Category

Over 60 yrs	
Over 40 & below 60 yrs	
Over 30 & below 40 yrs	
30 yrs & below	
Staff	

Membership No. of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

_____ Name of Proposer	_____ Membership No.	_____ Date of Joining VVOGA	_____ Signature & Date
---------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------------

#### SECONDER :

I second the name of \_\_\_\_\_

(Name as used in Full. Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

bearing membership No. \_\_\_\_\_ for the above post.

_____ Name of Seconder	_____ Membership No.	_____ Date of Joining VVOGA	_____ Signature & Date
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#### CONSENT OF NOMINEE

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Address : \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Nos. \_\_\_\_\_

Membership No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Joining VVOGA \_\_\_\_\_

#### Fill if applicable

1) Year of submission of application for admission of daughter to Grade 1 \_\_\_\_\_

2) Details of current membership in Executive Committee or Office Bearer of any other PPA/OGA \_\_\_\_\_

3) Been an Ex-Co Member consecutively for 2011-2012,2012-2013,2013-2014,2014-2015,2015-2016 Yes/No

4) Nominee, Proposer & Seconder are Members of VVOGA since 31/3/2011-31/3/2016 Yes/No

I consent to be nominated for the above post & hereby declare that the above information furnished by me is true & correct.

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE FORWARD THE COMPLETED NOMINATION FORM BY HAND / REGISTERED POST TO REACH THE JT. SECRETARIES ON OR BEFORE 3.30 PM ON JUNE 10, 2016**

## CONCLUDED EVENTS IN 2016

<b>Annual Bodhi Pooja</b> January 16, 2016 	<b>Children's Day Celebrations</b> January 30, 2016 	<b>Founder's Day Pirith &amp; Dane</b> March 25 & 26, 2016 	<b>Visakha Avurudu Pola</b> April 2, 2016 
Commemorating the school's 99th birthday	Past & present hostellers ready for action	All night long pirith chanting to invoke blessings	Chief Guest Ms. Lamabadusuriya along with the school principal

## STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

In 2010, the Education Subcommittee initiated the "Student Scholarship Programme" and over the last 6 years, we have touched the lives of many students by way of scholarships.

Many of the scholarship winners have fared very well and entered universities including the medical and engineering faculties. We have even found scholarships for students to pursue their university careers.

Many hostellers from rural areas with parents who are not steady income earners but rely on daily wages amidst trying economic conditions are recipients of this programme.

Each student is paid Rs. 3500 monthly. While the hostel fee is covered through this programme, the day scholars receive cash to buy books and pay their tuition fees.

This programme would not be successful if not for your kind generosity. Currently we are looking for donors and if you or anyone you know is interested in sponsoring students, please e-mail ;

Sarangi <sarap@gmail.com>  
Imojani <imojani58@yahoo.com>  
Eranthi <EranthiP@masholdings.com>

## VISAKHA CENTENARY EXHIBITION

The school seeks the valuable support of the VVOGA membership to make the centenary exhibition a stunning success.

This educational exhibition which will be a forum for showcasing the talents and creativity of our school girls, is organized under the categories of Science, Commerce, Arts and IT. Thus the school looks forward to your co-operation by way of professional expertise as well as financial assistance.

Your expertise and guidance is sought to generate new ideas and for planning and creating novel and innovative exhibits for the event while financial support is sought to help turn the ideas into a reality.

For further details kindly contact ;

Ms. Buddhinie Medawatte ☎ 077 2788401  
<buddhiniemedawatte@yahoo.com>

Registered at the Department of Posts of Sri Lanka  
Under No: QD/175/NEWS/2016  
**Visakha Vidyalaya Old Girls' Association**  
133, Vajira Road, Colombo 05



"Peace comes from within.  
Do not seek it without."

To :