





## EVERY CHILD IS A BORN NATURALIST

**We** are at the end of another year - 2017 - the year Visakha Centenary was celebrated with many events in style. At the dawn of a new year, let's focus on something we missed for the past few years when we were focusing on the classroom education. Education is known as the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits in the general context. Are all these in the textbooks? You will say no. Then how can children learn these? Isn't it by experience or by listening to stories? Can you remember how you played with your brothers, sisters and friends? What did you learn by playing? I believe you learnt to respect others, work as a team, listen to others, so on and so forth.

If you go back to your childhood, what is your most memorable moment? Most probably you will be able to recall memories of playing with your siblings, making sand castles or maybe looking at the stars in the night. Some might remember quiet moments of solitude watching the clouds drifting by or sunlight flickering through the leaves of a tall tree. Nature play can be an effective teaching strategy across the curriculum and may furnish children and teachers with lasting memories. It can be very difficult for working parents to find the time or energy to engage in active play with their children. Dinner and laundry do not take care of themselves, but still must be done after a hard day at work.

Nowadays children have drifted from playing outdoors to playing computer games. This has an immense effect on their brain and growth which is named as 'Nature Deficit Disorder'. Researchers depict that these increase childhood depression, obesity, and shortened attention spans as products of lost time communing with nature. Nature play provides opportunities for young imaginations,

growing vocabularies, and potential social skills as children negotiate themes and scenarios and settle arguments. Children rather than teachers often direct nature play, thus building a sense of competence and collaboration.

Children are intrinsically motivated to observe, examine, compare, and experiment when faced with unknown plants, animals, and physical environments. During nature play, children take in a wide variety of information that is not available indoors. They use all of their senses as they explore and create in outdoor settings. Teachers can use children's curiosity about nature to help them develop scientific inquiry, a focussed and systematic approach to observation, documentation, and investigation. Scientific inquiry involves several stages, including wonder and exploration, taking action, extending and clarifying questions, searching for patterns and relationships, and sharing ideas.

So many of us have forgotten or never known the joys of spending time with children outdoors to enhance learning. Once Mahathma Gandhi said "To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves". We have only to step outside of the classroom door to activate children's curiosity and take learning to a new level.

### **Once Mahathma Gandhi said**

**Their eyes are, by nature, open to the glories of the stars, the beauty of flowers, and the mystery of life.**

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# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2017/18



## SEATED (FROM L TO R)

Ms. Samiddhi Dewapura, Ms. Renuka Dharmadasa, Ms. Iresha Senarath (Asst Treasurer), Ms. Imojani Marasinghe (Jt Secretary), Ms. Shanta Gunaratne (Vice-President), Ms. Sandamali Aviruppola (President), Ms. Priyangani Ratnasekera (Vice-President), Ms. Eranthi Premaratne (Jt Secretary), Ms. Achintha Jayawardhane (Treasurer), Ms. Arundhathi Chandrathilake, Ms. Buddhini Medawatte (Staff Member)

## STANDING (FROM L TO R)

Ms. Champa Jayawardena, Ms. Disna Sajeevani, Ms. Gowri Ratnayake, Ms. Wathsala Abeysinghe, Ms. Rasangani Premathilake, Ms. Nimali Heenpella, Ms. Gayathri Weeratunga, Ms. Poornima Kulasekera, Ms. Prabha Sanjeewanie, Ms. Chamindi Ekanayake, Ms. Rukshanie Vidyaratne, Ms. Tharushika Deshapriya, Ms. Akila Senarathne, Ms. Chathuri Amaradivakara, Ms. Iresha Senanayake, Ms. Kushani Athukorala, Ms. Arosha Hemali, Ms. Shehara Sirisena, Ms. Sabitha Gunathilake, Ms. Visaka Samaraweera, Ms. Lakmini Rathnasekera, Ms. Chamari Dhanapala

## ABSENT

Dr. Anula Wijesundara, Ms. Sujeenie Gunasekara, Ms. Chamari Obeysekara, Ms. Vajira Samithasiri

## CONVENERS OF VVOGA – 2017/18

**Archives** - Ms.Champa Jayawardena

**Cafeteria** - Ms.Shehara Sirisena

**Education and UK Bursaries** - Ms.Chathuri Amaradiwakara

**Equipment** - Ms.Nimali Heenpella

**Fund Raising** - Ms.Chamindi Ekanayake

**School Matters** - Ms.Buddhini Madawatte

**Fund Raising** - Ms.Akila Senaratne

**Medical Officers /Sick Room** - Ms.Rasangani Premathilake

**New Members** - Ms.Gayathri Weeratunga

**Newsletter/ Website/Foreign Branches** - Ms.Rukshanie Vidyaratne

**Religious Activities** - Ms.Chamindi Ekanayake

**Secretariat** - Ms.Arosha Hemali

**Social Activities** - Ms.Tharushika Deshapriya



## MEDICAL CAMP FOR PAST AND PRESENT TEACHERS - 2017

The Annual Medical Camp for the past and present teachers, organized by the Medical sub-committee of the Visakha Vidyalaya Old Girls' Association (VVOGA) was held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2017 from 8.00 a.m onwards in the school premises with participation of over 30 consultants from over 15 specialties. Professor Chandanie Wanigathunga who serves as a Professor of Pharmacology at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.



A number of diagnostic and curative services such as ECG, Echocardiograph, Ultra Sonography & Doppler Studies, Cancer Screening, Family Planning, Vision Screening & Optometry and Dental Services were offered along with a range of laboratory investigations. These services were delivered to approximately 250 participants including past and present teachers, principals, other staff members and their families.



## Centenary Banquet

## VISAKHA CENTENARY BANQUET

A banquet to rejoice and celebrate the journey of a hundred years of our alma mater was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at the Oak room, Cinnamon Grand attended by a large gathering of old girls to pay tribute to our founder- who generously contributed to setting up the school, our managers whose prudent management helped the steady progress over the years until the state take

over in 1961, our dedicated Principals who steered the fortunes of our school diligently and efficiently, the dedicated teachers past and present and the students who took up the challenge to produce excellent results in all fields academic and extra-curricular. A special documentary on the history of our school was screened bringing nostalgic memories of days gone by.



## AGM 2017

## Annual General Meeting and Sing- Along



The Visakha Vidyalaya Old Girls' Association which serves as a stronghold of the school's immense development, held their Annual General Meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2017 at the Jeremias Dias Hall, Visakha Vidyalaya, Colombo 04.

A Sing Along was also held right after the AGM. The event renewed the Visakhian fellowship and was a fun filled event for both young and old, as they all sang and danced to their hearts' content.

## Esala Sil

## Esala Sil Programme



The Esala sil programme was organized by the religious sub-committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2017. A full day programme consisting of dhamma sakachcha, bana sermons and meditation programmes by renowned bhikkhus and bhikkhunis were successfully conducted with the participation of past and present teachers and the old girls.

## Pulimood ORATION

## 27TH SUSAN GEORGE PULIMOOD MEMORIAL ORATION

The Annual Susan George Memorial Oration of Visakha Vidyalaya, was held this year on Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> July at 5.15p.m at the Jeremias Dias Hall of the school which was well attended and received publicity in the press before and after the event. The Oration was delivered by Dr. Iyanthimala Abeyewickreme Senior Consultant Venereologist. Hon. Senior Fellow, Post Graduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo, Immediate Past President, Sri Lanka Medical Association, Former Regional Adviser/HIV, World Health Organization, South East Asia Region.

The title of the oration "30 Years into the HIV Epidemic in Sri Lanka; Achievements, Challenges & Perspectives" was very informative and was eloquently delivered and kept the audience very interested. We were able to award 4 scholarships for outstanding performances at the A/L examination and are thankful to our generous donors who come forward every year with their contributions.





## Hostellers' Dhamma School

### Visakha Vidyalaya Hostellers' Dhamma School



Visakha Vidyalaya Hostellers' Dhamma School has been playing a vital role for more than 10 years. Mrs. Sabitha Gunatilake, the Head Teacher of Dhamma School and her dedicated staff organized two special events for year 2017 in celebrating the glorious 100 years of Visakha Vidyalaya. The World Children's day was celebrated & was sponsored by the Religious Sub-Committee. The children were treated to a feast of cuisine they like.

## Centenary Campfire

### Visakha Centenary Campfire

Visakha centenary campfire lit up on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2017 at the Jeremias Dias Hall from 6.30 p.m onwards. This fun-filled campfire was organized by the Past and Present Girl Guides of the 11<sup>th</sup> Colombo Guides Company in celebration of the Visakha Vidyalaya centenary anniversary.

Adverse weather conditions were unable to hamper the excitement of the girl guides, although the organizers were forced to make this an indoor event with a mock fire. Even so, the organizing committee succeeded to inspire the true effect of camp fire within the school Main Hall for the guides.

Apart from the 100th year celebration of Visakha Vidyalaya, there were few other centenary celebrations connected with the 'Visakha Centenary Camp Fire' which uplifted the event's significance. The year 2017 commemorated the Centenary of the Girl Guides Movement in Sri Lanka and the 100th birthday of the Late Mrs. Sita Rajasuriya.

Late Mrs. Sita Rajasuriya was a proud past Visakhian who was a much loved and respected captain of the 11<sup>th</sup> Colombo Company back in the day and was a trail blazer in the Girl Guides movement. She brought honour to her Alma Mater Visakha Vidyalaya and her country by becoming the First Sri Lankan who was elected to the World Committee of World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), the first Chairman of the AP Regional Committee and the First Asian to chair a World Conference of WAGGGS.





## SPORTS MEDICINE WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS



The Annual Sports Medicine Workshop, organized by the Medical Sub Committee of the VVOGA was held at the school on the 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2017, for the 7<sup>th</sup> Successful year.

The objective of this program was to educate the Games Captain / House Captains & their deputies, Sports women & teachers in charge of prevention and minimizing of sports related injuries, First Aid Measures to be taken in case of injury and Nutritional factors important to players.

*Asombro*



The Old Girls Association of Visakha Vidyalaya "Amazed" their members with 'ASOMBRO', an evening of fellowship with High Tea and a Fashion Show.

The event was held on Sunday, the 26<sup>th</sup> of November (2017), at the School Main Hall successfully as an evening of fun, fellowship & fashion.

Asombro was yet another event to mark the Centenary Celebrations of the school. The Theme of the Fashion Show was, "Celebrating Diversity among Women" and was exclusively brought together by well-known designers Yasisurie Kiribandara, Lonali Rodrigo and Sheruka Mahakumarage, the apparel footwear accessories were modelled by Visakhians themselves.



# UN YOUTH DELEGATE



## SHESHADRI KOTTEARACHCHI WAS APPOINTED TO THE POST OF A NATIONAL YOUTH DELEGATE FOR THE UN 2017/2018

Sheshadri Kottearachchi was appointed to the post of a National Youth Delegate for the UN 2017/2018 and recently arrived from a 2-week diplomatic mission at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. A past head girl of Visakha Vidyalaya, she holds a BSc. (Hons.) in International Relations from the University of London and she is a graduate with a special degree in English from the University of Kelaniya. She focuses on promoting Gender Equality and better standards of education for the youth of Sri Lanka.



## A VISAKHIAN TAKING ON THE BIG CHALLENGES FACING NEWBORNS - DR. ANUSHI RAJAPAKSA



Dr. Anushi Rajapaksa is an academic biomedical engineer and an emerging early career researcher (ECR) in the field of novel bedside technologies for newborn babies. Anushi graduated with first class honours from Monash University with degrees in Bachelor of Science and Electrical and Computer Systems Engineering. In Oct 2013, she was awarded a Ph.D. by Monash University where she successfully demonstrated a new platform for “inhaled DNA vaccines”. She is a proud Visakhian from the 2004 batch.

Dr. Rajapaksa was named in 2010 Young Biomedical Engineer of the Year (Engineers Australia). She was recently named as a finalist for the 2017 Victorian Telstra Business Woman of the year in the public sector and academia category. The Telstra Business Women’s Awards shine a light on women who are pushing the boundaries and thriving in their chosen profession.



# LEADING FROM THE FRONT

## ACHIEVEMENTS OF OLD GIRLS



Doctor Anomi Jayasinghe, has become the first Sri Lankan professional in Aviation Medicine to be selected as a member of the International Academy of Aviation & Space Medicine (IAASM), in recognition of her contribution to this field in Sri Lanka for over a decade.

A past pupil of Vishaka Vidyalaya, she earned her first qualifications at the North Colombo Medical College, Ragama and the University of West Indies in Barbados. She was originally trained in anesthesiology at the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine of the University of Colombo but eventually opted for a career in Aviation Medicine. Dr. Anomi pursued postgraduate training in Aviation Medicine and obtained the Australian Certificate of Civil Aviation Medicine from Monash University; Aviation Medicine Course from Singapore Aviation Academy; and a Diploma in Occupational Health & Safety from the University of Colombo.

She served at the General Hospital Anuradhapura where she handled disaster management, trauma cases and aeromedical evacuation of patients during the civil war, and thereafter she was attached to the Military Hospital in Colombo.

### VISAKHIAN EXCELS AT 20<sup>TH</sup> MASTERS ATHLETIC CHAMPIONSHIP - CHINA

Janaki Jayawickrama Fernando was selected to participate in the 20<sup>th</sup> Masters Athletic Championship at Rugao, China held from September 24<sup>th</sup> to September 29<sup>th</sup> 2017.

### JANAKI BAGGED THREE SILVER MEDALS AT THE CHAMPIONSHIP.

- Javelin Throw** – Silver
- Discus Throw** – Silver
- Hammer Throw** – Silver



### සිංහල ශබ්දකෝෂ කාර්යාලයේ ප්‍රධාන කතෘ ධූරයට ප්‍රථම වරට විශාඛාවක් පත්වේ

සිංහල ශබ්දකෝෂ කාර්යාලයේ ප්‍රධාන කතෘ ධූරයට ප්‍රථම වරට මහාචාර්යවරියක් පත්විය. ඒ භාග්‍ය හිමිකර ගත්තේ කොළඹ විශ්ව විද්‍යාලයේ මහාචාර්ය රෝනිණි පරණවිතාන මහත්මියයි.

1956 සිට 1964 දක්වා විශාඛා විද්‍යාලයේ අධ්‍යාපනය සම්පූර්ණ කළ ඇය 1696 වසරේදී විශ්ව විද්‍යාල දිවිය ඇරඹීය. සිංහල මහාචාර්යවරියක් ලෙස පරණවිතාන මහත්මිය කොළඹ විශ්ව විද්‍යාලයේ දීර්ඝ කාලයක් සේවයේ නිරත විය. ඇයගේ දියණියන් තිදෙනාම මෙරට මෙන්ම විදේශයන්හි ඉහළ වෘත්තීයවල සිටින විශාඛාවියන් වීම ද විශේෂත්වයකි.





# THE ANNUAL PRIZE GIVING

## THE ANNUAL PRIZE GIVING OF VISAKHA VIDYALAYA - 2016

The annual prize giving of Visakha Vidyalaya, Colombo was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017 at the Jeremias Dias Hall under the patronage of the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe. The Minister of Education, Hon. Akila Viraj Kariyawasam was the guest of honour and an eminent past Visakhian Prof. Anula Wijesundera was invited as a special guest to grace the occasion.

The Prime Minister emphasized that Visakha Vidyalaya has been ranked first place as per the results of the 2016 GCE Ordinary Level Examination among 1,270 schools.



## විශාලා ගීත නාටකය

නොවැම්බර් මස 01,02



විශාලා විද්‍යාලයීය අභිමනාවක් සියවස් සැමරුමට සමගාමීව ශ්‍රී චන්දරත්න මානවසිංහයන්ගේ විශාලා ගීත නාටකයට අනුව කේ.බී. හේරත් සූරින් විසින් ප්‍රතිනිර්මාණය කරන ලද විශාලා ගීත නාටකය, 2017 නොවැම්බර් මස 01 වෙනි බදාදා කමලා කපිලසේන මහත්මියගේ ප්‍රධානත්වයෙන් ද, නොවැම්බර් මස 02 වෙනි බ්‍රහස්පතින්දා ලලිතා ගුණරත්න මහත්මියගේ ප්‍රධානත්වයෙන් ද සවස 6.30 ට විද්‍යාලයීය ජෙරමියස් ශාලාවේදී වේදිකා ගත කරන ලදී.

බෞද්ධ සංස්කෘතියේ විශිෂ්ඨ චරිතයක් වූ විශාලා සිටු දියණියගේ චරිතයේ පූර්වාදර්ශයක් වන කාන්තාවකට අවශ්‍ය ශික්ෂණය, සංවර්ධනය, අභියෝග ජයගැනීමේ ආත්ම විශ්වාසය මෙන්ම පරිත්‍යාගශීලීත්වය ද මෙමගින් මනා ලෙස නිරූපණය කෙරිණි. 1959 ප්‍රථමයෙන්ම වේදිකා ගතවූ විශාලා ගීත නාටකය එවකට විදුහල්පතිනිය වූ සුසන්ත ජොර්ජ් පුලිමඩ් මැතිණියගේ ආරාධනයෙන් ශ්‍රී චන්දරත්න මානවසිංහයන්ගේ නිර්මාණයකි. එවකට ගුරු මණ්ඩලයේ සිටි ඩේසි කරවිට මෙනෙවියගේ නොමසුරු දායකත්වය ද මෙම විශාලා ගීත නාටකයට හිමිවුණි. පසුව විශාලා විද්‍යාලයීය සවර්ණ ජයන්තිය වෙනුවෙන් 1967 වසරේ දී ද, වප්‍ර ජයන්තිය වෙනුවෙන් 1992 වසරේ දී ද, වසර 90ක් පිරීම නිමිත්තෙන් 2007 දී ද විශාලා ගීත නාටකය රභ දැක්විණි.



## VISAKHIANS Flying High



The national carrier – Sri Lankan Airlines added a new chapter to the aviation history at 40000ft to commemorate the glorious 100 years of excellence of Visakha Vidyalaya on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2017.

The Sri Lankan Airlines UL454 from Colombo (CMB) to Nartia (NRT), flown by Pilot in command, Capt. Chamika Rupasinghe with her crew headed by Senior Cabin Manager Ajantha Karunatileke, was certainly a flight to remember.

### ALMA MATER CAMARADERIE ON UL 454 ON THE 2ND OF DECEMBER 2017

- |                                          |                            |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Pilot in Command                       | - Capt. Chamika Rupasinghe |
| • Senior Cabin Manager                   | - Ajantha Karunatileke     |
| • Cabin Supervisor /Japanese Interpreter | - Deepthi Peiris           |
| • Cabin Supervisor                       | - Rashini Rajawasam        |
| • Cabin Supervisor                       | - Ayomi Indiketiyahewage   |

### FLIGHT ATTENDANTS

- Duresha Kariyawasam
- Serangi Jayaratne
- Charitha Paranamanne
- Umangi Singhabahu
- Chithmi Ranawaka
- Nishani Dassanayake
- Denushka Weeraperuma



## VOLUNTEERS NOTICES

### EDUCATIONAL SUB-COMMITTEE

The education sub- committee is looking for qualified English / Elocution teachers. If you are interested to volunteer please send your CV with a cover note to [chathuri329@gmail.com](mailto:chathuri329@gmail.com)

The Education Sub Committee is awarding scholarships to students in need. If you are interested in joining this program as a donor; please fill a donor application form at the OGA Secretariat and hand over the duly filled form to the Secretariat.

### SINHALA DRAMA

The editorial board of the centenary souvenir is looking for Photographs of winning Sinhala dramas at Inter School Drama /Dance competitions. Please send scanned high resolution pictures with details - name of play, event, year, public performance and names of lead actors/actresses to [shantagun@gmail.com](mailto:shantagun@gmail.com) before the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Hard copies can be handed over to Deepika Hathurusinghe 0711399488 by prior appointment or to Mrs. Sita Siriwardena.

### SECRETARIAT

We need volunteers to serve at the VVOGA Secretariat and to undertake photocopying responsibilities during school hours. Those interested should contact,

**Arosha - 077 251 9975**

### CAFETERIA

We need volunteers to serve at the school cafeteria. Those interested should contact,

**Lakmini - 077 813 3525**

### VISAKHA CENTENARY PUBLICATION

#### HP's Gallery

Final Call to Head Prefects who have not sent their photos for the HP's gallery. An image from your school days should be sent to [shantagun@gmail.com](mailto:shantagun@gmail.com) on or before the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018 to Shanta Gunaratna

### THE CENTENARY TABLE CLOTH

The Centenary table cloth is in progress. If you would like your signature embroidered on the table cloth please contact,

**Madushani - 077 846 3618**



# NEWSLETTER

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

**100**  
VISAKHA VIDYALAYA  
1917 - 2017

## Upcoming Events

- **17<sup>th</sup> February**  
Childrens Day
- **25<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> March**  
Founder's Day Pirith & Alms Giving
- **7<sup>th</sup> April**  
Avurudu Pola

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“ How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the strong, because someday in your life, you will have been all of these.”

**George Washington Carver Botanist**  
Agricultural Chemist, Inventor, Educator

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Registered at the Department of Posts of Sri Lanka  
Under No: QD/99/NEWS/2018  
Visakha Vidyalaya Old Girls' Association  
133, Vajira Road,  
Colombo 05.