



VISAKHA VIDYALAYA OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY 2023



THRIVING THROUGH ADVERSITY

It is no secret that the past few years have been an onslaught to the global community with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the local front our people have suffered tremendously. First at the hands of the “Easter Sunday Bombings” in 2019, the multiple waves of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021 and now probably the worst economic crisis in the history of our country. From sky-rocketing inflation, to a collapsing currency, fuel queues and shortages of essentials, the Sri Lankan public has been battered badly in 2022.

However, through all the doom and gloom what stands out the most is the resilience of our people. We highlighted this in our July 2022 issue, aptly named “Rising with Resilience”. The resilience of Sri Lankans is something instilled in our very nature. Throughout our modern history we have overcome a 30 year Civil War, a devastating Tsunami, and all the troubles of the past 3 years. But our community still finds a way to continue to be mentally strong, help our fellow Sri Lankans in any way we can, and continue our daily lives with the hopes of a better tomorrow.

As Old Girls of Visakha Vidyalaya we must also appreciate the hardships faced by the greater Visakhian community. Particularly our students, teachers and hostellers. With this in mind the OGA focussed its efforts for 2022 on improving conditions as much as possible for our girls. Let us all join to support each other and our alma mater during these difficult times and thrive through Adversity.

Sukitha Cooray
Tharini Seram

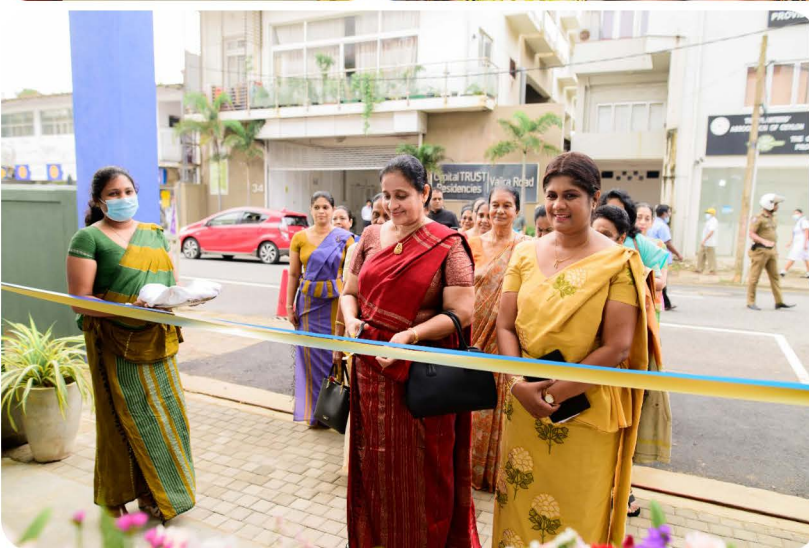


SCHOOL EVENTS

Grand Opening Ceremony of the Centenary Primary Building

26th of October 2022, marked a memorable day in the history of Visakha Vidyalaya, with the grand opening ceremony of the 'Visakha Centenary Primary Building'. It was indeed a lovely dream come true, built upon the efforts of thousands of Visakhians. The monument of love and hope "The Centenary Primary Building" was officially handed over to the school on this day with an improved learning and teaching environment for the young Visakhians. Ms. Sandamali Aviruppola, the Chief Guest, Ms. Manomi Senevirathna, the Principal, Deputy Principals, Past Principals, members of the Centenary Primary Building Committee, Officials and members of the VVOGA, Officials and members of School Development Society, Teachers, Donors and well wishers participated in this memorable event. The devoted efforts of the generous Visakhians, donors and well-wishers by means of individual donations and collective fund-raising efforts including the concert 'Kishani sings for Visakha' held in 2014, Centenary Walk, Centenary Carnival, The Centenary Year publication, and many more projects finally contributed the Rs 100 million needed for the Centenary Primary Building fund. The sheer dedication of the Centenary Primary Building Committee, the VVOGA and donors, is a symbol of gratitude for their Alma Mater which after having overcome many obstacles, culminated in the form of this glamorous monument. We hope this initiative will provide young Visakhians with the optimal learning environment, best equipping them with the knowledge and skills to conquer their dreams and expand their horizons.

There was also a Pirith Ceremony held on the 25th of October 2022 in order to invoke blessings for the opening of the Centenary Primary Building, with the participation of the Principal, Teachers and the old girls of Visakha Vidyalaya.





Visakha Vidyalaya Annual Inter House Sports Meet 2022

The Annual Inter-house Upper School Sports Meet of Visakha Vidyalaya was held on the 10th of October 2022 at the School Premises.

The Secretary of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, Dr. Amal Harsha de Silva was the Chief Guest while Ms. Gayani Dissanayake, a Visakhian and a key member of the National netball team who won the Asia Cup in 2022, graced the event as the Guest of Honour.

Pulimood House scoring a total of 410 points secured 1st place while Jayathilake House with 392 points and Dias House with 365 points followed with 2nd & 3rd places at the Annual Inter-house Sports Meet 2022.





Visakha Vidyalaya Primary Sports Meet 2022

The Primary Sports Meet of Visakha Vidyalaya was held on the 30th of September 2022 at the School grounds. Ms. Amaya Karunaratne, former Head Prefect in 2010/2011 was the Chief Guest.



Susan George Pulimood Memorial Oration – 2022

The 31st Susan George Pulimood Memorial Oration was held on the 31st of August 2022 at the Jeremias Dias Hall, Visakha Vidyalaya along with a live stream telecast. Prof Deleeka Dias, Professor from the Department of Electronic and Telecommunication Engineering was the orator this year and delivered her oration on the topic "The Magical World of Connectivity" sharing insights on the connectivity of humans to machines and everyday objects into one big network which has made the world become an incredibly powerful repository of intelligence. The event was well patronized in spite of the fuel restrictions.

Susan George Pulimood Award Winners for 2022 are as follows.

Bio Science – Joint Winners - Chanuli Seneesha Hettiarachchi & K. M. G. Tarini Shenara Dias

Physical Science - G. A. Savithi Hansadi

Arts - Ranudi Gunawardena

Best All Rounder - Nilakna Disiwari Warushavithana





INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW EXCO

Visakha Vidyalaya Old Girls' Association EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - 2022/2023



Seated from Left to Right

Uthpala Dissanayake
(Staff Member)

H.L.Erandi Harshani Nanayakkara
(Assistant Treasurer)

Visakha Samaraweera
(Joint Secretary)

Punsirini Malavi
(Vice President)

Ms. Manomi Seneviratne
(President)

Sharmini De Almeda
(Vice President)

Sarang Perera
(Joint Secretary)

Sumudu Lakmali Abeygunawardana
(Treasurer)

Jeevani Pandithage
(Advisor)

Standing 1st row from Left to Right

Sonali Fernando
Co-Convenor Fund Raising S/C

Imesha Madushani Rodrigo
Co-Convenor Archives S/C

Manika Weerawardena
Co-Convenor Education S/C

Kasuni Athapattu
Co-Convenor Social Activities S/C

Lakshi Kiribathgoda
Committee Member

Indunil Ekanayake
Committee Member

Hasini Herath
Convenor Sports S/C

Eranga Karunaratne
Convenor Social Activities S/C

Rasika Aluthwalage
Convenor Medical S/C

Niroshi Jayasuriya
Convenor New Members S/C

Tharini Seram
Co-Convenor Communication S/C

Standing 2nd row from Left to Right

Poornima Jayawickrama
Convenor Fund Raising S/C

Shalika Ranaweera
Convenor Secretariat S/C

Chathuravi Suriyaarachchi
Co-Convenor Religious S/C

Shamendri Akila Senaratne
Convenor Religious S/C

Ayodya Rodrigo Ranasinghe
Convenor Hostel S/C

Dilini Gunathilaka
Co-Convenor Secretariat S/C

Varuni Anusha Gamage
Co-Convenor Medical S/C

Ravini Wimalasuriya
Co-Convenor New Members S/C

Jayani Handagama
Convenor Archives S/C

Absent

Manoja Wickramasuriya
(Advisor)

Sujeenie Gunasekera
(Advisor)

Chamindi Ekanayake
Convenor Education S/C

Pabalu Perera
Co-Convenor Building & Maintenance S/C

Iresha Senerath
Co-Convenor Sports S/C

Ayendra Bulathsinghala
Co-Convenor Hostel S/C

T.M. Samadhi N.K. Tennakoon
Convenor Building & Maintenance S/C

Sukitha Cooray
Convenor Communication S/C



FUNDRAISING FOR THE VVOGA

Pop Up Book Sale 2022

Fundraising projects are an integral part of financing the many worthy causes championed by the OGA. The “Pop up Book Sale 2022”, held on the 3rd of September 2022 was one such initiative. The proceedings were declared open by the Chief Guest Ms. Charulatha Abeysekera Thewarathanthri, who is a distinguished Past Visakhian & Graitiaen prize winning novelist. The Principal, Ms. Manomi Senevirathne, Past Principals, Teachers and the Executive Committee members of the VVOGA were also present to support the event.

The Book Sale was a resounding success, featuring more than 40 stalls, which comprised of popular publishers, stationery brands and educational toys.



PROJECTS DONE FOR THE HOSTEL

Hostel Meal Support – Sponsored Meal Project

Given the economic challenges faced by all Sri Lankans during this year, the Hostel sub committee of the VVOGA highlighted the need to extend the maximum support to the present students living in the Visakha Vidyalaya Hostel. The “Sponsored Meal Project” was kicked off by setting up the “Hostel Meal Support Fund”. The fund accepts any donation large or small from the entire Visakhian community.

Since its initiation on the 15th of August 2022, the fund has been able to finance a meal for all Hostel students on every second working day of the week. The intention is to continue to grow the fund and provide more nutritious and enjoyable meals for the girls on a continuous basis.

Donations can be done via the membership portal under “Hostellers’ Meal Fund” or directly to the VVOGA Treasurer’s office on school days.



Hostellers' Kala Ulela

The Hostellers' Kala Ulela was organized with the intention of sparking creativity, fostering fellowship and ultimately creating an environment where the girls could have a good time.

OGA volunteers also actively engaged with the girls, helping with practicing singing, dancing, arts & crafts and writing skills. The show went ahead on the 29th of August 2022 with the girls, volunteers and everyone participating having a wonderful time.



Social Etiquette Workshop

Equipping our students with the knowledge on social conduct is invaluable, and will lay the foundation for them as they go out into society. With this in mind, the sub committee organized a workshop on Social Etiquette on the 16th of August 2022. A large group of 132 girls from the Hostel took part, and enjoyed the interactive session with demonstrations on etiquette and table manners. The session ended with dinner that was kindly sponsored by a well wisher.



New Hostellers' Workshop on School History and Traditions

Assimilating into a new culture can be challenging for anyone. Even more for a group of young women who would be living away from family for an extended period. A workshop was organized in order to both welcome and educate new girls to the Hostel.



The session was held on the 2nd of August 2022 and had 29 new students who had joined grade 6. They were taught about the history, traditions, events and architecture of the school. The discussion further went on to school functions, extra curricular activities and the different streams of education. The girls were welcomed to feel a part of our greater Visakhian Community and encouraged to engage and participate in these many activities.



Children's Day Celebrations for Hostellers' 2022

World Children's Day is celebrated globally to promote the welfare of all children. The VVOGA made a special effort to make this day an enjoyable one for all our girls at the Hostel. A hundred students from the Hostel participated at this event on the 1st of October 2022 and were able to enjoy a Children's Movie and have some refreshments after.

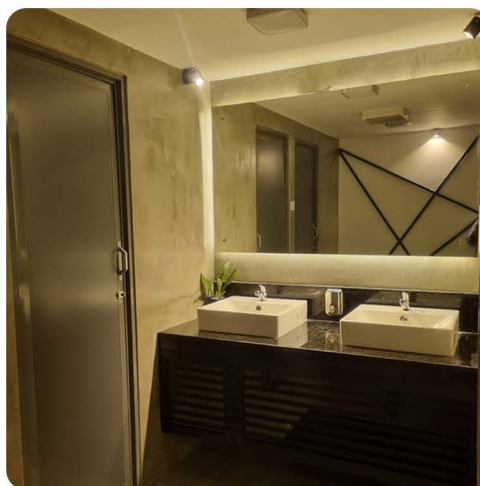
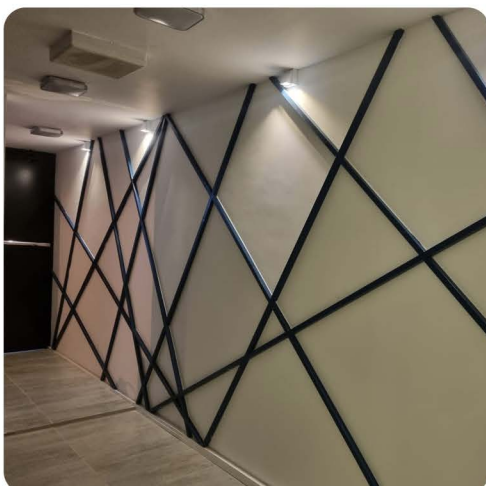


BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE

VVOGA Restroom

Given the involvement of the OGA in supporting the functioning of the school, the OGA office helps as a central location to coordinate most of these activities. The OGA office restroom project was initiated by the Building Maintenance and Equipment Sub Committee in order to improve the facilities available to OGA members supporting the school.

The new facilities were declared open by the Principal, Ms. Manomi Seneviratne, on the 30th of August 2022. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to our OGA members for their generous donations and sponsorships, which allowed the committee to raise the Rs. 2.5 million required for the project. The committee would also like to extend their sincere thanks to the members who assisted with designing and coordinating the construction.





Old Hall Renovations

The Old Hall is considered as a traditionally important building at Visakha and comes under the purview of the Building Maintenance and Equipment Sub Committee . It is used by our girls for many aesthetic events. The renovation was planned in 4 phases. At the moment 2 phases have been completed; the Exterior/Roof and Stage.

The project was financed by a Fund Raising Project done in 2020/21 as well as direct donations from well wishers. However, the OGA is in need of further funding of approximately Rs. 6.6 million for the 3rd and 4th phases and the project is expected to continue into 2022/23.

Donations for the project can be done via the membership portal under “Old Hall Renovation” or directly to the VVOGA Treasurer’s office on school days.



SPORTS

Sports Equipment Project- Implementation of a Space Conserving Cupboard for the Cadets Platoon

The Sports Sub Committee of the OGA identified the need for additional storage space for the cadet platoon equipment. As a solution to this challenge, the committee decided to build a specially designed space-saving cupboard, that would give ample storage space in the limited area available. The multipurpose cupboard was worth Rs. 432,920 and was handed over to the Cadets on the 3rd of June 2022.





Sports Nutrition Project for School Athletes

Nutrition is an often overlooked, key aspect of sports performance. With this in mind, the Sports Sub Committee organized an awareness session for the sportswomen of Visakha Vidyalaya in the month of June 2022, conducted by Nutrition Professionals.

The girls were educated on common dietary myths and mistakes and the scientific evidence that support these views. The speakers delved into nutrition specifics based on the intensity of the sport, age, body weight of the individual athletes. The national athletes who were in attendance were also given individual advice to improve their performance through better nutrition.



Combating Obesity Among Adolescent Girls with Zumba

An online physical activity promotion programme was introduced to overweight and obese school girls aged 15-17 years with close monitoring of their height and weight. Two Zumba sessions were held per week over 8 weeks with the guidance of fitness instructor Ms Shamika Rajapaksha.

75% of the participants showed a significant weight reduction and improvement in their Body Mass Index. Surveillance revealed that the rest of the 25% of participants have not joined the session regularly or not followed the recommended dietary patterns. Feedback from the participants and parents was positive and encouraging. All the participants were advised to maintain a healthy BMI by continuing the recommended level of physical activities. The programme was conducted from March 2022 to August 2022.

Sports Motivation Programme for Basketball and Netball Players

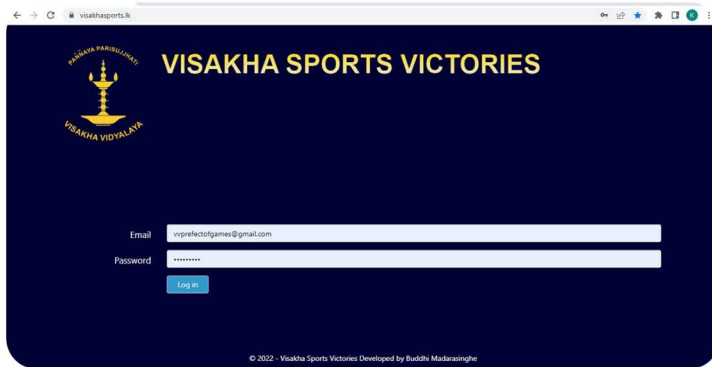
A sports motivation programme was carried out in August 2022 by Ms. Krishani George, a popular sports motivator and an advisory committee member for Basketball. This was held in two sessions at the school premises with the participation of Netball and Basketball players.

The programme was focused on improving their team spirit, courage and dedication and ultimately the uplifting of the individual as well as team performances during the tournaments.





Visakha Sports Victories Database



The sports sub committee created a database to record the sports victories of school athletes in September 2022. Maintenance and improving the features of the database will be done from time to time by the development team and will be verified by the school administration. The newly appointed games captains and sports captains were given the necessary training to ensure the timely uploading of data.

Athletes can request to access their records on sports achievements even after leaving school.

VESAK

The Vesak Project 2022

The annual Vesak project organized by the Religious Sub Committee of the Visakha Vidyalaya Old Girls' Association was successfully concluded on 13th August 2022. This year's project focused on donating drugs and essential items worth LKR 1.3 million, to the Castle Street Hospital for Women.



The VVOGA extends its heartfelt gratitude to the Batch of 1995 whose generous support contributed more than 40% of the total budget. We also wish to acknowledge everyone who extended their selfless support to make this project a success.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF VISAKHIANS

Aquatic National Achievements

The Vishakians kept the school flag flying, securing their 2nd consecutive overall girls championship at the Sri Lanka Schools Aquatic Championship 2022.





Diving

The overall National Diving Championship of the Junior Category was won by Visakha Vidyalaya.

Water Polo

Visakha Vidyalaya Water Polo team created history when they achieved an unbeaten season during 2022, after winning all encounters. The team won their annual encounter with Ladies' College, Sri Lanka National Championship and Sri Lanka Schools National Water Polo Championship. The Junior team also won the National Championship.

Artistic Swimming

The Visakha Vidyalaya Artistic Swimming team was also able to win the National Age Group- Artistic Swimming Championship 2022 title with stunning choreography to amazing music. A team of 10 Visakhians under the guidance of Coach Prabashi and Coach Yeshaya led the Visakha team to victory. The Overall Junior Championship was also won by Visakha Vidyalaya.

Swimming

Visakha Vidyalaya, who were crowned champions the previous year as well, won the overall SLASU Novices Swimming Women's Championship 2022 with their team of 37 Swimmers who trained under the guidance of Head Coach Julian Bolling. The Visakha team also won The Junior Women's National Swimming Championship 2022.



Debating

The Visakha Vidyalaya Debating team was crowned Champions of the All Island Inter-School Debating Tournament organized by Rebuilding Sri Lanka Together. Sajani Ranathunge was awarded the Best Debater of the competition.

Western Music

Visakha Vidyalaya Senior Western Choir trained by choirmaster Mr. Rohan De Lanerolle won the National Championship for Girls Schools in the A1 category for the second consecutive year. The choir scored a magnificent 273 points to win the competition.



The Senior Band of Visakha Vidyalaya was placed 1st in the National Mixed Instrumental Competition.



SHINING STARS

Achievements of Past Visakhians

Three past Visakhians were part of the Sri Lanka National Netball team who won the Asian Netball Championships 2022 to become Six time Champions on the 11th of September 2022.



Gayani Dissanayake



Thishala Algama



Semini Alwis

TRIBUTE TO VETERAN FILM DIRECTOR DR. SUMITRA PEIRIS

Dr. Sumithra Peiris has worked in over 10 films in the capacity of Screenwriter, Director, Producer and Editor. She is Sri Lanka's first female filmmaker and was known as one of the country's top-notch national icons.



Born on March 24th 1935, she began her education in Avissawella, then later enrolled to Visakha Vidyalaya in Colombo.

Dr. Peries started off her own cinema director debut with her first film Gehenu Lamai. The film was a box office hit and managed to bag many awards at the film festivals of the time. Her next film Ganga Addara was another box-office hit. She has subsequently directed many more feature films which have all been subjected to international acclaim. Her last film venture Vaishnavee, shot in 2012, made her the first director ever to shoot with the latest Red Epic camera and this step has laid the foundation for the next Generation of Digital Cinema for Sri Lanka.

Dr. Peiris later served as Sri Lanka's ambassador to France and Spain from 1996 to 1999 and was also appointed as the ambassador of Sri Lanka to the United Nations by President Chandrika Bandaranayake Kumaratunge.

Dr. Peiris has been honored with the title of Kala Keerthi by the Government of Sri Lanka in 2005 and with the title Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays by the Government of Japan in 2021. She also holds an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Kelaniya for her outstanding contribution to the local cinema.

At the 75th OGA Anniversary celebration, Dr. Sumithra Peiris was awarded the LifeTime Achievement Award initiated and presented by the VVOGA in recognition of past Visakhians who have won acclaim and for recognising their contribution in their chosen field of work.

Dr. Sumithra Peiris passed away at the age of 88 on the 19th of January 2023.



OBITUARIES

Former Deputy Principal Ms. Kalyani Rajakaruna

Her immeasurable service for over 2 decades at Visakha as a teacher and as a Deputy Principal will be remembered with much gratitude. She will be cherished in the memories of a generation of Visakhians who passed through the hallowed portals of Visakha during the 1990s and 2000s.

May she attain the supreme bliss of nibbana!



Former Vice President and Secretary of the VVOGA and Past Teacher of Visakha Vidyalaya Ms. Premitha Seneviratne

Ms. Premitha was a teacher who rendered more than 25 years of exemplary service to Visakha Vidyalaya. At the time of her retirement she served as the head of the Advanced Level Science Section. She also served as a former Vice President and Secretary of the VVOGA and continued to support as an active member over the decades.

May she attain the supreme bliss of nibbana!



Ms. Mallika Perera



Ms. Kamala Gammanpila



Ms. Nelina Seneviratne



Ms. Pushpa Wedikkara

GO GREEN INITIATIVE

“Alone we can do so little,” said educator and activist Helen Keller. “Together we can do so much.”

As you know the VVOGA is striving to drive the Go Green initiative focusing on sustainable and environmentally friendly practices by adopting digital modes of communication. In keeping with this initiative, the VVOGA plans to e-mail the Newsletter going forward.

Currently, some members have not updated their email addresses on the membership portal. We encourage all such members to kindly co-operate by logging onto the Membership portal and updating the personal details with your e-mail addresses so that we can proceed with forwarding you the e-Newsletter.

This will not only facilitate our Go Green initiative but also contribute towards a considerable saving in terms of cost. We look forward to your support and thank you for your understanding as always.

Please use the below link to register for the digital newsletter.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1b0I8EDCLzkwDIOWIPYwD3_2ySzcc60FuLjB3hF2eMnl/viewform?edit_requested=true



SUPPORT US

Appeals to the Members

A PROJECT BY THE WOGA HOSTEL SUBCOMMITTEE

HELP FUND THE HOSTEL MEALS

CURRENTLY THE VISAKHA VIDYALAYA HOSTEL HAS APPROX. 150 HOSTELLERS. WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THEY HAVE ACCESS TO A HEALTHY DIET WHILE RESIDING HERE. HOWEVER, IT'S A CHALLENGING TASK DUE TO THE RISING COSTS OF A MEAL IN ALL ITS ASPECTS. WE HOPE YOU COULD HELP US BY MAKING A CONTRIBUTION

You can make a donation of your liking or sponsor a meal

- Breakfast - 37,500 LKR per meal
- Lunch or Dinner- 49,000 LKR per meal

Payments can be done via the membership portal under 'Hosteller's Meal Fund' or pay directly to the VVOGA Treasurer's office on school days

PROVIDE A HEALTHY DIET

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED PLEASE WHATSAPP
AYODYA - +94773389709
AYENDRA - +94774806056

PLEASE REFRAIN FROM SHARING THIS FLYER ON FB

Support for Medical Needs

The role of the Medical Sub Committee is to provide medical care to students and staff members during school hours and the hostellers during weekends and public holidays. The medicines required for this purpose were funded by the generous donations of our active members. However, the present economic crisis in the country has reduced the amount of donations and increased the prices of essential medicines drastically. Therefore, we need to raise even more funds to meet the medical requirements. Thus, we will be much obliged if you could contribute towards this initiative in the form of cash or medical donations to help provide this valuable service continuously. Frequently used drugs are Paracetamol, Salbutamol, Cetirizine/Loratadine/Chlorpheniramine, Antacids (famotidine/Digene/Aludrox), Domperidone, Vitamin C, ORS, Mefenamic Acid, Diclofenac Gel, Betadine, Soframycin cream, and items such as gauze swabs, cotton wool, plasters.

For details please contact:

Rasika 0772920353

Varuni 0773406987



Join the Scholarship Programme as a Donor

The Education Sub Committee is awarding scholarships to students in need. 77 students currently receive scholarships under our programme. If you are interested in joining the programme as a donor please contact

Manika (0714743074)

Help a Needy Student

The Education Sub Committee is arranging a gift pack for the students under the scholarship programme. This gift pack will include a uniform, a pair of shoes and stationary material for the total value of Rs. 10,000/-. If you are interested in donating a gift pack, please contact

Chamindi (0776161475)

English Teachers Needed

The Education Sub Committee is looking for qualified English / Elocution teachers. If you are interested in volunteering please send your CV with a cover note to

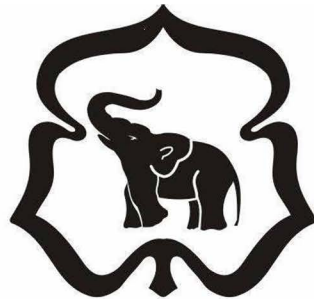
chamekanayake@yahoo.com

Visakha Vidyalaya T-shirts for Sale

Latest Visakha T-shirts are now available. If interested, please contact 011 2551180 for more information. You can also get your hands on the T-shirts by visiting the OGA room during school hours.



11th COLOMBO GIRL GUIDES CENTENARY 1923 – 2023



The first event to mark the centenary celebrations of the 11th Colombo Guide Company will be a Commemorative Assembly on Sunday 5th March 2023 in the School Hall at 3 PM.

Due to limited availability of seats, past Guides of 11th Colombo wishing to attend the function are kindly requested to reserve their seats by informing Anoja (0771673845) or Shanta (0773608150) before 24th February 2023.



UPCOMING EVENTS 2023

FEBRUARY	Programme for Primary Teachers (17th February 2023)	
MARCH	Programme for Middle and Upper School Teachers Blood Donation Camp	Akila - 0772668614
APRIL	Avurudu Pola (1st April 2023)	Poornima - 0717431133 Sonali - 0774407622
MAY	Vesak Project Medical Camp Hightea	Akila - 0772668614 Rasika - 0772920353 Eranga - 077 650 6278
SEPTEMBER	Musical Show (10th September 2023)	Poornima - 0717431133 Sonali - 0774407622

