



LADIES' COLLEGE OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT – LADIES' COLLEGE OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

INTRODUCTION

The Hon. Secretary has pleasure in presenting the 111th Report of the Executive Committee of the Ladies' College Old Girls' Association ("LC OGA"), for the Year 2019/2020. Although the Annual General Meeting ("AGM") was scheduled to be held in October of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant restrictions imposed by the government prevented the same. The Executive Committee of the LC OGA made several attempts to have the AGM whenever restrictions seemed to be easing, however this was not possible due to the overarching and continuous restrictions placed on public gatherings. The Executive Committee was also conscious of its responsibility towards the membership which includes many seniors.

Thus, this report covers a longer time period than the traditional twelve months. i.e. it covers all activities undertaken by the LC OGA from October 2019 to February 2021.

EVENTS AND FELLOWSHIP

The Executive Committee of the LC OGA has, in the year under review, been actively involved in the organization of events to engage the membership. A summary of the events held are set out below:

Christmas Dinner -2019

The LC OGA's annual Christmas fellowship dinner was held on Wednesday, 27th November 2019 at the Main Ballroom of the Shangri-La, Colombo. The LC OGA chose a vintage Christmas theme for the celebration, with the venue being transformed into a vintage wonderland. The stunning



LADIES' COLLEGE OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

décor was conceptualized and styled, with meticulous detail, by Sonali Ratwatte of Weddings by Sonali. The decor included rustically elegant table centerpieces made of twigs and vintage lanterns, interspersed with pine cones, baby's breath, and candles, that set the tone, courtesy of Sri Lanka's premier florists, Umanga and Prati Chandrasiri of Poru.

In keeping with the theme, guests received a traditional Christmas welcome of warm mulled wine, spiced apple cider and Christmas canapés during cocktail hour in the foyer, where LC-ites mingled and connected with friends.

Spa Ceylon, our principal sponsor, debuted their "make your own goody bag" activity, with a private "market stall" transforming a space within the foyer to resemble a Christmas marketplace. Guests were able to choose a selection of complimentary Spa Ceylon products from vintage carts full of goodies, including soaps, scrubs lotions, make up, and more, accompanied by a number of other promotional items and vouchers from Spa Ceylon.

Cocktail hour came to a close when the doors of the main ballroom were opened ushering guests in, to mark the commencement of the evening's festivities. Guests slowly found their way to their tables that were laden with beautiful details including napkin rings hand made by the committee for the occasion, set on elegant gold rim charger plates that significantly enhanced the ambiance. Guests found more gifts at their seats from our second principal sponsor Cargills, in delicately decorated bags filled to the brim with edible gifts. Ladies' College branded tins of tea and mugs, Christmas cake and a whole host of other goodies courtesy of a number of generous sponsors meant guests left with both hands full. Further, an unprecedented number of giveaways including airline tickets, weekends away, dinner vouchers, electric appliances, and more, contributed to the celebratory mood that was undoubtedly prevalent throughout the night.

After the singing of the school hymn and the lighting of the Christmas tree, the President of the LC OGA, Mrs Fathima Aziz, welcomed guests. She spoke of the close-knit LC family whose unity is particularly strengthened by the diversity of its members. She highlighted the significance of the



LADIES' COLLEGE OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

choice of the Shangri-La Hotel, Colombo (one of the targets of the Easter Sunday attacks) as the venue of the Christmas dinner, which she hoped would send out a message of indomitable positivity and hope which would resonate not only within the LC community but more widely as well.

Part of the proceeds of the event were donated to Caritas Seth Sarana, with a cheque for Rs.200,000 being presented to Father Ramanayake of Caritas on 21st November 2019 at the Ladies' College office.

There was something for everyone at this fellowship event, which welcomed a cross-section of the Ladies' College alumni community – Old Girls from 20 years to 90+ years attended this year. The layout of the event included a lounge area with divans and sofas ensuring LC-ites were not confined to their tables, and instead allowed to mingle with friends and enjoy the night. Christmas carols led by the LC OGA choir ushered the festive tone of the evening.

The games had everyone on their feet, especially the house game, which had the guests cheering madly like they were back at the school sports meet in our beloved Back Garden. The inimitable Voice Print delivered tune after rollicking tune, ensuring that the dance floor was never empty. Old Girls Devashrie de Silva and Amandhi Caldera delighted guests with their renditions of Christmas carols during the dinner.

The Shangri-La Hotel, Colombo pulled out all the stops to serve up a scrumptious five course Christmas dinner with all the traditional trimmings, including a turkey, ham, seafood, lamb, Brussels sprouts and more that catered to every palate. The culmination of the culinary journey was flaming Christmas puddings which were served to each table with the mandatory accompaniment of brandy butter. Everyone left commenting on how exceptional the food and service was.

The evening was compered by the irrepressible Shehara de Silva, who made sure the tone of the event was light and merry with her wonderful banter.



LADIES' COLLEGE OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

A really marvelous time was had by all present, making all the preparation put in by the Committee over the preceding months well worth the effort.

Senior's Christmas Lunch - 2019

The annual Seniors' Christmas Lunch was held on Saturday, 30th November 2019 at the Old Hall. It was a lovely afternoon of fellowship, activity and merry-making in a familiar and much-loved venue, for the most senior members of the LC alumni community. The event was organized jointly by LC Cares and the LC OGA.

The program started with the customary singing of the School Hymn and Mrs Fathima Aziz, (President, LC OGA) welcoming guests. The LC OGA Choir lead the guests in toe-tapping renditions of favourite carols. There were several games including a trivia competition and a Christmas card-making competition, which had the guests fully engaged. Santa made a surprise appearance, delighting guests with presents.

Lunch was a scrumptious festive buffet including roast lamb and chicken accompanied by delicious sides. The feast was followed by home-made Christmas puddings with brandy butter and Yule Logs. The afternoon concluded with a *baila* competition.

Our guests left with beaming smiles and great feedback on a morning of fun and fellowship with their sister LC-ites.

Founders' Day - 2020

Service of Thanksgiving

2020 marked the 120th year of Ladies' College and the LC OGA held its Founders' Day celebrations on Saturday, 29th February 2020. Following tradition, a morning service of thanksgiving, presided over by Reverend Melvin de Silva, was held in The Chapel of the Hope of the World. The chapel was tastefully decorated for the occasion with a beautiful floral arrangement



LADIES' COLLEGE OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

at the altar. It was wonderful to see the chapel overflowing with old girls of all age groups, joining together to give thanks for their beloved alma mater.

The theme of the service was, aptly, 'Unity with Thanksgiving'. Ms. Roshanara Page (President-Elect) welcomed the congregation and Ms. Manisha Pieris (LC OGA Representative on the Governing Body) delivered the Thanksgiving Prayer. Ms. Nirusha Ratnatunga (Secretary, LC OGA), gave a Bible reading while Ms. Eesha Speldewinde (Principal, Ladies' College), read the Gospel. A heartfelt sermon was delivered by Mrs Dayanthi Samaranayake, who urged us to view 'Unity' as a need for all of creation to be reconciled and unite with God. To achieve this, she challenged us to surrender to God, respond to our calling to be God's stewards and to serve with love, following Christ's example of forgiveness, humility and servanthood, as indeed our Founders did. The Prayers for the People were led by Mrs Amali David (Treasurer, LC OGA).

The LC OGA Choir, directed by Ms. Sureka Amerasinghe and comprising approximately fifty Old Girls, sang three joyful anthems which reverberated throughout the Chapel.

Celebratory Brunch

The service was followed by a celebratory brunch in the familiar Old Hall. Mrs Parameswary Coomaraswamy (Vice President, LC OGA) welcomed attendees to the bunch. The atmosphere was celebratory as guests entered through the beautifully decorated corridor that was filled with handmade red and white pom poms. Tiffany chairs, delicate flower arrangements and candles provided by Lassana Flora transformed the well known and widely used old hall into an elegant venue for brunch, marking the milestone occasion in style. A scrumptious buffet catered by Raffles was served along the drive, outside the Old Hall. Everyone enjoyed a lovely day with lively banter and chatter filling the air as old friends reunited to reminisce and celebrate.

A beautiful, 3 tiered white and red birthday cake (created for the occasion by Arulini de Silva of Sugar Shack) was cut by Mrs Eesha Speldewinde (Principal, Ladies' College), Mrs Fathima Aziz (President, LC OGA) and Mrs Chrishanthie Seneviratne (President, Kandy Branch, LC OGA) after a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday" was sung by the guests.



LADIES' COLLEGE OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

An Isle of Gelato ice cream cart was in full swing, serving up delicious gelato - a welcome treat for guests in the afternoon heat.

This year's LC OGA Founders' Day event was also attended by eight members of the Kandy Branch of the LC OGA, who made a special effort to join their fellow alumni in Colombo for the celebrations.

Pop Up Market

In a first for the LC OGA, a Pop Up Market was held in the front lawn outside the Mabel Simon Hall along with the brunch being held at the Old Hall. The main purpose was to showcase old girl entrepreneurs and provide a platform to showcase their products to the alumni community, who may be unaware of these offerings from old girls. Over 30 old girl entrepreneurs displayed their wares offering everything from gourmet food, homemade food, to handmade coasters, notebooks and wrapping paper, framed hand-painted mementos, sustainable alternatives to plastic items, jewellery, bath and beauty products, antiques, string art, and apparel. The Pop Up Market was a roaring success, with many of the vendors selling out of their wares during the morning. It was fabulous to see the creative talents of all of our old girl entrepreneurs on display.

Founders' Day – 2021

This year the Executive Committee of the LC OGA had to make a decision as to whether to organize a Founder's Day service with a restricted number of LC OGA members permitted to attend (due to the restrictions on public gatherings resulting from the Covid-19 Pandemic) or to a record celebration that could be watched by the entire membership, online. The committee opted for the latter, and a celebratory video was broadcast on Youtube on 14th February 2021

The program included a message from Ms. Fathima Aziz (President, LC OGA), a prayer from Ms. Eesha Speldewinde (Principal, Ladies' College), a poem by Ms. Anisha Wijewardane (Publicity Secretary, LC OGA) and a selection of hymns sung by a few members of the LC OGA Choir. Despite the obvious risks, 10 members of the LC OGA Choir volunteered to record a few



LADIES' COLLEGE OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

hymns for this video and we are grateful to these ladies for coming together spontaneously for the love of singing and for their school. The highlight of the video was a special performance by a virtual Chorale of Old Girl choristers from across the globe of *Messiah* which was arranged by Sureka Amerasinghe and first recorded for the CD produced by the Ladies' College choir for the school's centenary celebrations. Some of the choristers who first sang this song for that CD were a part of the Chorale. Mrs Christine Perera, who nurtured a love of music and singing in generations of Old Girls, also made a surprise appearance, to the delight of viewers.

The Committee would like to place on record its gratitude to Ms. Surekha Amerasinghe for her direction of the LC OGA Choir and the LC OGA Chorale, arrangement of the hymns and coordination of the choirs and all musical aspects of the Founders' Day video.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MEMBERSHIP DURING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD

Determined to keep a sense of connection and spirit of fellowship alive amongst the LC alumni community, the Executive Committee of the LC OGA launched a number of initiatives via its social media platforms this year.

LC Star Files

LC-ites are accomplishing great things and taking enormous strides in diverse arenas, The purpose of the 'LC Star Files' initiative is to showcase these exceptional ladies and celebrate their achievements, while inspiring our members. We have had a wonderfully enthusiastic response to our LC Star Files posts on our Instagram and Facebook pages, with our members celebrating our home-grown 'LC Stars'.

Each LC Star File takes the form of a brief interview, with the featured LC-ite answering a set of questions designed to give readers a glimpse of the personality behind the name. To date, we have



LADIES' COLLEGE OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

showcased 10 LC-ites who are excelling in fields ranging from science and conservation, to music, architecture and advocacy, and the series will continue.

She Means Business

The 'She Means Business' series showcases our upcoming LC-ite entrepreneurs and is intended to shine the spotlight on the fascinating businesses and brands they have created. LC-ites are carving niche markets for themselves across a spectrum of industries and this series celebrates their achievements while giving us insight into their entrepreneurial journeys and the lessons they have learned along the way.

The Ruby Room – LC OGA Virtual Book Club

In another first during the lockdown period, the LC OGA, in a first, also initiated a virtual book club. We had an enthusiastic response to the endeavor with readers from around the globe tuning in for lively discussions on Michelle Obama's memoir *Becoming* and Bernadine Evaristo's 2019 Booker Prize winner, *Girl, Woman, Other* which were moderated by Manique Wijewardane-Bloom and Shalini Wickramasuriya respectively.

Virtual Cook-Alongs

The LC OGA streamed two live action cook-alongs with the help of well recognized old girl chefs. The first event was hosted by Jovanka Jayaweera of Big Bird Delights, and the second, which was Christmas themed, was conducted by Ruwanthi Fernando of Roo's Deli. To commemorate Thai Pongal, Adirupini Tyagaraja conducted a demonstration on how to prepare a traditional celebratory dish.

Christmas Décor – DIY

Piyusha De Silva, an Old Girl who runs petitiedecor.lk, conducted a master class online on preparing Christmas centrepieces and decor.



LADIES' COLLEGE OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

Christmas Jingle Jam

To round off the year, a group of choristers from the LC OGA Choir got together one evening to record an impromptu Christmas Jingle Jam featuring some well-loved Christmas carols. The program was put together by Sureka Amerasinghe, director of the LC OGA Choir and, we hope, brought a little festive cheer to the end of a challenging year.

ASSISTANCE RENDERED TO THE SCHOOL

Further to requests by the membership for the LC OGA to provide suggestions to the school on the selection criteria adopted in appointing school girl office bearers, the LC OGA put together a subcommittee for the purposes of facilitating the same. The subcommittee studied the issues at hand, models adopted by other private schools in Sri Lanka and the desired final outcome vis a vis due process being followed, and drafted a set of guidelines which were presented to the Principal for consideration.

DONATIONS

Donation to Caritas – Seth Sevana

The LC OGA donated a sum of LKR 200,000 from the proceeds of the Christmas Dinner 2019 to Caritas Seth Sevana. The said organization is actively involved in furthering the educational goals of those children who were affected, both directly and indirectly, by the Easter Bombings 2019.

Donations of Personal Protective Equipment

The LC OGA made a donation of LKR 100,000/- towards the purchase of personal protective equipment for frontline workers involved in fighting the COVID -19 pandemic.



LADIES' COLLEGE OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

Donation towards the erecting of a Plaque for Ms. Gwen Opie

The LC OGA donated a sum of LKR 100,00/- to be used towards a plaque honouring Ms. Gwen Opie. The said plaque was installed in the Chapel of the Hope of the World.

Donations towards Prizes

The LC OGA made a donation of LKR 35,000/- towards prizes for the school prizes and LKR 120,849/- towards the professional advancement of academic staff of the school.

COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee of the LC OGA met monthly, and sometimes bi-monthly, for the period commencing October 2019 and ending February 2021. The restrictions imposed by the pandemic did not deter the holding of the committee meetings, with the members proceeding to meet virtually.

The LC OGA Secretariat has been kept open on all weekdays from 09am to 01pm.

NEWSLETTERS

Four newsletters were circulated to the membership during the period under review. In November 2020, the Executive Committee of the LC OGA launched a new format of the quarterly newsletter. Re-christened “the Red Velvet”, the new format has a clean, fresh and modern appearance and, we hope, is more reader-friendly.

APPRECIATION

This report would be incomplete if I didn't extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the following:



LADIES' COLLEGE OLD GIRLS' ASSOCIATION

- (a) Our Patroness Ms. Eesha Speldewinde and Vice Patroness Ms. Deepika Dassanayake;
- (b) Ms. Rajini De Zilwa, Ms. Vidhyani, Ms. Anurudha and all other members of the school staff and facilities section for their prompt and unstinted support during all of our events;
- (c) The minor staff of the school for rendering assistance readily when required to do so;
- (d) DHP Munaweera & Company, our Hony. Auditors, for ensuring a prompt and clear presentation of the financial affairs of the LC OGA;
- (e) Ms. Swun Kous for her able assistance in managing the LC OGA Secretariat;
- (f) Ms. Shamindrini Asirwatham, the past Secretary of the LC OGA, for her support during not only the transition period, but throughout the period under review. She has always been a call away and focused on ensuring a smooth transition;
- (g) Ms. Amaya Weerasinghe and Ms. Anisha Wijewardane, the Assistant Secretary and Publicity Secretary, for all their hard work;
- (h) The members of the LC OGA Executive Committee for their support during the year; and
- (i) Last but certainly not least, Ms. Fathima Aziz, our able President, for all of the time and effort spent ensuring that the LC OGA was active and engaged with its membership during the time period under review.

Nirusha Ranjithkumar Ratnatunga

Hony. Secretary

Ladies' College Old Girls' Association

09th March 2021