



# AMERICAN CENTER NEWSLETTER

The American Center, 44 Galle Road, Colombo 3

Telephone: 2498100 Telefax: 2498101

Email: amcentersl@state.gov



American Center

Colombo

Aug. – Sept. 2014

## CONTENTS

### Page 2

- **Winners of World Environment Day Photo Contest**
- **Music Workshop**
- **Environmental awareness program in Kandy**

### Page 3

- **Panel Discussion on Study in the USA**
- **Vice Consul's Jaffna Visit**

### Page 4

- **Tour to Kanneliya Rainforest**
- **AFCP Director Visits Sri Lanka**
- **Access Students Visit Colombo**

### Page 5

- **American Center Director Visits American Corner Jaffna**
- **Poetry Slam Competition**

### Page 7

- **AIRC News**

### Page 8

- **Film Screenings at the American Center**

## American Center Celebrates International Coastal Cleanup Day



American Center Colombo welcomed Environmental Club members on International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) Day last Saturday to learn about efforts to preserve Sri Lanka's natural coastal beauty. Mr. Pubudu Weerathna, a well-known Sri Lankan environmentalist, conducted a presentation on importance of the ICC Day prior to the cleanup program. U.S. Embassy officials Ms. Nicole Chulick, Director of the American Center, and Ms. Dawn Suni, Cultural Affairs Officer, brought their families and joined other environment lovers to take part in cleanup activities on the beach.

*More photos on page 6*

## Upcoming Events . . . . .

### October 10, 2014, 2:30 pm

An interactive workshop themed "Empowering Adolescent Girls; Ending the Cycle of Violence" will be held at the American Center. Call 011 2498180 for more details.

### October 21, 2014, 4:45 pm

Lives Worth Living: An interactive forum on enhancing opportunities for persons with disabilities will be held at the University of Colombo Main Auditorium. Call 011 2498180 fore more details.

### October 25, 2014, 3:30 pm

Monthly storytelling program at the American Center. Call 011 2498128 or 011 2498169 for more details.

### November 25, 2014, 3:00 pm

Open Mic Competitive Poetry Slam, Season XIX will be held at the American Center Auditorium in Colombo. Call 011 2498128 for more details.

### Week-end Movies in October. Every Saturday at 3:30 pm @ the American Center Auditorium. Entrance is free!

October 4: Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory

October 11: Open Season

October 18: A Little Princess

October 25: The Secret Garden

Call 011 2498146 or 011 2498169 for more details.

## Winners of World Environment Day Photo Contest



Winners posed for a photograph with Ms. Dawn Suni, Cultural Affairs Officer and Ms. Nicole A Chulick, Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy Colombo.

L to R  
Sayuri Wanniarachchi; K Upekshi Sewwandji; Senuri Senadeera;  
Akshina Sethmi Liyanage; Dawn Suni (CAO); Nicole A Chulick (PAO);  
Joel Garnier; M I Ayyash; M B R T Ranathilaka; and T. Gowthaman  
(N. Kadootkajan is absent)

To celebrate the World Environment Day 2014, the American Center collaborated with Junior Observer of Sunday Observer to host a photography competition for students.

The competition centered on the theme "Beauty and Serenity of Nature." Out of hundreds of photographs submitted for this competition, first, second and third places were selected under three age groups. The award ceremony was held on August 29th at the American Center auditorium with the participation of Nicole A Chulick, Public Affairs Officer, and Dawn Suni, Cultural Affairs Officer.

The winners received a certificate signed by the Ambassador and a life time membership to the American Center Library. Faima Farisz, the editor of the Junior Observer was also attended the event.

## Music Workshop: Fusion of Eastern and Western drumming

On August 6, 2014, the U.S. Embassy in collaboration with MusicMatters, a Colombo-based music school, hosted a percussion workshop where students learned to apply Eastern drumming techniques to Western instruments, adapting the tabla to the drum set. Local university and school students who study Eastern music and play instruments such as the tabla and tammattama joined together with renowned American percussionist Dan Weiss, who was in Colombo to perform at the MusicMatters festival this weekend. When young people from diverse communities come together to share their love for music and art,

they promote harmony and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. *More photographs on page 6*



Mr. Dawn Weiss showing some tabla rhythm.

## Let's Keep Our World Heritage City Clean



Youth Forum members (YF) of the American Corner Kandy conducted an environmental awareness program in collaboration with the Central Environment Authority, Kandy Municipal Council and Department of Education.

In August, during the Kandy Dalada Perahara, an annual event of historical and cultural significance, the youth educated the public about preventing litter on the streets and using waste bins provided by the Kandy Municipal Council.

## Panel Discussion on Study in the USA



A participant in Colombo raises a question for the panel.

On September 22, 2014, the American Center hosted a panel discussion on 'Study in the USA' by U.S. Embassy Vice Consul Sheela Krishnan and EducationUSA Advisor Edna Selvanayagam to students interested in higher studies in the United States. Participants from the American Corners in Kandy and Jaffna joined the discussion via video conference as well.

The participants were able to learn about a wide selection of U.S. universities, scholarship opportunities, the American college preparation process, U.S. student visa applications and many other factors that need consideration prior to going to the United States. Nicole Chulick, Director of the American Center moderated the event.

## Vice Consul of the U.S. Embassy Visits Jaffna

Vice Consul of the U.S. Embassy, James Ross visited Jaffna recently and participated in several outreach events organized by the American Corner in Jaffna. Ross visited University of Jaffna on September 19, 2014, as part of the Embassy Speaker program. Many students from the faculty of law attending the program appreciated his presentation on 'Freedom of Expression in the United States' and engaged in a lively discussion.



Students at University of Jaffna listening to presentation by Mr. Ross .



Mr. Ross delivering his presentation at the American Corner, Jaffna.

In addition Ross also hosted a presentation on 'Back to School - Discussing Education in the U.S.' at the American Corner Jaffna on the same date. Ross previously worked as an American university professor. Many university and graduate students joined the discussion and enjoyed his personal, behind-the-scenes perspectives.



Join the U.S. Embassy facebook page with more than 102,000 fans and counting...

<http://www.facebook.com/Colombo.USembassy>

## Members of the American Center's Environmental Club Visit Kanneliya

Twenty four members of the Environmental Club of the American Center Colombo enjoyed a day trip to Kanneliya Rain Forest, a biological hotspot in Galle, and learned about the vast diversity of plants and animals in Sri Lanka's rainforests. Led by well-known local environmentalist Mr. Pubudu Weeraratna, the members also had a chance to cool down in a refreshing waterfall.

If you wish to join the American Center's Environmental Club call 011 2498146 or 011 2498169.

*More photographs on page 7*



Mr. Pubudu explains about endemic plants in Kanneliya.

## AFCP Director Visits Sri Lanka



Dr. Perschler poses with the participants who came for the training.

The Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP), established by the U.S. Congress in 2001 and administered by the U.S. State Department, annually provides direct grant support for cultural heritage preservation in countries around the world selected through a highly competitive process.

On August 4th, Dr. Martin Perschler, director of the AFCP office in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in Washington, DC, conducted a training session in Colombo on cultural preservation and the AFCP process. Dr. Perschler holds a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia in the history of architecture. He met with professionals in the fields of cultural and architectural preservation in Sri Lanka and visited several AFCP projects around the country.

## Access Students Visit the American Center

As part of the conclusion to their two-year program, students from the Embassy's English Access Micro Scholarship Program in Killinochchi went to American Center in Colombo, enjoyed a leadership skills workshop where they learned to develop self-motivation strategies and personal value systems to guide their choices in life. The group of 39 students who visited Colombo got a surprise skateboarding lesson from Information Officer Joshua Shen as well.

The U.S. Embassy funds 12 Access programs across Sri Lanka offering children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds high quality English language classes.



During the leadership skills workshop held in Negombo.

## Jaffna Photography Contest Award Ceremony



Winners and merit awardees pose for group photo with Mr. Andrew Mann and Ms. Nicole Chulick.

The American Corner in Jaffna, together with the Youth Forum, hosted an award ceremony for photography contestants in Jaffna on September 4, 2014. Mr. Andrew C. Mann, Deputy Chief of Mission, and Nicole Chulick, Director of the American Center, presented the awards.

Young contestants participated in the contest with the theme 'Authentic Jaffna through My Lens' in two categories: 'Go Green City' for ages 19 and above; and 'Environmental Pollution of the City' for ages 14 to 18. Each category had 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize winners, while seven other contestants received 'Merit Award' certificates and free membership to the Jaffna AC and the American Center in Colombo.

## Award Ceremony - English Enrichment Course in Jaffna

Nicole Chulick, Director of the American Center congratulated students on their successful completion of a 4-month English course sponsored by the American Corner in Jaffna. During her remarks on September 5, Nicole emphasized the importance of learning English as a tool for communication and encouraged the students to keep practicing.

This course is conducted free of charge for students mainly from low-income families, providing them an opportunity to improve their English knowledge prior to following higher studies.



A student sharing her class-room experience. Director of the American Center Ms. Nicole Chulick and English Instructor Mr. Harry Gnanarajan are also in the picture.

## Poetry Slam contest at the American Center



Poets and judges from the senior category pose for a group photo with Information Officer Mr. Joshua Shen.

On September 25, 2014, the American Center Colombo hosted the Poetry Slam Season XVIII. 63 young poets captivated the audience with presentations of their original works.

'Judges Choice' and 'Audience Choice' winners received certificates, prizes, and free lifetime membership to the American Center Library in Colombo and to American Corners in Kandy and Jaffna. Press and Information Officer Joshua Shen served as the emcee.

Come to the next one at the American Center on November 25, 2014.

## Photos - Celebrating International Coastal Cleanup Day



## Photos - Music Workshop



## Monthly Essay Competition



# Learn about America



### Essay Competition for School Children on the theme of Learn About America

The American Center has organized an essay competition for school children, the results of which will be published in the Junior Observer of the Sunday Observer.

The monthly essay topic is for children in two age categories 12-15 years and 16-18 years.

Each age group is given a monthly topic related to the United States of America and is asked to write an essay with a minimum word count. The students can conduct research for their essay at the American Center Library in Colombo, at the American Corners in Kandy and Jaffna, or from

sources on IIP Digital, internet resource with information on the United States, its culture, history, literature, politics, tourist attractions and much more.

The first three winners in each age group will be given a selection of American books, a lifetime membership to the American Center Library, and a certificate signed by the U.S. Ambassador. A prize ceremony will be held at the American Center Colombo every two months.

### Essay topics for July - September 2014 are as follows:

**12-15 years:** Discuss the role of Education in youth empowerment. (500 words)

**16-18 years:** The theme chosen for International Youth Day 2014 by the UN is "Youth and Mental Health". Discuss your thoughts on this theme (1000 words)

Please see the Junior Observer of the Sunday Observer for more details. Closing date October 15, 2014.

## American Center Library Holds Monthly "Readers Are Leaders" Youth Book Club



The kids draw a picture on what they have discussed in the book.

On September 27th the American Center Library hosted its monthly "Readers are Leaders" children's book club. A Volunteer from the Asia Foundation in Sri Lanka read "Otis" written by Loren Long and had a discussion on the book. There were twenty kids ages 6-10 years participated in this monthly event held on every 4th Saturday of the month. The American Center Library began the "Readers Are Leaders" program in January 2010 to promote English-language reading and a love of books.

## Photos - Visit to Kanneliya



## Film Screenings at the American Center

American Center Newsletter

August - September 2014

### October 2014 (Theme: National Hispanic Heritage Month )

#### **October 7 - American Experience: A Class Apart** (60 minutes)

In the tiny town of Edna, Texas, in 1951, a field hand named Pete Hernandez murdered his employer after exchanging words in a gritty cantina. From this unremarkable small-town murder emerged a landmark civil rights case that would forever change the lives and legal standing of tens of millions of Americans. *A Class Apart* tells the little-known story of a band of underdog Mexican-American lawyers who took their case, *Hernandez v. Texas*, all the way to the Supreme Court, where they successfully challenged Jim Crow-style discrimination against Mexican-Americans.

#### **October 14 - The Mambo Kings** (104 minutes)

Musician brothers Cesar and Nestor leave Cuba for America in the 1950s, hoping to hit the top of the Latin music scene. Cesar is the older brother, the business manager, and the ladies' man. Nestor is the brooding songwriter, who cannot forget the woman in Cuba who broke his heart.

#### **October 21 - The Blue Diner** (100 minutes)

*The Blue Diner* is a film about food, memory, language, and caskets. It is the story of a Puerto Rican mother and daughter living together in Boston and the difficulties they encounter when the daughter, Elena, mysteriously loses her ability to speak Spanish, her first language. Everyone has a theory about the origin of Elena's misfortune, but no one knows for certain what has caused the tragic and absurd event.

#### **October 28 - Real Women Have Curves** (90 minutes)

Meet Gracie Bowen, she's your average, ordinary 15-year-old girl, except for one thing: she's determined to play varsity soccer... on the boys' team! But when her school forbids her to play and even her family questions her ability, Gracie sets out on extraordinary quest to prove them all wrong. Fighting to change the school's policy and facing off against some of the toughest competitors on the soccer field, Gracie must summon all of her strength and courage, to finally show the world that a girl with a dream can do absolutely anything!

Movies start promptly at 6:00 pm every Tuesday. Seating is limited and is first-come, first-served. Please contact the American Center at [amcentersl@state.gov](mailto:amcentersl@state.gov) or at (11) 249-8146 with any questions. Entrance free!

