



# American Center Newsletter

The American Center, 44 Galle Road, Colombo 3

Telephone: 2498100 Telefax: 2498101

Email: amcentersl@state.gov



American Center

Colombo

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## Upcoming Events . . . . .

### Monday, April 26:

A panel discussion on Intellectual Property will be organized by the American Center and held at the University of Colombo on April 26<sup>th</sup>. More details will be announced later in our Facebook and Website.

### Friday, May 14 10am:

Award ceremony of the "Learn about America" essay competition will be held at the American Center Auditorium.

## 'Justice Everywhere' Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Exhibition draws large youth participation in Colombo, Ampara, Batticaloa and Jaffna



Martin Luther King III and Ambassador Butenis lighting the traditional lamp at the opening ceremony in Colombo at the National Art Gallery

The Martin Luther King, Jr. commemorative exhibition on the theme 'Justice Everywhere' was inaugurated in Colombo and was subsequently staged in Ampara, Batticaloa and Jaffna during February and March 2010 drawing an audience of over 6,000 participants. The exhibition attracted a large number of youth who participated in the various programs of the exhibition.

Martin Luther King III (MLK III) inaugurated the exhibition in Colombo on February 6, and delivered the keynote address at the opening ceremony to peace activists, academics, students, media personnel and the public. Ambassador Patricia Butenis welcomed the audience, introduced MLK III and declared the exhibition open after the keynote address. *Soul Sounds*, a popular Sri Lankan choir, performed the Freedom Medley based on King's "I have a dream" speech adding a vibrant touch to the event.



MLK III delivering the keynote address at the inauguration.

The exhibition was showcased in four venues across Sri Lanka. The exhibition in Colombo was held from February 6 – 9, 2010 at the National Art Gallery and then travelled to South Eastern University of Oluvil (Feb. 17-19) and Eastern University in Batticaloa (Feb. 22-24) and finally ended in Jaffna (Mar. 7-9) at the University in Jaffna.

At each venue the exhibition included an interfaith dialogue with religious leaders representing Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. The speakers were prominent religious leaders and civil society leaders who engaged the participants in dialogue after a presentation on peace and non-violence from their religious perspective. Glen Davis, Cultural Affairs officer introduced the panelists and explained the purpose for the interfaith dialogue. These discussion ended with interactive Q&A sessions at all venues.

A key feature of the exhibition was the nonviolence workshops conducted by *Realizing the Dream*, a U.S. NGO founded by MLK III to carry out the legacy of his parents.

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## Reporting Social Issues; Ethics Involved – a Workshop for Journalists



The American Center joined hands with the Sri Lanka Chapter of the Commonwealth Journalists' Association to organize a workshop for mid career journalists in Sri Lanka.

who is also a reporter and an editor, worked on the theme “Reporting social issues; ethics involved” while Ramprasad particularly focused on areas such as reporting of HIV/AIDS.

The workshop which was held at the American Center auditorium on March 18 and 19 was attended by journalists from Sunday Observer, Daily Mirror, Vettri FM, Island, Virakesari, Rivira and Lakbimanews. The participant journalists were very appreciative about the workshop. Jayampathy Jayasinghe from Sunday Observer said that he “enjoyed every minute of the workshop” and that he “looks forward to many more workshops of this nature.”

The award winning journalism educator Tsitsi Wakhisi and Jyotika Ramprasad – both from the University of Miami -- shared their experiences and expertise with the Sri Lankan journalists. Wakhisi,



Hon. Justice Shiranne Tilakawardane delivers her speech at the American Center Auditorium

## American Center Celebrates Women's History Month

March 31, 2010: In recognition of Women's History Month, the American Center, the U.S. Embassy's cultural institution, organized a Public Lecture entitled “Domestic Violence: Who it Hurts & How to Stop it.” Supreme Court Justice Shiranne Tilakawardane delivered the presentation. Over 60 participants attended the lecture and represented a wide spectrum of society: university students, school children, academics, and NGO representatives.

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## Southern Province Workshop in English Language Teaching



Southern Province Workshop in ELT, were held on March 15-16, 2010 with the support of The Provincial Educational Department in Matara and The University of Ruhuna in Matara.

120 secondary level English Teachers from Matara/ Galle / Hambantota and Kalutara attended the program.

The sessions were led by Dr Jill Robbins from the Gorge Town University, Daniel Ringold, former English Language Fellow to Sri Lanka, Dr E A Gamini Fonseka , Head of the English Language Unit, University of Matara and Ms Eisha Hewabowala of the University of Kelaniya.

The workshop consisted of some important topics: Dr Robbins worked on “Learning Strategies Through Play” and “Strategies for Authentic Speaking and Listening”; Mr Ringold on “Techniques for Creating an Interactive Classroom”, “Teaching and Learning Smarter with Multiple Intelligences” and “Tools for Activating Materials and Tasks in the English Classroom”; Ms Hewabowala on “Poetry and Prose in the GCE (O' Level) English Literature Curriculum” and Dr Fonseka on “Juvenile Fiction and Drama in the GCE (O' Level) English Literature Curriculum”.

The participants were very active and engaged in every session. All participants demonstrated the ability to interact with others and discuss the variety of topics related to English Language Teaching. They shared ideas freely and commented that they were able to learn some new techniques and activities that they would try with their students. Some of the participants commented that this was the first time that they had ever been to a training workshop.

## US Embassy Supports English Language Teaching at the University of Ruhuna



Deputy Vice Chancellor Professor Gamini Senanayake lighting the traditional oil lamp while Dr. Robbins looks on at the inauguration ceremony.

March 12, 2010: The US Embassy, together with the University of Ruhuna, launched a two-week training program for staff of the English Teaching Unit of the University of Ruhuna in Matara.

The program aims to introduce American TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of

Other Languages) standards which would help to improve the new Bachelor of Arts Special Degree syllabus at the University of Ruhuna. Dr. Jill Robbins of George Washington University in

Washington, D.C. is leading the workshop. The program was opened by Deputy Vice Chancellor Senior Professor Gamini Senanayake, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, Professor R.M. Ranaweera Banda, Head of the ELTU, and Dr E.A. Gamini Fonseka. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Professor Senanayake emphasized the vital importance of English as a tool of communication and its role in enhancing the quality of undergraduate programs in Sri Lanka.

Dr. Robbins, during her remarks, outlined several contemporary approaches to language learning such as cooperative learning, learner-centered teaching, and constructivist education and emphasized how these techniques are instrumental for achieving long-term goals in English Language Teaching.

## English Language Teacher Training Workshops, Trincomalee

Two English Language Teacher Training Workshops were held on March 6-7, 2010 with the support of The Provincial Educational Department in Trincomalee and The Academy of Professional Studies in Trincomalee. 19 secondary level English teachers attended the program on March 6th and 22 teachers on March 7th. Teachers came from Anuradhapura and from four zones within the Trincomalee region.

The sessions were led by Daniel Ringold, former English Language Fellow to Sri Lanka. The sessions focused on two major topics: 1) activities and resource ideas for teaching about U.S. culture and 2) communicative English teaching techniques and classroom activities. Prior to the training



Teachers with Daniel Ringold who led the sessions

workshops, participants were surveyed on their interest in a variety of topics and workshop topics were chosen from those most popular with the group.

The participants were very active and engaged in every session. All participants demonstrated the ability to interact with others and discuss the variety of topics related to English Language Teaching. They shared ideas freely and commented that they were able to learn some new techniques and activities that they would try with their students.

## Women's History Month . . . . .

*From page 2*

The lecture was also broadcast live to American Corners, which are satellite locations of the American Center, in Kandy and Olivil through a video conference link.

Justice Tilakawardane discussed the lack of respect many women experience daily, saying, "Gender discrimination, or lack of equality, causes very serious repercussions in our communities leading to violent interpersonal conflict resolution resulting in domestic violence, rape or sexual

harassment." She mentioned her own experiences working with battered women in Sri Lanka, the legal framework surrounding acts of violence against women, and concrete ways every member of the society can actively discourage domestic violence.

Audio file of the speech will be available on our website : <http://srilanka.usembassy.gov>

## 'Justice Everywhere' Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Exhibition . . . . .



Dr. M.M. Ismail, Vice Chancellor of the South Eastern University delivering the welcome message at the opening of the exhibition at the university in Oluvil.

These workshops "From Chaos to Community: An Introduction to Kingian Nonviolence" were very popular and attracted a large number of university students including NGO staff and educators. All workshops were interpreted in Sinhala

and Tamil. The participants received certificates at the end of the training at the university venues.



Interfaith Dialogue - left to right: Mr. Glen Davis, Cultural Affairs Officer of the U.S. Embassy; Megahajathure Siri Vimala Himi, Chief Incumbent of Naga Vihare; Mr. Subramaniam Paramanathan, Secretary of Peoples Council for Peace and Goodwill; Fr. Dr. Michael Savundranayagam, Rector of St. Francis Xavier's Major Seminary; Mr. Seyed Ahmed Buhari Ahmed Sultan Sufiyan, Chairman, Peoples Secretariat

The poster exhibition was in three segments titled "Nonviolence Heroes" depicting the connection between King and Gandhi; "March to Washington" a series of IIP posters; and "Journeys towards Freedom" on the civil rights

movement's continuing legacy through the election of Barack Obama as the first African American elected as President of the United States. The exhibition also included a book display on King and leaders in the civil rights movement. Students were encouraged to take part in the quiz contest, comment on US Embassy Colombo's Facebook page and give camera interviews on their views of the exhibition.

The exhibition received wide publicity including TV and press coverage at all venues. The American Center Public Diplomacy office collaborated with 'Foundation for Co-Existence', a local NGO and with 'Realizing the Dream, Inc.', to conduct the workshops at each of the exhibition venues.

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## More photographs from Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Exhibition



Section of the audience attending the inaugural ceremony applauding the Soul Sounds.



Soul Sounds performing the Freedom Medley at the inauguration ceremony.



Section of the large number of university students who participated at the nonviolence workshops in Oluvil.

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## 'Justice Everywhere' Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Exhibition . . . . .

More photographs from Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Exhibition



A participant receiving the certificate of participation at the end of the workshop at Eastern University from Mr. Davis

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The nonviolence workshops conducted by Mr. Johnny Mack of *Realizing the Dream* was attended by a large number of students from the Jaffna University.



Students viewing the poster show at the exhibition stages at the Eastern University.



Mr. Glen Davis introducing "A Force More Power" documentary prior to its screening for school students during the exhibition in Jaffna.



Wesley Tharpe and Leslyn Wong, trainers from *Realizing the Dream, Inc.* a U.S. NGO conducting the nonviolence workshops at the South Eastern University.



School students listening attentively to the explanation of the poster show in Oluvil.

## US Government expands Scholarship Program for Young Journalists



US Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Valerie Fowler (left) presents a diploma to K. Mala of Batticaloa District, one of 16 graduates who received a USAID scholarship to attend the one-year journalism program.

March 4, 2010: The US Agency for International Development (USAID) announced the expansion of its scholarship program to bring youth to study at the Sri Lanka College of Journalism. US Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Valerie Fowler made

the announcement at the Sri Lanka Press Institute Diploma Program graduation ceremony.

USAID is providing scholarships for 26 students to attend the one-year Journalism Diploma Program in 2010. The Program focuses on radio, television, or print media. Courses are conducted in Sinhala,

Tamil, and English, and all students receive English language instruction. Current USAID scholarship recipients represent Tamil, Sinhala and Muslim communities from the Eastern Province (12 students) and the Northern Province (14 students).

In 2009, USAID provided scholarships for 14 students from the Eastern Province and two students from Monaragala District in Uva Province. As a condition of the scholarship, USAID scholarship recipients will return to their home districts or provinces to work as journalists after receiving their diplomas. This will strengthen regional reporting and ensure journalists are well-trained and prepared to cover important stories that are of interest to local and national audiences.

The Diploma in Journalism Program is conducted by the Sri Lanka Press Institute through their educational arm, the Sri Lanka College of Journalism.

## US Government Study Identifies Aquaculture Opportunities in Eastern Sri Lanka



March 26, 2010 – A US Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded study report has identified investment opportunities in the aquaculture sector in the Eastern Province.

Aquaculture, or fish farming, has the potential for significant growth in the East given the availability of suitable land and a strong export demand for fish and seafood.

This report also identifies aquaculture products that are most suitable for export and obstacles that must be overcome to encourage investment and development by the private sector. There is a high potential to create new jobs in the East, while using environmentally-friendly techniques through growth in aquaculture.

However, succeeding in the export market will require that Sri Lankan entrepreneurs -- fish farmers, transporters and exporters -- work

together to meet stringent requirements for proper cultivation, harvesting, processing, handling and transport. To sell in foreign markets, fish and fish products must meet exacting standards from harvest to the point of delivery to the consumer.

The study also finds that the Eastern Province offers investors a larger choice of suitable sites for aquaculture activities. There is an abundance of lagoons, marshes, mud flats and other saline areas relatively free of population and urban development. Aquaculture activities in these areas can be developed to create employment opportunities that complement, not compete with, existing agriculture or maritime fishing. Proper aquaculture practices will create additional support for protecting the environment and fertility of these coastal habitats.

The aquaculture study is one of seven assessments funded by USAID/Sri Lanka through its project called Connecting Regional Economies (CORE) project. This project connects producers in the Eastern Province, Uva Province and North Central Province to urban markets and export gateways in and around Colombo and the western coast.

The complete report is available at [www.core.lk](http://www.core.lk)

## Hayleys wins USAID Global Development Alliance Award for Sri Lanka



Hayleys Chairman, Mohan Pandithage and USAID/Sri Lanka Mission Director, Rebecca Cohn posing with USAID Chief Operating Officer, Alonzo Fulgham after the awards ceremony.

April 02, 2010: A ground-breaking Private Public Alliance (PPA) between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Hayleys Group has been chosen from 700 such initiatives around the world to

receive USAID's 2009 Global Development Alliance (GDA) Award. The US Government singled out this partnership as a model of how US Government foreign assistance can be maximized through greater engagement with the private sector.

The alliance with Hayleys fosters commercial agriculture in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province. The pilot project was launched in April 2008 and assisted farmers in areas affected by conflict to embrace innovative agricultural practices in an effort to improve their incomes. Hayleys initially introduced gherkins, jalapeno peppers and pineapples to selected locations of the project areas, facilitated technology transfer to farmers, provided material inputs on credit and provided guaranteed prices to the farmers for their agricultural produce.

At the end of this pilot project, each of the 160 participating farmers earned an average of Rs

45,000 per acre (approximately \$400) as additional net income for the two-month crop cycle, a substantial supplement to subsistence farming. Knowledge transfer and creation of market linkages helped the farmers to increase their commercial farming income through better utilization of their land resources.

The success of the pilot project led to a new alliance in 2009 between USAID and Hayleys and its subsidiaries. This Sustainable Agriculture through Commercialization (SAC) Project is expected to link 3,600 conflict-affected farmers from different regions in the Eastern Province to a commercially viable and sustainable agricultural program that ensures a substantial increase in farmer incomes.

Through the project, Hayleys plans to buy farmer produce valued at \$5 million (Rs 575 million) thus ensuring an increase of almost 50 per cent in net income per farmer, by 2012. An initial grant of \$1 million (Rs 113 million) by USAID will help to leverage nearly \$3 million (Rs 323 million) in investment by Hayleys and its subsidiaries Sunfrost Limited and Hayleys Agro Farms (Pvt) Ltd.

The SAC project will link 2,500 gherkin farmers to a global supply chain through a farmer out-grower system utilizing Hayleys' strengths in superior manufacturing and global marketing and increased value addition to farmer produce in the Eastern Province. In addition to the links with the global market, the project will empower local agricultural producers through production and supply of high quality seed material.

## US Government Provides 750 Scholarships to Youth in the East and North

March 23, 2010: USAID recently awarded 500 scholarships in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to youth in the North. Earlier, USAID/Sri Lanka, the development agency of the US Embassy, provided ICT scholarships to 250 young people from the East. The scholarships will provide the recipients with the skills needed to meet current workforce demands.

USAID, in a partnership with Microsoft's Unlimited Potential Partnership (UPP) program, developed computer-based ICT curricula to address the workforce needs in the agriculture, apparel, media,

and tourism sectors.

Rebecca Cohn, USAID Mission Director said, "These four sectors account for about 39% of all jobs in Sri Lanka, and ICT skills are critical to succeeding in these areas. These scholarships from USAID will enable the youth to find jobs and participate in the country's economy. That benefits the students, the communities, and Sri Lanka."

Infoshare, a local non-profit organization, designed the curriculum and IDM, an ICT academy, delivered the training through its national affiliates. Although the UPP initiative is ending, another USAID project will use the curricula to train an additional 10,000 youth throughout the East.

### What is Earth Day?

#### Earth Day and the Rise of Environmental Consciousness



Take Pride in America, Living Lands and Waters and other volunteers pick up trash along the Potomac River.

Earth Day, April 22, is the annual US celebration of the environment and a time for Americans to assess the work still needed to protect the natural gifts of our planet. Earth Day has no central organizing force behind it, though several nongovernmental organizations work to keep track of the thousands of local events in schools and parks that mark the day. It affirms that environmental awareness is part of the country's consciousness and that the idea of protecting the environment — once the province of a few conservationists — has moved from the extreme to the mainstream of American thought.

This was not always the case. In the 19th century, Americans, blessed with a vast land rich in natural resources, lived with the notion that fresh fields were always just over the horizon. When one exhausted the soil or forests or coal of a given place, it was possible to move on to another. As industry boomed in the early 20th century people accepted without question skies blackened from smokestack emissions and rivers fouled with industrial waste. As early as the mid-1930s — and again in the 1950s — Ohio's Cuyahoga River, running through America's industrial heartland, was set ablaze by burning chemical waste from factories built upon its banks. There was no public outcry. Few people even noticed.

During the 1960s public attitudes began to change. In 1962 a marine biologist named Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*. The title referred to a future without birds and described in plain language devastating long-term effects of highly toxic pesticides and other chemical agents then commonly used in American agriculture, industry and daily life. The book was a surprise bestseller.

In 1968 Apollo astronauts, returning from their pioneering orbital flight around the moon,

photographed the planet Earth as a whole for the first time. This image of the Earth — small, fragile, beautiful, and unique — quickly was imprinted on the psyches of millions. In 1969 industrial runoff in the Cuyahoga River again caught fire. This time the public reaction was immediate and intense. Cleveland, where the fire occurred, became a national laughing-stock, and the satirical song "Burn On, Big River, Burn On" was heard on radios across the country. In that same year the US Congress passed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), establishing a "national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment."

Concurrent with this slow building of environmental awareness was the increasingly vocal opposition to US involvement in the war in Vietnam. Public demonstrations against the war — particularly on college campuses — gave impetus to the idea that organized challenges to the "status quo" could in fact change public policy and behavior.

#### Origin of Earth Day

Gaylord Nelson, a US senator from Wisconsin and a longtime conservationist, was one who understood that the methods developed for use in the anti-war protest could succeed in other areas as well. "At the time," Nelson later wrote, "there was a great deal of turmoil on the college campuses over the Vietnam War. Protests, called anti-war teach-ins, were being widely held on campuses across the nation ... It suddenly occurred to me, why not have a nationwide teach-in on the environment? That was the origin of Earth Day."

Nelson returned to Washington and began promoting Earth Day to state governors, mayors of big cities, editors of college newspapers and, importantly, to *Scholastic Magazine*, which is circulated in US elementary and secondary schools. In September 1969, Nelson formally announced that there would be a "national environmental teach-in" sometime in spring 1970.

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### What is Earth Day? . . . . .

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"The wire services carried the story nationwide," recalled Nelson. "The response was dramatic .... Telegrams, letters, and telephone inquiries poured in from all over the nation. Using my Senate staff, I ran Earth Day activities out of my office. By December, the movement had expanded so rapidly that it became necessary to open an office in Washington to serve as a national clearinghouse for Earth Day inquiries and activities ....



A unique vision of Earth rising above the Moon was captured during an Apollo 8 Mission. (NASA Photo)

Groundbreaking federal legislation followed the success of the first Earth Day. The US Environmental Protection Agency was established in 1970, followed by the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act of 1972, and the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Among

the many far-reaching provisions of these bills was the requirement that automobiles use unleaded gasoline, achieve a minimum number of miles-per-gallon of gasoline and be equipped with catalytic converters to reduce the amount of toxic fumes released by automobile exhaust.

Then, in the wake of this legislative success, Earth Day seemed to disappear. Though annual celebrations continued, they failed to match the size and enthusiasm of the first year. Earth Day seemed to have become a relic of the protest days of the early 1970s.

Yet the spirit of Earth Day continued. Environmental organizations grew in size and power. Groups such as Greenpeace, formed in Canada in 1971, adopted principles of nonviolent civil disobedience to raise public consciousness about dwindling whale populations and the risks of nuclear power. The Nature Conservancy, formed in 1951, rededicated itself in the early 1970s to the "preservation of natural diversity" and began to buy undeveloped land for use as nature preserves. Venerable institutions such as the Sierra Club and the National Audubon Society vigorously brought suits against logging companies to slow the destruction of old-growth forests. Funded by public contributions and staffed with lawyers and educators as well as

scientists and naturalists, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) became aggressive watchdogs for the environment.

At home, Americans, often prompted by their children, began to separate their household trash for recycling. By the late 1980s recycling programs were established in many communities. By the mid-1990s these municipal recycling programs were paying for themselves, the amount of trash dumped into landfills was in noticeable decline, and more than 20 percent of America's municipal trash was being converted into useful products. Corporations, ever conscious of the desires of the consumer — and the bottom line of profits — began to promote themselves as being environmentally friendly. Many firms adopted sensible business practices that increased efficiency and reduced the amounts of industrial waste.

### Resurgence in 990S

Earth Day came back in a big way in 1990. Led by Dennis Hayes, a primary organizer of the first Earth Day, Earth Day 1990 was international in scope. More than 200 million people around the world — 10 times the number in 1970 — participated in events that recognized that the environment had finally become a universal public concern. The global momentum continued in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where an unprecedented number of governments and NGOs agreed on a far-ranging program to promote sustainable development. The 25th anniversary of the first Earth Day in 1995 was a time to assess environmental progress. In Western countries the news seemed good — air and water were cleaner, forests were expanding and many other environmental indicators were up as well. The sometimes volatile combination of legislation, lawsuits brought by NGOs, public education and more efficient business practices had made a noticeable and positive effect on the condition of the environment.

Source: [www.america.gov](http://www.america.gov)

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 which is published in Junior Observer of the Sunday Observer.

The monthly essay topic is for children in three age categories 12-14 years, 15-16 years and 17-18 years.



Winners of the Essay Competition held in September 2009  
From Left to Right : Duvindi Illankoon, Chathuranga Shyamal Udawatta, Ahanya Loganathan, Ambassador patricia Butenis, Zara Sanerson, Zafra Fuaiz, Michelle Joanne David, Reshika Sandini & C.N.A. Kulatunga

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 American Corners in Kandy and Oluvil, or from sources on [America.gov](http://America.gov), a very good internet resource with information on the United States, its culture, history, literature, politics, tourist attractions and

Award Ceremony of the "Learn About America" Essay Competition

March 26, 2010: Another batch of winners of the "Learn About America" Essay Competition received their awards in a ceremony held at the American Center auditorium. The winners for September and October 2009 were awarded at this event by Ambassador Patricia Butenis.

much more.



Winners of the "Learn About America" Essay Competition – October 2009.  
Left to Right: Ruhi Hilmy, Maimoon Mohamed, Rashmi Kurukulasuriya, Bilesha Prasandani, Ambassador Patricia Butenis, Gishan Nirmasanka, Celina Fernando, U.L. Najana and Munsif Saheed

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 US Ambassador. A prize giving ceremony will be held at the American Center Colombo every two months.

Essay topics for April are as follows :

**12-14 years :** Select a United States national park you would like to visit and explain why you would like to go there. (500 words)

**15-16 years:** Research and discuss ways Americans and Sri Lankans are recycling garbage in their schools and homes. Discuss what you can do to promote recycling in your community. (750 words)

**17-18 years:** Discuss the impact of climate change on plants and animals in the United States and Sri Lanka. What can be done to protect these species? (1000 words)

Please see the Junior Observer of the Sunday Observer for more details.

The Information Resource Center of the US Embassy Colombo introduced this Essay Competition titled "Learn About America" in January 2009 through Sunday Observer to promote American culture, its people and values among the youth population in Sri Lanka.

Watch the video: <http://www.youtube.com/user/USEmbassySrilanka>



**“Readers are Leaders” reading club program**

The American Center, has initiated a new project called “Readers are Leaders”.

It’s a monthly program that is held every 4th Saturday of the month targeting children of 10-14 years of age. This reading club is a collection of readers who participate in the regular discussion of books. The objectives of initiating this Reading Club Project are:

- To develop a taste for reading in young adults, in order to consolidate what they learn in school;
- To strengthen their reading skills, foster new reading habits, and encourage young adults to visit the library regularly; and
- To allow members exposure to new ideas and differing viewpoints, and to provide an opportunity to socialize with other book lovers.

The inaugural program was held on January 23, 2010 with 51 members and Mr. Glen Davis, Cultural Affairs Officer at the American Center read a story to the children who came for the inaugural reading club program.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> program was held on February 27 and Ms. Sina Jones, Public Diplomacy Associate of the American Center read the story to the members of the reading club. The new arrivals of IRC that are suitable for young audience were displayed and some of the reading club members obtained the IRC membership and borrowed the books.

This Reading club will offer the benefit of having all members in the same room, which makes for a much more personal and intimate experience. Children are invited to share their reading experiences. In this way, this program would help them to improve their knowledge in English language, develop their oral communication, summarizing and reading skills. By listening to their friends, they also broaden their horizons to encompass new books, ideas, writers and collections.

**There Was Once a Boy Named Milo**

Come join more than 40 of your peers as the *Readers are Leaders* book club continues to follow Milo and Tock on their journey to bring Rhyme and Reason back to Dictionopolis in Norton Juster’s classic *The Phantom Tollbooth* on **Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> April at 2:30pm.**

The Readers are Leaders book club is designed to encourage youth ages 10-14 in developing a love of reading and to experience the excitement of literary journeys. Guest readers from the US Embassy pose engaging questions to increase children’s understanding of both the book and the English language.

Immediately following the book club meeting, the American Center will screen the film, *Aladdin*. Youth films are shown every Saturday at 3:30.



27 March 2010, Dominic “Doc” Meyer, Information Management Specialist at the US Embassy Colombo reads *The Phantom Tollbooth* with members of the Readers are Leaders book club . In the midst of preparing for examinations 40 children chose to take a break from their studies to enjoy an afternoon discussing American literature with their peers.

## Workshops on Online English Language program DynEd



March 8, 2010:  
The Public

Diplomacy section of the US Embassy hosted two workshops to demonstrate the DynEd English language

program. DynEd is a computer-based program available to all American Center library patrons. Mr. M. Nareen, the Academic Consultant who conducted the workshop demonstrated DynEd registration,

placement tests, and the many other user-friendly characteristics of the program. The workshops were held at the American Center, Colombo and Colombo International Hotel Management Center.

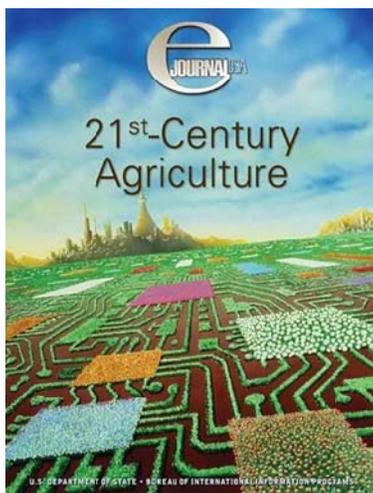
DynEd is a comprehensive online English Language program developed in the United States. It provides access to several learning modules such as First English, Dynamic English and Hospitality English. DynEd's technology-assisted courses and assessment tools help learners acquire all levels of language skills, beginning with listening and speaking.

For more information on the DynEd language program offered through the American Center call 249-8100 or email [amcentersl@state.gov](mailto:amcentersl@state.gov)

## The American Center Library will be closed on

# April 13 - 14, 2010 (Sinhala & Tamil New Year)

### 21st-Century Agriculture



Humanity's longest struggle has been to feed itself. This *eJournal USA* explores how 21st-century technical prowess and agricultural skill hold the key to feeding the growing populations of the future.

#### Inside this publication:

- [Every Link in the Food Chain](#)
- [Food for the World](#)
- [Bring Fish From the Waters](#)
- [Fresh From Farm to Plate](#)
- [US Food Policy Aims for "Transformational Change"](#)
- [The Borlaug Legacy: A New Paradigm for Agricultural Research](#)
- [Feeding the "Hidden Hunger"](#)
- [Crops Will Provide 21st-Century Energy](#)

Read Online at: <http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/ejs/0310.pdf#popup>

## April 2010

### **April 3 - Beauty and the Beast** (1991, 84 minutes)

When the film's beautiful book loving heroine, Belle, sings the first of an unprecedented three Oscar nominated songs you too will fall instantly under its spell. However, it is the spell of an enchantress that opens this classic fairy tale turning a cruel prince into a hideous beast who lives in his bewitched castle inhabited by Lumiere the love struck candelabra, Cogsworth the pompous clock, the kindly Mrs. Potts and an inquisitive little teacup named Chip. To break the spell the Beast must win Belle's love before the last petal falls from an enchanted rose. Best Picture Golden Globe Award winner.

### **April 10 - 101 Dalmatians** (1996, 79 minutes)

The fun starts the moment Dalmatians Pongo and Perdita settle into their owners' flat to become proud parents of 15 precocious pups. Its one big happy dog family until the outrageous Cruella DeVil kidnaps the puppies along with every other Dalmatian in the city! Now it's up to Pongo and Perdita using the magic of the entire animal population in a thrilling mission to help the courageous pups outsmart their evil captor.

### **April 17 - The Jungle Book** (1967, 78 minutes)

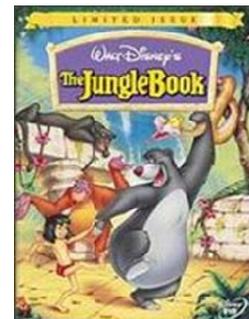
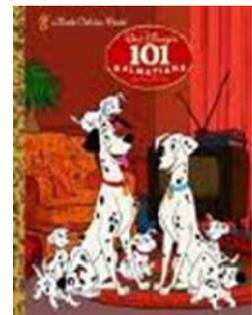
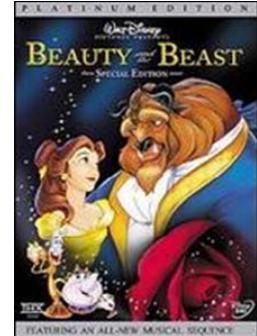
This animated gem springs brilliantly to life when Mowgli, an orphan boy raised by wolves is encouraged by his animal friends to leave the jungle before the return of the fearsome man-eating tiger, Shere Khan with Bagheera (his loyal panther friend) at his side, Mowgli's journey back to the "man-village" begins. Along the way he is befriended by a free-spirited bear named Baloo, Who rescues him from hilarious run-ins with some of the wildest Disney characters ever created-eccentric elephants a bewitching boa and a be-boppin orangutan named King Louie. Through it all, it's lovable Baloo who teaches Mowgli the "Bare Necessities" of life and the true meaning of friendship.

### **April 24 - Aladdin** (1992, 90 minutes)

This animated gem springs brilliantly to life when Mowgli, an orphan boy raised by wolves is encouraged by his animal friends to leave the jungle before the return of the fearsome man-eating tiger, Shere Khan with Bagheera (his loyal panther friend) at his side, Mowgli's journey back to the "man-village" begins. Along the way he is befriended by a free-spirited bear named Baloo, Who rescues him from hilarious run-ins with some of the wildest Disney characters ever created-eccentric elephants a bewitching boa and a be-boppin orangutan named King Louie. Through it all, it's lovable Baloo who teaches Mowgli the "Bare Necessities" of life and the true meaning of friendship.

*Reviews were drawn from DVD covers*

**Movies start promptly at 3:30pm every Saturday. 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.**



## Film Screenings at the American Center

American Center Newsletter

April 2010

### April 2010 - Tom Hanks Movies

#### **April 6 - That Thing You Do!** (1996, 108 minutes)

Recounts a fable of a pop rock band formed a year after the Beatles took America by storm in early 1964. Jazz aficionado Guy Patterson, unhappily toiling in the family appliance store, is recruited into the band the Oneders (later renamed the Wonders) after regular drummer Chad breaks his arm. After Guy injects a four/four rock beat into lead singer Jimmy's ballad, the song's undeniable pop power flings the Wonders into a brief whirlwind of success, telling the tale of many American bands who attempted to grab the brass ring of rock and roll in the wake of the British Invasion.

#### **April 20 - Sleepless in Seattle** (1993, 105 minutes)

Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan star in Nora Ephron's wonderfully romantic comedy about two people drawn together by Destiny. Hanks stars as Sam Baldwin, a widowed father who, thanks to the wiles of his worried son, becomes a reluctant guest on a radio call-in show. He's an instant hit with thousands of female listeners, who deluge his Seattle home with letters of comfort. Meanwhile, inspired in equal parts by Sam's story and by classic Hollywood romance, writer Annie Reed (Ryan) becomes convinced that it's her destiny to meet Sam. There are just two problems: Annie's engaged to someone else, and Sam doesn't know yet that they're made for each other.

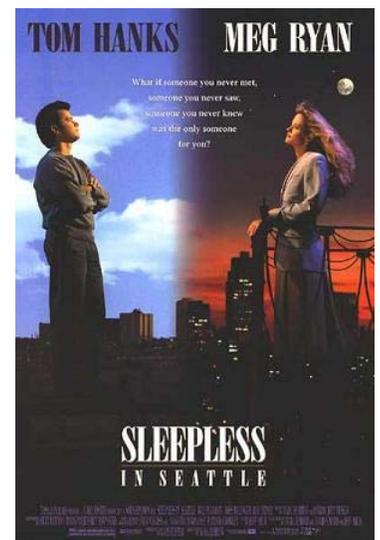
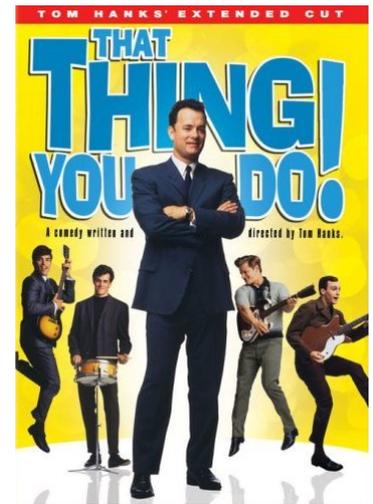
#### **April 27 - Forrest Gump** (1994, 144 minutes)

The Academy Award winner for Best Picture, Best Director Robert Zemeckis, and Best Actor Tom Hanks, this unlikely story of a slow-witted but good-hearted man somehow at the center of the pivotal events of the 20th century is a funny and heartwarming epic. Hanks plays the title character, a shy Southern boy in love with his childhood best friend (Robin Wright) who finds that his ability to run fast takes him places. As an All-Star football player he meets John F. Kennedy; as a soldier in Vietnam he's a war hero; and as a world champion Ping-Pong player he's hailed by Richard Nixon. Becoming a successful shrimp-boat captain, he still yearns for the love of his life, who takes a quite different and much sadder path in life. The visual effects incorporating Hanks into existing newsreel footage is both funny and impressive, but the heart of the film lies in its sweet love story and in the triumphant performance of Hanks as an unassuming soul who savors the most from his life and times.

*Reviews drawn from MSN movies, All Movie Guide and Amazon*

**Entrance free!**

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Tom  
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Forrest  
Gump

