



# AMERICAN CENTER NEWSLETTER

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The American Center

Colombo

June – July 2014

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## U.S. Embassy Colombo Hosts Iftar Dinners



Chargé d'Affaires William Weinstein welcomed the guests.

The U.S. Embassy hosted an Iftar dinner to mark the holy month of Ramazan at the residence of Chargé d'Affaires William Weinstein in Colombo on July 15. Religious leaders, political leaders, academics, entrepreneurs and journalists were among the many guests of varied faith backgrounds. Mr. Weinstein's remarks highlighted the importance of Ramazan as the perfect time to join together and recognize the power of tolerance, understanding, and communication in creating lasting harmony in Sri Lanka.

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## Upcoming Events . . . . .

### "Ceylon 18th"



The American Center in Colombo is currently holding an art exhibition featuring the work of Nuwan Perera. The exhibition runs until September 13. Entrance is free.

### September 22, 2014, 4:30 pm

A Panel Discussion on "Study in the USA" will be held at the American Center in Colombo. Participants at the American Corners in Kandy and Jaffna will be able to join the event via DVC. Call 011 2498128 for more details.

### August 23, 2014, 3:30 pm

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

### Week-end Movies in August. Every Saturday at 3:30 pm @ the American Center Auditorium.

- August 2: Pete's Dragon
- August 9: Despicable Me 2
- August 16: Rio
- August 23: Happy Feet
- August 30: A Series of Unfortunate Events

Call 011 2498146 or 011 2498169 for more details.

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## What is Sri Lanka's Place in Rising Asia?



Participants who were joined the panel discussion.

The U.S.-Sri Lanka International Visitor (IV) Alumni Association organized a panel discussion on "What is Sri Lanka's Place in Rising Asia?" on June 6 at the Fulbright Commission in Colombo. This was the first of a series of panel discussions. The panel comprised of Mr Arjuna Herath (Partner - Ernst & Young, President - Chartered Accountants of Sri

Lanka), Mr Asanga Abeyagoonasekera (Executive Director - Lakshman Kadirgama Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies), Ms. Dharisha Bastians (Senior Journalist - Daily FT & Correspondent for the NY Times) and Mr. Anushka Wijesinha (Research Economist - Institute of Policy Studies). Topics such as the possibility of Sri Lanka becoming an aviation hub, importance of doing business with India due to their large domestic market, the question of whether there is even a need to go out of Asia for imports, and the rising investments of China in the country were touched upon. The 32 participants had a lively discussion with the event being moderated by Ms. Rezani Aziz (CEO - AdFactors Public Relations Lanka (PVT) Ltd).

The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) is the U.S. Department of State's premier professional exchange program. Through short-term visits to the United States, current and emerging foreign leaders in a variety of fields experience the U.S. firsthand and cultivate lasting relationships with their American counterparts.

## Iftar Dinners . . . .

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On July 21 U.S. Embassy Colombo and the Ceylon Moor Ladies' Union organized an Iftar meal at the Home for Girls, a Muslim girls' orphanage in Colombo. Acting Public Affairs Officer Dawn Suni and other female Embassy officials joined the children to break the fast, celebrating the Ramazan season together in the spirit of interfaith harmony and friendship.



Students at Home for Girls with school supplies from the U.S. Embassy.

## U.S. Student Visa Presentation



Sheela Krishnan doing her presentation on U.S. Student Visas.

On July 15 Vice Consul Sheela Krishnan led a presentation on U.S. Student Visas at the American Center to a large number of students aspiring for higher studies in the U.S. Over 50 (please confirm #) Sri Lankan students discussed how to research universities, apply for visas, and life on U.S. college campuses. The U.S. Embassy regularly holds these open sessions for anyone who is interested in pursuing higher education in the U.S. Look out for future events on the [Embassy facebook page](#).

## Fourth of July Quiz Contest at the American Corner in Kandy



Audience at the 'Quiz Contest' at the American Corner Kandy.

On July 4 American Corner Kandy hosted a Quiz Contest in celebration of the Fourth of July - the

Independence Day of the United States. More than 40 students, Youth Forum representatives and members of the public attended the Contest.

Ms. Azna Deen, an English Instructor at the University of Peradeniya facilitated the program. Following a warm welcome from American Corner Coordinator Inoka Rathnayaka, the participants and audience enjoyed an energetic competition on U.S. history, popular culture and trivia.

The audience enjoyed learning more about the U.S. and celebrating the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and the American Center signed up several new members.

## Support Center for Students with Disability

On June 19 American Center Director Christopher Teal joined the Arts Faculty of the University of Colombo to launch the Support Center for Students with Disability. The new Support Center, which was initiated by a group of concerned students, is equipped with state-of-the-art computers, special equipment and software for the visually impaired, recording devices and furniture from a \$20,000 grant provided by the U.S. Embassy in December 2013. The Support Center will help students with disabilities to engage more fully in their academic studies and also have access to wider range of subjects which was hitherto not available to them due to limitations in access to text books. The Jinasena Training and Rehabilitation Trust also partnered with the U.S. Embassy and the University of Colombo on this project.

The U.S. Embassy strongly supports inclusivity for all religious, ethnic, differently-abled and minority communities. In his remarks, American Center



Unveiling of the plaque to open the Support Center.

Director Chris Teal highlighted the importance of diversity and inclusivity in academic and campus communities. University of Colombo officials commended the U.S. Embassy's assistance in providing state-of-the-art facilities for students with disabilities.

## Forthcoming events . . . .

**August 8, 2014, 9:00 am**

Becoming a Scientist: Building Science Projects

The United States-Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission will host a Scientific Discovery Session by The Elon

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Traveling Science Centre and Co-founder Dr. Crista Arangala. Two identical two-hour sessions will take place. For registration details, read the flyer available at: <http://goo.gl/Jm1Fif> or call 011 2564176 or 4718744.

## Teacher Training Workshops



Teachers participating in a workshop activity.

The Embassy partnered with the National College of Education to provide teacher training workshops along the Southern coast. English Language Fellow Carol Marsh conducted workshops in Pasdunrata, Tangalle and Tissamaharama.

Teachers took part in interactive lessons aimed to learn student-centered instruction techniques, which results in an enhanced learning experience for the students.

## Poetry Slam Contest at Gateway College, Dehiwala



Poets, audience and the school staff pose for a group photo with U.S. Embassy's Cultural Affairs Officer Dawn Suni.

On July 17 the American Center hosted a Poetry Slam at Gateway College, Dehiwala. Twelve Gateway College students 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. The American Center will continue to host Poetry Slams at schools to encourage talented school students to express themselves freely and creatively. More photos available on our [facebook page](http://www.facebook.com/Colombo.USembassy): [www.facebook.com/Colombo.USembassy](http://www.facebook.com/Colombo.USembassy).

## Board Games at the American Center



Kids playing Board games.

Guests at the American Center Library are now enjoying our new Board Games and Conversation club. Led by State Department Summer Hire Ms. Jordan Crume, students and parents from the Colombo area are practicing their English, playing American board games and solving puzzles, and making new friends through the American Center Library.



Join the U.S. Embassy facebook page with more than 98,000 fans and counting...

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

## 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, a very good 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 giving 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)

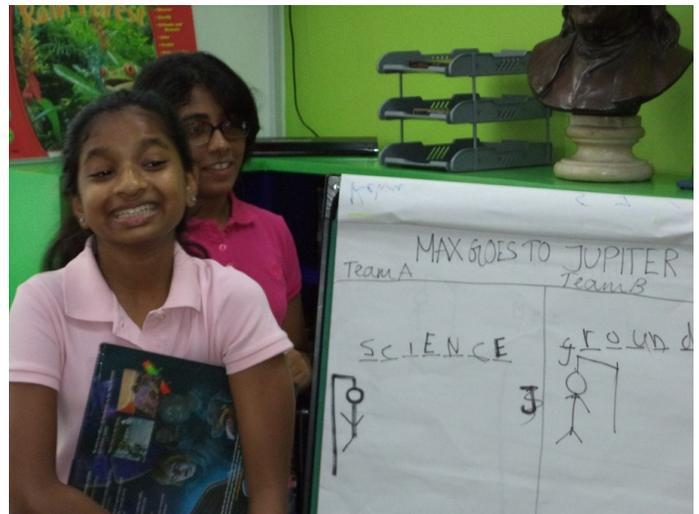
Please see the Junior Observer of the Sunday Observer for more details. Closing date September 30, 2014.

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

On July 26 the American Center Library hosted our monthly "Readers are Leaders" children's book club. Volunteers from the Asia Foundation in Sri Lanka read "Max Goes to Jupiter" and had a discussion on the book. There were twenty five kids ages 6-10 years participated in it and this is a monthly event held on every 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month.



Kids listening to storyteller.



Joel Prakash reads from "Max Goes to Jupiter."

The American Center Library began the "Readers Are Leaders" program in January 2010 to promote English-language reading and a love of books. Please see our Facebook page for the next meeting. [www.facebook.com/colombo.usembassy](http://www.facebook.com/colombo.usembassy)

# Film Screenings at the American Center

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## August 2014 (Theme: Sports)

### **August 5 - Glory Road** (118 minutes)

This is an exciting and inspirational true story of the team that changed college basketball -- and the nation -- forever! Josh Lucas (SWEET HOME ALABAMA) stars as future Hall of Fame coach Don Haskins of tiny Texas Western University, who bucks convention by simply starting the best players he can find: history's first all-African American lineup. In a turbulent time of social and political change, their unlikely success sends shock waves through the sport that follow the underdog Miners all the way to an epic showdown with all-white, #1 ranked Kentucky for the National Championship!

### **August 12 - Remember the Titans** (113 minutes)

Academy Award(R)-winner Denzel Washington (Best Actor, TRAINING DAY, 2001) gives a victorious performance in this stirring and uplifting film. REMEMBER THE TITANS is a rousing celebration of how a town torn apart by resentment, friction, and mistrust comes together in triumphant harmony. The year is 1971. After leading his team to 15 winning seasons, football coach Bill Yoast (Will Patton) is demoted and replaced by Herman Boone (Washington), tough, opinionated, and as different from the beloved Yoast as he could be. How these two men overcome their differences and turn a group of hostile young men into champions, plays out in a remarkable and triumphant story full of soul and spirit. You and your family will never forget the Titans.

### **August 19 - The Blind Side** (128 minutes)

Michael Oher (Quinton Aaron) knows little about family. Less about football. What the homeless teen knows are the streets and projects of Memphis. Well-to-do Leigh Anne Tuohy (Sandra Bullock) knows little about his world. Yet when she and Michael meet, he's found a home. And the Tuohys have found something just as life-changing: a beloved new son and brother. This real-life story of family and of Michael's growth into a blue-chip football star will have you cheering with its mix of gridiron action and heartwarming emotion. Share the remarkable journey of the college All-American and first-round NFL draft pick who was a winner before he ever stepped onto the playing field.

### **August 26 - Gracie** (95 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!

