

THE TCASD TIMES

"Our mission is to develop a peaceful, cultural oriented and educated community, who think globally, act responsibly and contribute to the societies we live in."



About Us

The Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham, TCASD for short is a non-profit organization aimed at providing our youth and young children with opportunities to engage in activities that will enlighten them on their culture and prospective futures. The organization promotes cultural awareness, excellence in academics, and community involvement. We pride ourselves on forming a steady foundation to allow our children and youth to become great leaders in tomorrow's society.

Upcoming Events!

- Valentine's Day Event
- Science Fair
- University Fair
- Mother's Day
- Beach Trip
- March Break Camp
- Woman's Club
- Literacy Day
- Seniors Activity Day

Global Village Concept brings all people together, I would simply say, "every country is our own and all the people are our kinsmen."

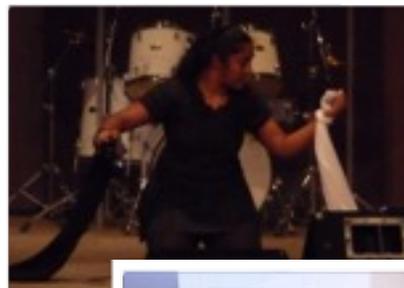
- Tom Thiru (President)



Thai Pongal

The Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham (TCASD) is committed to instilling positive values in children and youth by motivating them to participate in various cultural and academic events. The Tamils in the Durham region were fortunate to celebrate the Tamil Heritage Vizha of "Thai Pongal" with families, friends, political leaders who supported the achievement of the proclamation of the Tamil Heritage month, Tamil organizations and various community groups. TCASD is very proud and thankful to Town of Ajax and the City of Pickering for the declaration of our Heritage month of Thai. The Pongal event was celebrated at the Ajax Community Centre with over 200 people in attendance. The hall was decorated with the traditional lamps, ("kurthu oli") coconut leaves, beautiful Kolam, and clay pots on the table as the centrepiece. The Pongal pani was set up in a special place facing the Sun God. TCASD's talented children brought the sun into the room with their talented art work. The guests and children had an opportunity to pour the freshly harvested rice, in significance of Prosperity, Peace and Happiness. The Pongal was prepared and shared with all the guests, along with delicious home made food prepared by TCASD members. The Town of Ajax Mayor presented the Tamil Heritage month proclamation to TCASD. The youths and children kept our audience entertained with

traditional Pongal songs, dances and creative crafts and meaningful speeches. More over, it was a great family event to unite the community. In celebrating Tamil Heritage month, TCASD presented the Town of Ajax and the City of Pickering with a decorated pongal pot and wooden spoon to display. In addition to that, TCASD presented new Tamil books to the Oshawa, Ajax and Pickering library. Four Tamil women from TCASD were recognized by MP Hon. Chris Alexander for their volunteer work, their leadership to TCASD and to the community. It was a successful event with many guests such as, MP Chris Alexander, MPP Joe Dickson , Mayor of Ajax and councillors, Mayor of City of Pickering and councillors and many community partners.



Peace & Harmony Community Concert

On March 3rd 2012, the youth members of the Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham (TCASD) participated in the Peace and Harmony Community Concert, hosted by Mr. Roland Rutland, the External Affairs Co-ordinator for the Durham Bahai' Community. The Concert was held at the Forest Brook Community Church, Ajax. The main goal of the concert was to promote diversity and humanitarian rights. The youth of TCASD did two beautiful dances, both to represent diversity and human rights. One of the dances was named as "Breaking the Ties." It was performed and choreographed by Vashinie Kamesan. The dance was created based on the idea of metaphorically tying and bringing down the dreams of a girl. The dancers' hands were tied with black and white knots to symbolize different stereotypes and stigmas affecting the life of a girl. At the end of the dance, the dancer broke free from the knots, symbolically representing a girl becoming independent. The second one was the Peacock dance, which originated from India. The peacock dance has some religious significance to the Hinduism. Also, it is the National Bird of India. The peacock dance is performed through the rainy seasons. This very popular "Peacock Dance" was performed by Meka Ratnarajah, Thanya Maniam and Taneeka Thirukumar and was choreographed by Tanesha Thirukumar.

Language Learning Resource

The Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham participated in an event organized by the Durham Regional Immigration Portal to launch their newly produced English Language Curriculum for all the ESL (English as Second Language) students in Durham. The curriculum was made in such a way that all immigrants to Canada would not only learn English but also have access to the opportunities and support centres present in Canada. As for the members of TCASD, it was a great honour to be part of an event that will help many Tamil families living in Durham. The TCASD youth and members set up an information booth and participated in the launch of this new curriculum. This was a great opportunity for all the TCASD youth and members to make connections with representatives throughout Durham and to learn about the programs offered to Durham residents. TCASD would like to thank and appreciate the Durham Regional Immigration Portal for inviting us and for supporting all the immigrants to Durham.



Art Fest

Art fest is an event that is hosted by the City of Pickering that provides local artists opportunities to bring arts and culture to the Durham community. This event affords an opportunity for community artists to show and sell their work. Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham is a proud contributor in Art fest and has been involved with the event for over four years. During the program TCASD distributed many items such as putting henna on peoples' hands, and selling sarees and jewelleryes. TCASD was very pleased and honoured to be participating at Art fest 2012. Thank you to the youth who volunteered their time to help with the Art fest.



Mother's Day

The Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham, hosted its annual Mother's Day Celebrations on the 12th of May, 2012 at the Ontario Power Generation Centre in Pickering. The event was organized by the youth of TCASD with the help from the executive team members. The celebrations revolved around, the theme "An evening at Hawaii." The event started around 7:00pm, with a moment of silence remembering the mothers passed away due to various reasons. Following the moment of silence, the TCASD youth and children came up and expressed their love for their mothers. The TCASD youths, Sigogini Sivarajah and Vashine Kamesan were the masters or ceremonies for the event and coordinated the programs. After expressing their love to their mothers, the youth and children also handed out roses and chocolate to their mothers. The junior and senior group students from Mrs. Tharmini Thishyan music classes performed a few songs dedicated to all mothers. The mothers were treated with extra care and were made to feel like celebrities. Afterwards, the audience enjoyed the TCASD Mother's Day Presentation put together by Vashinie Kamesan, with the help of Thiviyaah Pushparajah. Lastly, a pot luck dinner was served and everyone enjoyed the rest of their night with music and dancing. Special thanks is sent out to the Ontario Power Generation for providing us the lovely space to host this event, all the families who contributed to the potluck dinner and all the youth who contributed to making the evening successful and enjoyable.

Lights of Hope Charity Gala



The Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham celebrates its 3rd annual "Lights of Hope" Charity Gala. The Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham (TCASD) hosted its 3rd Annual Lights of Hope Charity Gala this past weekend, 'An Evening in Paris'. It started with a scenic drive to the stunning Deer Creek Golf Club, located in the growing suburb of Ajax, Ontario. The Charity Gala was organized by the TCASD's executive members. The executive committee is made up of a highly competent and experienced team, which in turn, has allowed the organization to achieve many creditable goals within short periods of time. The members of TCASD promote and motivate their youths to participate, organize and choreograph the breathtaking dances and fashion show that were featured during the evening. The Lights of Hope Charity Gala is an annual event, held by TCASD, to voice awareness and contribute to Cancer Research for the community. It was wonderful to see politicians from all levels of government and community groups attending this event. We were honoured to have the following dignitaries at our event Hon. Chris Alexander, MP Ajax Pickering, Joe Dickson, MPP for Ajax Pickering, Tracy McCharles, MPP, Dave Ryan, City of Pickering, Ajax Councillor Ward 2 Renrick Ashby, Pickering Councillor Ward 2 Doug Dickerson,

Pickering Councillor Ward 1 Jennifer O'Connell, Regional Councillor Ward 3 Peter Rodrigues, President and CEO of Veridian, Michael Angemeer, President/CEO of EcoHealth Resource & wellness Centre Inc Bridgett Lawrence, CEO of Oshawa Hospital Foundation, Robert Baker and the staff Bahai Community External Affairs Coordinator of Durham region, Roland Rutland. Our Honourable guest, Dr. Leta Forbes, Chief of Oncology, R.S. McLaughlin Durham Regional Cancer Centre, Regional, Special guest speaker, Ms. Saumiya Srivigneswaran, Senior Policy Analyst Health Canada. In the last three years, TCASD has done an outstanding fundraising effort by raising over \$25,000 charity funds which was donated to the R.S. McLaughlin Durham Regional Cancer Centre towards a patient examination room located at Lakeridge hospital in Oshawa.



In addition, we also donated funds for Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering's hospital for Women's and Children Health Program and an MRI unit. The wonderful combination of adults, youth and senior members of TCASD helped give full efforts in making the event a success. Guests of the night arrived to a gorgeous hall decorated with Eiffel Tower centre pieces. Striking a pose for the cameras on the way in, guests showed off in

their attractive gowns, dresses, sarees and formal wear. Our MC's enlightened the program by entertaining the audience throughout the night. The event lead off with a dance



performance, All You Need is Love, followed by A Walk to Remember to embrace the theme. Both dances featured an elegant mix of culture and modern steps that kept the audience on the edge of their seats. The incredible performances, slideshows, table decorations and professional photography were a result of the work by a vast group of TCASD youth, who put a tremendous amount of hours into the preparation for the day. The danced floor opened with a Thank you note to all our well-wishers, participants, advertisers, sponsors, banquet hall facilities and DJ! The youth and the guests kept the dance floor lively and made the evening one the most memorable events.



Park Cleaning

Everyone needs a beautiful, safe and clean place where the local residents can relax or play. Helping to keep the park clean is a small step but an important one that everyone can take to ensure our environment is kept clean. The ravine located by the corner of Liverpool Road and Bayly Street in the City of Pickering has accumulated various forms of garbage and debris over the past winter. It certainly makes the City of Pickering more attractive to visitors and allows sustainability to protect the environment and natural ecosystems. TCASD is a dedicated participant in the clean up of the park. TCASD also adopted a park and was involved in the yearly clean up of it. TCASD would like to thank the City of Pickering for all the cleaning supplies and collection of the garbage. Also, we would like to thank Doug Dickerson, Deputy Mayor for the City of Pickering and Keith Falconer, President for the Pickering East Shore Community Association for coordinating the clean up. TCASD kindly asks that you please help restore nature to its natural beauty.

Family Health Seminar

On the June 10th, the Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham in Partner with Ajax Library, Main Branch conducted a free Family Health Seminar. TCASD conducts various health seminars throughout the year aimed at helping community residents live a healthier lifestyle. Dr. Kanna Vela who is a general practitioner (GP)



in Pickering conducted this lecture. This seminar in particular was to bring awareness to the community about seasonal allergies, travel advisories and vaccination since summer was around the corner. In addition, she also talked about skin care and provided valuable tips on how to protect your skin and keeping healthy in the summer time. Dr. Kanna answered many questions from the audience especially from the elderly patients on diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. Many young parents were not shy about asking question on allergies and asthma triggering factors. It's our goal to have these types of seminar as seasonal and as often as possible. TCASD would like to thank Dr. Kanna Vela for taking time to come and give a very valuable seminar.

Ontario Science Centre



On August 3rd 2012, the children, youths and a few adults of Tamil Cultural Academic Society of Durham attended the Ontario Science Centre to enhance their knowledge of science. The group of 52 were split into smaller groups, led by two youth members. The leaders guided the children and adults to different stations around the centre that would most entertain each individual. Many of the children learned about science through fun and exciting activities. All the groups came together during the lunch break, where pizza was ordered and shared. The children and youths took full advantage of the gift shop to purchase any souvenirs.

The Ontario Science Centre has not only provided the TCASD members with better understanding of science but has also provided good services to keep the groups entertained. We would like to thank every member that successfully made our trip memorable.

Ajax Movie Night

Summertime is an excellent time to enjoy ourselves. The days are long and the weather is beautiful. The town of Ajax has seized the opportunity by hosting continuous movie nights at the Ajax Sports Complex on Audley Road. The Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham (TCASD) was pleased to get an invitation to take part in this event on July 19th. TCASD had a colourful booth, decorated in magnificent sarees. There was a photo board displaying many of TCASD's previous, successful events. TCASD applied henna, a classic Indian tradition, a very popular activity especially among kids and youth. The youth of TCASD put henna on many of the people who approached the booth, designs ranging from simple to intricate. Many of the individuals were amazed by the artistic talents of the TCASD youth. As the evening ended, there were still many who visited the TCASD booth, wanting henna to be done on their hands. As it became dark, the movie "The Lorax" began, concluding the entertaining evening.



TCASD's Annual "Believe in You!"



"Believe in You" is TCASD's major festival, which has been celebrated over the last few years. It is also a cultural & educational talent show hosted by a few youths in Durham region. This event was held at J. Clarke Richardson on Sunday, October 2, 2011. This amazing festival consisted of many performances such as dramas and plays, music and dances that were choreographed by the youth and guided by adults. These outstanding performances were witnessed by over 500 people. The "Believe in You" festival brought an exciting evening for the youth, parents and the audience. This year over 150 participants took their talents to the stage. Some highlights of the show includes semi classical Bharathanatyam, Hip-Hop performances, and a play to end it all off. Together, it was a spectacular festival that put the Durham region on the cultural diversity map. The experience was not complete without a true taste of Tamil cultural food and Pizza. We had many dignitaries come to our annual Believe in You festival. Specifically Hon. MP Chris Alexander, MPP Joe Dickson, Councillor Joann Dies, Councillor Renwick Ashby, Mayor Dave Ryan, Councillor David Pickles, Jonny

Conte president of Italian Club, Roland Rutland, Jenny Ding Chinese Canadian Culture Centre, Shashi Bhatia and Councillor Peter Rodriguez. This event also was a partnership by multicultural communities in Durham region, such as Italian community, Chinese community, Caribbean community, Baha'i community and Indian community. These kinds of activities made TCASD as one of the leading organizations, promoting cultural and educational activities within Durham region. All the parents, youth and the community leaders were amazed with the outcome and look forward to next year's bigger and better event. Special thanks go to the TVI, CMR, Monsoon Journal and Ajax Snap for the Media coverage. The youth of TCASD, would also like to extend their gratitude to the 2011 Executive team and their parents for giving them this amazing opportunity. With that said, thank you for all who had contributed in one way or the other to make this day a huge success.



NAVARATHRI CELEBRATION

Navaratri means nine nights in Sanskrit and symbolizes the triumph of good over evil. On this occasion, devotees worship all nine forms of Goddess Durga. Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati are worshiped for three days each asking for their blessings in different aspects of a person's life. The first three days are worshipped for Durga remover of miseries of life and gives power and energy. The next three days are for the goddess Lakshmi, who is considered to have the power of bestowing on her devotees an inexhaustible wealth. The final set of three days is for worshipping the goddess of wisdom and knowledge, Saraswati. In order to have all-round success in life, we need the blessings of all three aspects of the divine mother, therefore, the worship for nine nights is important. Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham members in partnership with Ajax Academy celebrated Navarathri on Oct 22nd evening which was one of the nine days. The evening was filled with devotional songs, prayers and devotional dances for peace, wealth and knowledge. It was a wonderful opportunity for the families to gather to pray and explain the significance of this Hindu festival to their children. Festive vegetarian snack was brought in by each family and shared amongst everyone. Sincere thanks to the coordinator of this evening.



AJAX SANTA CLAUS PARADE

Once again for the 5th time Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham (TCASD) was pleased to participate in the Ajax Santa Clause Parade. This year's theme was Santa's Magical Parade of Lights took place on Nov 10th in the evening and TCASD float was looking bright and as magical as ever before. The Parade started at Bayly Street and Mackenzie Avenue and continued east on Bayly Street towards Harwood Avenue and north to Achilles Road. It was an evening complete with music, magic, lights and lots of cheering and smiling children lined on the street to watch the parade and of course the big guy in red, Santa. TCASD's float was beautifully decorated with lights and Christmas decorations to capture the essence of Christmas. The child members of TCASD were in the float smiling and waving to the crowd. Thanks to the parade decorators, children and parents for coming out.



CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

One December 22nd, 2012 the TCASD Christmas party became a successful event. St. Andrew's community centre was beautifully decorated with traditional Christmas passion by the organizers. Over a hundred people gathered to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The celebrations started with a prayer and blessings from Pastor Nicolas, Ajax Christian Church. Children played games and danced with Santa. While everyone was having good time, our members still made sure to remember those from our homeland. We fund raised to give hope to a family back in SriLanka through the TCASD "COW PROJECT." The 2013 TCASD calendar was issued, pages were beautifully put together by SP Solutions. This calendar included the Tamil culture, memory of Thayakam, TCASD's five year events and achievements of our youth and children. Members received the calendar with great enthusiasm and happily contributed towards the "PROJECT." The project is in progress, and it would be greatly appreciated if a small contribution like to contribute towards the cost of purchasing COW's was made.



Our Editors:



Tanesha Thirukumar



Rosie Mahendran

Do you like to know what TCASD is all about? Want to be part of our family? Contact us, new members are always welcome.

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