

Past Events

ONAM NITE 2020 by Mr. Sathian Pookkuttath

SMA's plan to hold the annual celebratory Onam Nite at the prestigious Esplanade Theatres, Singapore had to be dropped – like most other shows across the island nation - due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

A decision was then taken to celebrate it virtually, with some live interactions. SMA's FB channel was the de facto social media where the premiers as well as the live shows were showcased. YouTube relays of the same added a second layer through which the program could be watched by the audience in Singapore as well as across the globe.

Given the economic downturn and social upheaval caused by COVID it was decided to enable the maximum number of people to stay at home and enjoy the show, by making it a non-ticketed, free of charge event.

A highlight of this year's digital Onam Nite was that it was held over two evenings instead of the usual one.

Celebrations started on the 6th of September and carried forward to the 12th of September 2020 - both in collaboration with Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay.



A colourful spectacle, Onam Nite 2020 had music, dance, fusion as well as comedy. Something for everyone.



Both international and accomplished local artistes performed in the show. Singers Madhu Balakrishnan, Chithra Arun, Nithya Mamen, Niranj Suresh, Meenakshy Jyothish, Pavithra Nair, Swathi Suresh, Prakash and Preji CK added their voices to make it a memorable occasion.

Cine artist and danseuse Vineeth as well as dancers Rachana Narayanankutty, Sarayu, Shantha Ratii and Maalika Panicker performed classical dances. Gayathri Gopal, Archana Pradeep and Aparna Pradeep delighted the viewers with their Odissi and folks dance performances respectively.

A much applauded musical fusion by flautist Rajesh Cherthala and violinist Abhijith PS added further musical notes to Onam Nite.

Bhakar's Arts Academy music group, comprising Kalaiselvam P on the flute, Preetashini N on the veena, Vismitha R on the violin, Arul K on the mridangam, and Ashwin R on the ghatam, enthralled the viewers with a beautiful musical performance.

A live tête-à-tête with leading Indian dancer and actress Asha Sharath was another highlight of the show.

Bringing the entire show together were talented comperes Gayathri Gopal, Swathi Suresh, Aparna Pradeep and Jibu. Sajin, Bimal Ram, Vinayan, Yadunand and Oxus International and others played a huge role behind the scenes. SMA would like to extend our appreciation to all of them, without whom this show would not have been possible.

An audience of 35,000 viewers watched Onam Nite 2020 from Singapore as well as from all over the world.



YOUTH WING UPDATES

by Dr. Vidhya Pillay

The Youth Wing organized a three part series called 'Onashamsagal 2020' in conjunction with Onam in August 2020. The series was featured on the Youth Wing Facebook and Instagram pages.

The first part, which was a video on how to tie a Kerala sari, set mundu for ladies and mundu for men by our members Aathira, Shafiq and Sangeeta.

The second part of the series was a short film written and directed by our members, Basil and Vinayak. It also starred Kaveri, Shafiq and Viknesh who are members of the Youth Wing too. It showed what Onam was and how Singaporean Malayalees of different religions celebrate Onam in Singapore. The short film was featured on August 23rd 2020.

The last part of the series was uploaded on August 31st 2020. It was called 'A Singapore Story'. On Sunday, August 30th 2020, the Youth Wing members sponsored and delivered the Ona Sadhya to 10-12 families identified by a Family Service Centre. The sadhya was catered from Curry Magic. The meal was sponsored by donations from the Youth Wing members, our families and friends.



We wanted to do something to spread the joy of Onam by giving back to society in whatever way possible. Since the Ona Sadhya is a main part of Onam celebrations, we decided to deliver the Ona Sadhya to the families. Besides, food is one thing that unites all Singaporeans as well. It was an extremely fruitful and satisfying venture as everyone did their little part to make this small way of giving back to the community happen.

The Youth Wing would also like to welcome our new members, Aathira, Jason and Neha.

VISMAYASALLAPPAM

by Mr. Sathian Pookkuttath

SMA conducted a magical motivational programme led by the renowned magician and motivational speaker, Sri Gopinath Muthukad, on 12 Jul 2020. The programme was a live online interactive session. Many children and parents participated actively. He discussed many areas which are relevant in daily life, including career, health, ethics and science, as well as magic. He also gave advice to children on how to make the best of their time. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the session – it was an uplifting hour in the current gloomy situation.



LADIES' WING POOKKALAM CONTEST

by Dr. Sunitha Nair

SMA Ladies Wing organised a Pookkalam Competition 2020, as part of the SMA Onam 2020 celebrations. There were 31 entries out of which top three winners were chosen by an eminent panel of judges. The winning entries of the contest are:



1st Prize: Megha Shyju



2nd Prize: Deepthy Tushar 3rd Prize: Sreeja Nair

SMA Ladies' Wing also conducted an online Q&A session on Ayurveda medicine, with guest Dr. Lakshmi Nair. Many members attended and found the session informative.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION
by Mrs. Sindhu Krishna Prasad

During this COVID-19 period, SMA took the initiative to compile videos of COVID support measures undertaken by different Indian Associations in Singapore. The 4 Associations are the Bengali Association, Kannada Sangha, Sindhi Association and the Kadayanallur Muslim League.

This COVID support video was to showcase and archive this movement whereby our whole community came up with various activities to motivate, support and help the needy in such difficult times. We wished to portray this humanitarian spirit during this unprecedented situation and wanted to celebrate this; so it may serve as a lesson for our future generations on how we overcame these difficult times together.

This compiled video was featured on Vasantham channel, in the show, Thalam Indian Beat. SMA is proud to share this video with the National Museum of Singapore, Indian Heritage Center, LISHA and all the four associations that contributed.



SMA TEENS CLUB
by Ms. Devika Prem

SMA's Teen Club, Chengathis, kicked off their very first event a few weeks ago. The event was organized by 4 Malayalee teenagers; Nysa, Karthika, Krithika, and Devika. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the event took place on online platforms like Zoom.

The event was conducted with the aim of bringing together Malayalee teenagers in Singapore. Over 30 teenagers between 13 to 18 took part in this event.

The event started with an icebreaker where participants played 2 truths and 1 lie to know each other better. After that, we conducted a Kahoot game with questions ranging from general knowledge about Kerala, fun facts about SMA, and references to Malayalam pop culture. The top 3 winners of the Kahoot Quiz even won Starbucks gift cards worth \$30. The event ended off with a riddle sharing session where participants took turns sharing riddles and guessing their answers.

SMA Chengathis will be organizing many more exciting events so if you are a teenager interested in joining us please email us at chengathis@malayalee.org.sg We look forward to meeting you!



CONTINUED SMA COVID-19 WELFARE ACTIVITIES **by Mrs. Sunu Sivadasan-Ghani**

SMA has continued to extend support during this challenging period.

1. We continued to coordinate with MOM to arrange for release papers, and communicated with High Commission of India (HCI) to repatriate Indian transient workers wanting to return home for various reasons.
2. SMA also communicated with HCI to give priority to families who wanted to return to Kerala due to urgent reasons, when issuing tickets.
3. We continue to provide groceries to students who seek our help. We continued to collaborate with Project Providence to pay rent for deserving students.
4. In response to a cry for help by a Foreign Domestic Worker (FDW) from Kerala whose employer was making it difficult for her to return home to her sick child, we communicated with the employer and got him to get her flight ticket. SMA made arrangements to take her to the airport.
5. In another case involving a FDW, SMA responded to a call for help from the husband of the FDW who complained of being unable to contact her, and also about outstanding dues. We contacted the employer, spoke to the FDW and finally got all overdue salary settled. FDW will be leaving for Kerala soon.
6. SMA provided all the necessary help to repatriate a student who drowned in an unfortunate incident that happened on the day of Onam. Apart from making arrangements with the casket company, we communicated with his Polytechnic and assisted them with all the necessary facts needed by MOE and MOH. IHC was also contacted to help in the repatriation.
7. We responded to the desperate call for help by a husband who wanted to join his helpless wife and twin babies (5 months old) in the hotel where she was quarantined. The wife was taken

directly to the hotel after arriving here in the middle of the night. Though MOM as well as employer of the husband had given permission for him to be with his wife during the quarantine period, hotel refused to permit entry as final permission had to come from STB. We managed to get STB to speed up and provide permission the same night the wife arrived.

8. SMA responded to a medical emergency in the early hours of the morning, when a student who was bleeding profusely contacted us. Transport was arranged and student was admitted in hospital. Apart from helping the student to communicate with the doctor and understand the need for an emergency operation, we connected the billing department of the hospital with the school administration regarding insurance payment.
9. Cousin of a patient, a PR in Singapore, approached SMA to help with the case of being charged unfairly by an ambulance company as well as a private Hospital. We spoke to the ambulance company to understand the reason for the exorbitant bill, checked with the billing department and the doctor's office to understand the details of the medical case and the huge medical bill charged. There seemed to be a few lapses, so we wrote to MOH and Medical Council who are looking into the matter.
10. Helped an old Indian couple (Singapore Citizens) who was referred to us. We provided groceries and connected them with SINDA. We also contacted SINDA to help another PR who was struggling to pay her children's school fees after her husband was bedridden from a stroke. SMA helped settle one month's school fees.

COVID-19 Support Fund

We are grateful to everyone who donated generously to SMA's COVID-19 support fund, to support our mission to help our community.

If you would like to donate, you may do so at member.malayalee.org.sg/donate
If you or anyone you know needs help, please contact us at welfare@malayalee.org.sg

SMA TECH FORUM

by Mr. Balagopal Unnikrishnan

The Singapore ecosystem has highly talented individuals working in various fields of science and technology. SMA Tech Forum was founded in May 2020 with the aim of bringing together such enthusiasts within Singapore.

Since different demographics keep track of only their narrow fields of interests - educating and bringing awareness to the community of the latest technology trends is useful. Our aim is to have at least one interactive public engagement session each month where volunteers or subject matter experts from various fields discuss trends in their domain.

Events held so far:

1. Demystifying Artificial Intelligence: How Intelligent machines will change the future - Robin Vinod (JC2 Student)
2. Tinkering with Arduino by Dr. Rajesh Panicker (Senior Lecturer at NUS)
3. Arduino Workshop by Malavika Menon (Data Scientist at GoJek)
4. The Magic Behind Google Search by Malavika Menon
5. Cybersecurity Fundamentals - Anand Rajan (Data Scientist at a leading bank)

4 technology sessions have been conducted as part of the Big Questions talk series. As a follow up to the Arduino session, a hands-on workshop was held at the SMA building. Restrictions due to COVID are still in effect - but this has in no way discouraged active participation from tech enthusiasts. Virtual talks and the workshop sessions were conducted in line with recommended safety protocols and we are happy to see a steady stream of participants for all the

sessions.

Today we are a small group for 16 members, and we would love to have more enthusiasts join us. Feel free to write to us at techforum@malayalee.org.sg if you have queries or have an interest in being a speaker, or to be a part of this fun team.



For SMA membership: <https://www.malayalee.org.sg/become-a-member/>

For any feedback/queries, please write to info@malayalee.org.sg