



# FOCUS

News Letter of The Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada

இலங்கைப் பட்டதாரிகள் சங்கம் - கனடா

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## The Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada

Established in 1989, on the initiative of Sri Lankans with degrees from Universities in Sri Lanka, **the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates of Canada (ASGC)** celebrated its tenth anniversary in December 1999. The membership of ASGC is now open to all Canadians of Sri Lankan origin Graduates and Diploma holders.

Currently, every effort is being made by the ASGC to focus on organizing events and activities of specific interest to the high school students, and affording them an opportunity to interact and learn from both the academic learning and professional experience of Sri Lankan graduates from Canadian Universities. It is our intention, through increased activities and promotional efforts, to expand the membership of the association to include more graduates from Canadian Universities.

Our goal is to bring together all Canadian Graduates of Sri Lankan origin, provide a forum to meet, learn and harness our collective experience, wisdom, charitableness and, above all, the voluntarism to the benefit of the Canadian community in general and of the Sri Lankan community in particular.

We hope to develop a Directory of Graduates of Sri Lankan origin living in Canada using our website- [www.asgc.ca](http://www.asgc.ca) -and membership contacts in the near future. It is our expectation that such a Directory will serve as a valuable source of reference for establishing and fostering contacts and networking among fellow graduates.

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### Activities for the year 2003

1. We continue to send textbooks, journals and computers to the universities in the North and East of Sri Lanka. As part of this ongoing

project, we seek donation of used university books published within the last three years. Those who are willing to donate books are invited to contact Mr. Ramanathan at 416 438 2949 or Mr. Surren Balendran at 416 471 4145.

2. In order to replenish our coffers, benefit show of movies "Kandukondaen Kandukondaeni" and "Parthalae Paravasam", has been organized at Elane Theatre at Eglinton Ave. East on Sunday, May 11, 2003 at 1.30 pm. Admission is by donation of \$6.00 per person. We solicit the support of members and well-wishers to make this event a success.
3. In appreciation of the services being rendered by the Centenary Hospital to Scarborough residents, a fund raising Car Wash was started many years ago, and this continues as an annual event. Thanks to support of a large number of young volunteers, a sum of \$1,500 was collected and donated to the Centenary Hospital Foundation last year. This year's event will take place in July. The date and location will be announced in due course. Children are encouraged to participate in this event and qualify to receive Volunteer Certificates, issued by ASGC, which are recognized by the Ontario School Boards.
4. The first Computer Program Contest and Seminar on Computer Technology, organized by ASGC in 2002, proved to be both very successful and popular among the students and the community at large. As a response to the commendation and encouragement received from the community, it has been decided to make this an annual event. . The Association is looking for sponsors in our community to support this event in order to promote computing skill among our children. Business establishments and professionals are encouraged to support this event and be recognized at the function. Those interested are invited to get in touch with either Mr.

Theivendrarajah at 416 335 3453 or Mr. Ramanathan at 416 438 2949.

5. A request received from the University of Jaffna is appearing in this bulletin. This request was conveyed to Mr S. Sivanesan, a senior member of ASGC, by Professor Kumarvadivelu, Dean, Faculty of Science, University of Jaffna, at a meeting held in Jaffna late last year. It will be recalled that in 2002, ASGC extended financial assistance and helped those concerned to organize and conduct series of workshops and seminars for training teachers in the North and East to prepare them to teach the recently revised GCE (A/L) syllabus. ASGC wishes to solicit the support and assistance of members and well-wishers to get actively involved in organizing and delivering of such assistance either directly or through our Association. For further details please contact Mr. Sivanesan at 416 293 4697, Mr. Theivendrarajah at 416 335 3453 or Mr. Ramanathan at 416 438 2949.
  6. The Career Counseling Workshop for High School Students and Parents, which is recognized as the most productive annual event being organized by ASGC, will be held in September. As in the past, keynote speakers will include high-ranking officials from the Toronto District School Board, and successful professionals from Information Technology, Applied Sciences, Humanities, Pharmaceutical Industry, Law etc. We encourage students & parents to make the best use of this opportunity and enroll in this free workshop. The exact date and location for this event will be notified later. For further information please contact Mr. Ramanathan at 416 438 2949 and Mr. Surren Balendran at 416 471 4145
  7. ASGC continues to provide assistance to new graduate immigrants to settle down in Canada by helping them to get their educational certifications evaluated by the relevant authorities, job referrals and job search programs.
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## **Ten Must-Have Skills for A Job Seeker** **(By Pan Kanagaretnam)**

**Communication Skills:** Placed first in the list of skills by many job-search experts, the communication skills broadly refers to one-on-one verbal language skills, writing skills, presentation skills, and the ability to convey thoughts, opinions, suggestions, questions and answers in an appropriate and professional manner. Listening skills is also an important aspect of communication. Only those who listen intently to every nuance of every question that the interviewer asks could respond clearly and concisely.

**Job-Related Skills:** While it is important that one fits into a job description, to-day one has to recognize the fact that the whole area of job-related skills is being treated with more flexibility. It has been found that some organizations would be content with as low as 60-70% job-related skills in order to have a person who seems to fit the “personal chemistry” attributes and company culture.

**Multiple Skills Sets:** Unlike in the past when prospective employers were looking for people who brought one highly specialized skill to the company, to-day most employers are prepared to hire those who bring multiple skill areas with them such as for example, chemistry and computer science, engineering and biochemistry, science and business etc. In short, combination skills can really be an asset for hiring and promotion.

**Willingness to Learn:** Employers are attracted by job seekers who belief in “lifelong learning” not necessarily in hard skill areas that impact on one’s job. It could include attending even classes in “Yoga” or going back to school in the evening to learn say Tamil or English Literature, which goes to demonstrate one’s commitment to constantly improve and enrich his or her mind and knowledge which in turn would impact positively on one’s job.

**Teamwork Skills:** All Employers are looking for workers or employees who could fit into and work with a team. Therefore successful work experience in a team-based environment, even as a volunteer in a charitable or student organization, could be a great

asset. Most of the companies consider such a successful experience a key determinant in a hiring decision.

**Customer Service:** Customers or patrons are the key to the success of a business and public service. They are the people who benefit from, and pay for the services the employees and the companies offer. Therefore all employers are looking for people who have an excellent understanding of the importance of customers and customer services; the skills to understand their expectations and requirements; and, above all, the need to focus on timely and complaint free delivery of products and services. Several questions will be asked by prospective employers in order to determine one's understanding of this critical skill area.

**Initiative:** Initiative is understood to mean one going beyond one's call of duty, go beyond or exceed the expectations of those one support or work with, and the kind of work hours one keep. These attributes and qualities are usually determined on the basis of report and response to questions received from the references. It will be advisable to be fully prepared to talk about some examples showing important accomplishments, pointing out those situations showing he or she has "gone mile" in order to satisfy the needs of the project and those who are counting on his or her efforts.

**Adaptability:** Researchers have found that people in industry are subjected to constant change. Therefore a key part of one's interview preparation should be to find some examples of how he or she has adapted to unexpected circumstances or totally new learning or working environments. The likely questions that may be asked at interviews include: What are your thoughts about why organizations have a need for change? And, Have you sought to maintain or exceed your results in the face of change?

**Promotability:** This refers to a gut-level instinct that an interviewer develops regarding an applicant's ability to grow in an organization. They wonder as to whether or not the candidate demonstrates the overall behaviours, skills, knowledge and desire to grow. It is in order to determine one's "promotability", that questions are asked about one's short-term and long-

term career expectations by employers. People who are promotable are thought to have career plans in place, and they are on that plan at any point in time. Candidates at interviews should be prepared to explain such plans if the need arises.

**Salesmanship:** All employees are expected to have the ability to sell, and this becomes evident in the ways one describes his or her strengths in a job interview. This is an ability to sell one's ideas, proposals or projects to others including to the company management.

(Based on a research article in "Contract Pharma" July/August 2002 issue)

### **ASGC Executive Committee 2004**

#### **President**

C. Ramanathan 416 438 2949

#### **Vice President**

K Theivendirarajah 416 335 3453

#### **Secretary**

Surren Balendran 416 471 4145

#### **Assistant Secretary**

S Sivanayagamoorthy 416 267 6712

#### **Treasurer**

A Rasaratnam 416 267 8390

#### **Assistant Treasurer**

N. Ketharanathan 416 677 4707

#### **Members:**

S. Sivanesan

Pan Kanagaretnam

V. Manivannan

Pradeepan Nanithamby

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C Devasagayam

A P Chelliah

T Ravikulan

A Sivakumar

Kana Thavayogarajah

### **Readers Corner**

Anyone willing like to contribute to the FOCUS newsletter is welcome to forward his or her suggestions and articles to the editors at:

**info@asgc.ca**

## **Appeal by the University of Jaffna**

### **1. Visiting Lecturers**

University of Jaffna is looking for visiting lecturers willing to undertake short-term assignments in the University in the following areas:

- A) Electronics;
- B) Computer Science;
- C) Mathematics; and
- D) Statistics.

Those selected will be entitled to a payment ranging from Rs.12,000 to Rs.25,000 a month. If required, the University will also help find suitable accommodation.

Those interested are invited to send their Resume or Bio Data to: Prof. S Kumaravadivel, Dean Faculty of Science, University of Jaffna, Jaffna, Sri Lanka. E-mail:rkumar@panlanka.net, Telephone No.011942222685.

### **2. Teachers to teach English to University Students**

Jaffna University is also looking for Qualified Teachers to teach English as a second language to undergraduate students.

Those qualified are persuaded to contact, the Head Department of English, University of Jaffna, Jaffna, Sri Lanka., or Mr.S.Sivanesan(ASGC)at sivasinniah@netscape.net for details.

### **3. Laboratory Equipment and Materials**

Help and assistance is sought to find, locate, collect and send used Laboratory Equipment and Materials in good condition discarded by the Canadian and U.S. Universities or other institutions.

The following are some of the equipment that would be useful to the University laboratories: Microscopes, spectro photometers(UV-Visible & Infra-Red), Oscilloscopes, Incubators, Ovens, Water baths, Autoclaves, Evaporators, Sterilizers, Gas chromatographs, High performance Liquid chromatographs, pH Meters, refractometers, electronic balances, etc., Computers and computer accessories.

Volunteers are advised to contact the following persons:

1. Vice Chancellor, University of Jaffna, Jaffna, Sri Lanka. , Telephone No.0119421-2294,2006. Fax:01194-21-2294
2. Prof. S Kumaravadivel, Dean Faculty of Science, University of Jaffna, Jaffna, Sri Lanka. E-mail:rkumar@panlanka.net, Telephone No.011942222685.
3. Dr. K Theivendirarajah at [theivendirarajahk@hotmail.com](mailto:theivendirarajahk@hotmail.com).

### **4. Books**

Help and assistance is sought to collect and send new and used books (published within the last3 to 4 years) on: Agriculture, Bio Science, Physical Science, Medicine, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, Physical Education and computers.

Volunteers are advised to send a list of available books for selection and collection prior to shipping to the Secretary, ASGC at surrenbalendran@hotmail.com.

### **5. Joint Research programs with Canadian Universities and Scholarships for Post Graduate Studies**

Help and assistance is sought in identifying opportunities for the University of Jaffna to undertake Joint Research programs and studies with Canadian universities, preferably, on the basis of long-term arrangements. Help and assistance is sought to arrange scholarship to young University Lecturers to pursue their postgraduate studies ino Canadian Universities.