Vidyāṇa
the Gift of Knowledge

Loyola Campus and Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) is collaborating in providing tertiary and Higher education opportunities at the margins in Sri Lanka.
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Front Cover
A collection of photographs of people about whom different articles are written in the Magazine and those associated with Loyola Campus

Back Cover
A glimpse of the activities at Loyola Campus - Trincomalee

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The words ‘Hero’ and ‘heroine’ are often used in our daily conversations. We refer to someone as a hero or a heroine due to a personal quality, characteristic, trait or a special contribution made for the betterment of humanity. We treat them with admiration, respect and they are a source of inspiration for us. There are also heroes, a product of power, wealth, social status and physical beauty. Media companies, business cooperations, and political lobbies maintain a monopoly over them. Such heroes often represent the exploiters and the social evils that the real heroes fight against.

The understanding of heroism in today’s context is paradoxically different from what it represented a couple of decades back. In the past, a person who was thought to be a hero was marked by the journey: determination, courage, wisdom, compassion and lovingkindness towards the humanity. But today heroism demands consumerism, greed, hatred, manipulation, lust, division and discrimination. Hence, Loyola Campus hopes to create a counter narrative of heroic leadership in an effort to highlight thousands of heroes and heroines who live among us.

This issue of Vidyāna is dedicated to the real heroes of our society. They are different from the ones we see on television, cartoons, movies, and soap operas. They are not actors but those who have gone through years of pain and struggle, borne tremendous loneliness and sacrifices in order to make others’ lives better. Under the theme ‘Forgotten Heroes’ Loyola Campus attempts to offer tribute to so many people who sacrificed their lives for the betterment of others but often not recognized in the society. They are often the backbones of our villages, towns and cities. They have given life to many. Reading the stories of students narrating about different people from their villages and towns whom they consider to be heroes, has inspired me. The simple and humble lives of parents, tireless toiling of farmers and other workers, dedicated service of teachers, lifeless commitment of religious leaders are featured in the magazine makes us think deeply about our own human life and its commitments.

You might not find their names in the internet. No biographies might be written about them. No television channels might include the stories of them in their programmes. You will not find newspaper articles written about them. But they are the real heroes we should often remember. They will inspire us. They will challenge us to do the impossible. They will show how mediocre we have become. The remembrance of their lives and celebration of their contribution to the society will definitely be an introspection into our own lives.

Loyola Campus- Sri Lanka presents to you the January 2018 issue of Vidyāna. We are happy to bring out this issue that brings together articles, poems and photographs from students, facilitators and staff of Loyola Campus. Loyola Campus a venture initiated for and with those in the margins through the partnership of multiple collaborators such as Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) and Tertiary Vocation Education Commission of Sri Lanka (TVEC) has proven to be a fruitful endeavor towards recreating spaces for reconciliation and peacebuilding through tertiary and higher education.

Thiranjala Weerasinghe
Manager
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History is a tapestry of tiny moments. Heroes are often who come to the rescue of such tiny moments of crisis in history. They are personalities who take a principled stand, no matter what the consequences. In history, their acts of conscience or deeply held belief varied widely, depending on the person and the historical moment. While some historical personalities get all the glory, others perform great deeds but are barely recognized – may be for reasons they do not really fit into the historical narrative. Some were marginalised in history because they were on the losing side or were pushed aside by better-known contemporaries; others were so controversial that they self-destructed and dropped from view. In some ways, history does not do much justice to them either. In today’s globalised world, we are caught up in the media blitz of the more popular personalities from history, we often forget to remember those less famous, but are just important. While we love all of our often-sung heroes, there are far too many who go unsung.

Taste in heroes change. At the height of war in the year 2009 February, while crossing the military checkpoint at Vavuniya, Sri Lanka, I saw many young men crossing and moving towards the front lines. On both sides of the theatre of war, young men and women were told to be heroes, dying for a questionable war of nationalistic leaders. Heroism was not restricted, here, to a single moment or act but resided in a lifelong commitment to a nationalistic ideal. We learn from these heroic lives about the rewards (and costs) of single-minded devotion to a cause or a belief, of obstacles faced and not always overcome. However, these models of engaged commitment are compelling. Many of those young men and women are now forgotten heroes. In many respects, they are unsung or unrecognised heroes as much as forgotten ones. I have forgotten the images of children and youth behind barbed wire in the prison camps of Manik Farm and in Vavuniya. They survived a terrible war and kept learning in school. Now 9 years later they are young adults. When I see the faces of the JWL students in Vavuniya and other Loyola Campus, I see where many of them were 9 years as children and teenagers. It makes me happy to see them in the joint programme of Loyola Campus and JWL pursuing English classes and the academic online program of JWL in Liberal Arts.

JWL is loyal to this young generation of Sri Lanka and makes a contribution to their future. I dream of them as becoming the intellectual heroes of their communities in Sri Lanka. Let them be courageous men and women for others, who can think critically, express their opinion and lead others. May they become peace leaders!
Love me every woman
I'm not a boy
Love me every man
I'm not a girl
Who I am and who I am going to be
What can I do and what I want to do
Never have you taken notice.

I'm your friend being very close to you
Changing your life
Changing your trends
Changing your mind
Using your thinking
And making it work for me
But never have you known me clearly.

Yes! You love me
You cannot live without me
You believe that you use me
But who knows
You find me wherever you go
And whatever situation you are in
I define your life and your comforts.

Use me properly is cliché
And carefully would be to ask too much from you
Whenever you are with me
I see the glow on your face
I see your desire
I see you
But you don’t see me.

K Vijayarupan
Loyola Campus – Mannar
YOUTHFUL JOURNEYING

Indeed, youth is a time for multiple opportunities
   Lots of energy and tremendous enthusiasm
   Paving the way for future
   Facing challenges and problems
   But never giving up
   Never giving up
   Fighting all the way to the end.
   At times destroying their future
   Making choices that are not helpful
   Wasting their effort & hard work
   In something that doesn’t bring hope and joy
   So, they move aimless throughout their lives

   They will realize. Yes, they realize
   The choices they made and the time wasted
   Indeed, they have lost their youthfulness
   Now how to amend the wrongs done and the damage inflicted
   Scars made and the wounds created
   Lives destroyed and the hopes shattered
   Like a phoenix from the ashes arise
   Youthful tidings should arise from the pain and suffering.

   Youth a journey of tremendous energy and creativity
   A call to live in freedom and partnership
   Fighting for your dreams and aspirations
   In the hope of creating a better society.

   T Lumin
   Loyola Campus – Mannar
LOYOLA CAMPUS

Mannar, Trincomalee, Vavuniya, Puthukkudiyruppu, Hatton, Batticaloa and Mullaitivu
Tilling: The Forgotten

Forgotten Heroes. When we hear this word we all will start to think about many heroes. A Hero is the one who lives for others and dedicates their life for others. They are the real heroes. But today we also have made fake heroes. World recognises them not for their heroic life but for their wealth and social status. We have to remember and appreciate real heroes who make tremendous contributions in our lives.

In that way, there are many heroes. They belong to different religions, castes, languages and they live all over the world. They work very hard for us. They help their communities. Moreover, they sacrifice their lives for others. But what’s the result. After years of hard work dedication and contribution to the society, we just forget about them. They do not have a space in our media. They are not remembered every day. There are no special days for them.

I wouldn’t want to share about heroes of our history books, comic books, cartoon and cinema. I am not going to tell about them. If you wanted to read about such heroes, I doubt that this magazine is the correct choice. Rather, I’m going to tell you all about the Real Heroes. They live with us. They are your and my fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts. They take a huge burden in order to fulfil our needs. They work day and night. It is very hard to guess when they start working and when they finish their daily work. They often don’t share their difficulties with others. They think about the good of others.

But we don’t include them in our heroes list. And even often we don’t think about them as heroes. You might be wondering whom I refer to. They are the backbone of our country. They are our farmers who toil tirelessly. The farmers are often seen in the field despite the weather and other difficulties. Despite their dedication and service, they are one of the most exploited groups of people. They cultivate but they just get 1/100 of their produce. The remaining part is for you and me.

We take for granted how the farm products come to our table. They come to us through the sweat of thousands who toil around Sri Lanka in paddy cultivation, vegetable cultivation and other farming activities. It is time we remember them and pay our respect for their contribution for the society. They are the real heroes I would like to remember today.

M R Sasina
Facilitator
Loyola Campus - Mannar

Let us Remember Them

Remembering people! Yeah, it’s very difficult for many people to remember the people who have done good things in their lives. When the things are new or recent, people remember them and then they forget the great things done. There are so many people who have disappeared from our collective memories. At the same time lives and good deeds of some people still remain and they too live through those memories. Even though they are dead, they live amidst us and inspire us.

We recognise some who have done greater things such as Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, Mother Theresa, Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln etc. While media portrays them and helps us to remember them every now and then, there are so many people who are not recognised by media. Even though they have significantly contributed to the lives of people, they have not become famous. Hence, media houses do not give any value for them. They are forgotten and soon will be erased from this world. Think! If the world doesn’t remember these people, what will happen?

It is not only Dr A P J Abdul Kalam who taught the world to be simple in whatever position you are. It is not only Mother Theresa who taught us to be patient and help everyone without any expectation. It is not only Nelson Mandela who was a great president and sacrificed his life for the freedom of his people. They are indeed heroes. But there are so many others who were with us in our village, town, school, church, temple and home who had made a difference in our lives. They have taught us valuable things in life.

We can follow their lives and example in order to be a better human being. In that way, there is a great need of remembering people. When we remember them, we will remember the great deeds and lives of so many parents, teachers, relatives, neighbours, social workers, village leaders etc.

The great deeds of a person can be simple daily encounters, small contributions, learning and formation etc. It does not need always to be about a revolution, holding influential positions and becoming famous through media. We need to remember those who have made a difference in our lives, in our society, country and the world. They will inspire us always.

Dina Nirushana
Facilitator
Loyola Campus - Vavuniya
The world introduces different heroes time to time. Some can be very famous and some can be very popular. But the world forget to remember our real heroes.

Who can create a famous man? More than doctors who extend our life and its quality? More than lawyers that seek justice and more than scientists who seek progress, who contribute most to the growth of a society?

STILL UNFORGOTTEN

F. Ranjith Sudarshan
Facilitator
Loyola Campus - Mannar

The teachers are the ones who groom our future. They ensure peace, and they develop our capacities. Our teachers help us to grow when we need them the most. They never abandon us. The teachers fight every day to make the experience of their students extraordinary. Just like patriots who shape the future of their countries, and people from different professions who sacrifice to see a better tomorrow, the teacher suffer greatly to make their students better human beings.

When we go back to our own childhood, there is a teacher who accompanied us during crucial eras of our lives. They have journeyed with us at different occasions and helped us in numerous ways. A teacher doesn’t just train the students but shows the path. Although the world might forget the teachers and their contribution to the society, we won’t forget our real heroes. They still fight for us and with us every day in order to create a better future for us.
Committed to Serve

I would like to describe my hero Rev Sr Mary Brigitte, the Manager of Roman Catholic Girls' home Ilavalai. She was born in Jaffna on 8 October 1928. Brigitte was the last of four children in her family. When she was 14 years old, her happy comfortable family life was very much affected, when she lost her mother and father. She studied in Jaffna school and first showed an interest in religious life by the age of sixteen. She felt that she had been called by God to serve Him and others. Sr Brigitte is tiny and energetic. She has shone her energy and intelligence without expressing nervousness or impatience.

When she was nineteen she left home to join the Holy Family sisters in Jaffna. She received her religious training in Jaffna and took her first religious vows in Ilavalai. The first assignment given to her was to teach and to serve as the Principal of Jaffna convent school. She took an intensive training to prepare to work with the poor and started teaching them. She was liked by all. Slowly and steadily she expanded her work of educating young people throughout Jaffna. She opened a home for orphans.

She received the recognition and financial support from many people who were inspired by her work and commitment. She worked for the orphans, and for the very poor people in the area. She was a good-hearted person. She really loved children and she was the one who educated me. She will always in the memory of so many people. She has definitely made a lasting impact on the youngsters who came to her vulnerable and disoriented. She has given them direction and motivation to live a life of service. She is a real hero for all of us.

Vathani Balasubramaniam
Facilitator
Loyola Campus - Puthukkudiyiruppu

Narratives of Heroism

The world often portrays some as role models and heroes. They are indeed people who have lead an exemplary life and brought the rest of the world hope and joy. It is natural that the world falls in love with them. They are always remembered. People keep pictures of them and commemorate special days on behalf of them. It is true that such people inspire and encourage all of us.

But this narrative of heroism is quite controlled by media. It is media that decide who will be remembered as a hero and who will be forgotten from the memories of people. Those who conform to the categories of the present consumeristic world assisted by media will be registered globally as heroes. It is not wrong to say that the consumeristic ideology too is so much intertwined with the narrative of heroism today.

This is why local people who live their lives with courage, hope, optimism, determination and a critical view of the media, multinational companies and world politics will be forgotten easily. They are local. They do not fit into the expectations of the media houses. They do not have a monetary value. Hence, they are forgotten. If only we become better observers of our own homes, villages, neighbourhoods, schools and religious places we will find so many people who have got real heroic qualities. While they dedicate their lives for the betterment of others, they too inspire others to become better human beings. This is what real heroism is.

So let us take time and remember all those who have made so much impact in our lives.

Premini Karunanithy
Facilitator
Loyola Campus - Vavuniya
S
ome heroes are born, some heroes are made and yet some other heroes have great deeds thrust on them and exposed to the world. Among these different types of heroes, our hero in locality, Honourable Mr Ponnampalam Kandiah, popularly known as “Ganthi Iyah” tops others in Trincomalee because of his nonviolence and service attitude to mankind since his childhood.

Born in a remote village, Maathakal, in Jaffna, on 19 December 1918, Ganthi Iyah was educated in a small school in the district. Ever since his childhood days he was interested in reading books and one could easily identify his love for books through the pile of books neatly stacked in his house in Jaffna. Ganthi Iyah’s ambition, as he is popularly known in Trincomalee and in the spiritual world outside Trincomalee, had always been to encourage his students and his followers to read. I was fortunate enough to be one of his Tamil language students, way back in the period 1951 – 1953 in my primary years in a Sri Ramakrishna Mission Saratha Vidyalayam, a thatched roof primary school in a once very remote village, Thampalakamam in the Trincomalee district. I can still picture him entering our class, clad in a milk white verti (dhoti) and pure white pyjama top with a deep, calm and peaceful and I-am-going-to-make-you-learn determined look in his bright eyes, saying “Anatham, Anantham” (Be happy. Be happy – he always said that instead of “good morning” whenever he met anybody). He had a firm, yet friendly way of approaching and attracting his students. He was a strong believer of “Ahimsa” (non-violent approach). Although by birth he was a Hindu, he always talked about the good things in other religions and quoted examples to follow from them.

I still remember the way he would enter our classroom. “Class rooms” in those days cannot be compared in any way with our modern day class rooms! Our olden day “class rooms”, if they can be called class rooms at all in the period mentioned above, especially in any remote area primary school would be an open tiny part of a thatched roof large hut with other class rooms scattered about. We had no chairs or desks like in our modern day class rooms. We would squat obediently in front of our teachers facing a portable blackboard. Ganthy Iyah (we always addressed our teachers “Iyah” in those days), would enter our class room armed with a trunk – an olden day suitcase – full of books of various kinds, books of knowledge, spirituality, school books, stationeries, story books for the children, slates, slate pencils and many, many more, just to inculcate the habit of reading in our minds. And what’s more? He would give all these free to children who could not afford to pay for them and charged a very nominal fee – 02 cents – 05 cents from others! How did he pay for all these paraphernalia? Simply from his salary of around 25 rupees! I am a voracious reader now, carrying books of different nature along with me wherever I went to read whenever I had the opportunity, thanks to my beloved and respectable teacher, Ganthi Iyah.

50 years later, since the day I had last contact with him in 1953, I saw my respectable teacher one day squatting in front of “Kaali Kovil” in Trincomalee on a temple festival day, clad in milk white verti (dhoti) and bare chested and with a long snow-white beard, with books of different kinds neatly scattered around him. Can you imagine what he was doing? Just like in the school days, he was giving away books to children and adults who could not afford to buy them and selling to others who could afford to buy them!! My same old teacher with the same old selfless attitude of inculcating reading habit in others even in this modern time!! I was very much moved and immediately knelt before him and touched his feet. He was very pleased to see me and said “Anatham, Anatham” and offered me some valuable books on meditation and yoga. I offered to pay more for the books but my teacher would only accept the fixed price for them!

Thereafter I regularly visited him in his house in Trincomalee town and used to chat with him. The people of Trincomalee always got together and celebrated his birthday every year because of their affection and respect towards him. In his later years he had subscribed to a monthly spiritual magazine, “Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam” and other books of spirituality that advocated peace and harmony among people and communities. He used to get these magazines from Colombo Sri Ramakrishna Mission and sell them without any profit to people in Trincomalee just for the great vision of inculcating “Ahimsa” in people. This, he carried on till his very last day, 03 February 2017.

A selfless great soul, always thinking of others’ welfare had left us, but it is very unlikely this great town will ever forget him.

GANTHI IYAH, A Great Advocate of Reading

Manuel Indrasuriyan
Facilitator
Loyola Campus - Trincomalee
1. Can you give us an understanding as to how Loyola Campus and JWL operation began in Trincomalee?

Loyola Campus - Trincomalee was established in July 2017 using the existing structure of the Jesuit English Academy Trincomalee. Jesuit English Academy has been offering certificate courses in English and several other subjects for a number of years. The Government Technical College, established in 1995 in the existing Academy building, laid the foundation for what was later known as the Jesuit Academy of Trincomalee and now Loyola Campus - Trincomalee. The Centre has become a part of the Jesuit Tertiary Education endeavor in Sri Lanka, Loyola Campus with its preferred partner Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) another international Jesuit organization.

From September 2017, the Centre started offering Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL) affiliated Global English Programme for the benefit of the students in and around Trincomalee. There are a number of other courses such as Microsoft Office and Sinhala that are offered at Loyola Campus.

Trincomalee has been identified by Loyola Campus to be one of the Centres where students require professional expertise in English, Computer and several other professional courses. Loyola Campus - Trincomalee hopes to be registered under the Tertiary Vocation Education Commission (TVEC) soon and thereafter run NVQ level courses providing better opportunities for the students in and around Trincomalee. Moreover, the multi-ethnic and multi-religious environment of the locality will provide fertile ground for Loyola Campus, JWL to work for peacebuilding and reconciliation through tertiary and higher education.

2. We know that there are a number of educational institutes in and around Trincomalee who offer training in English Language and computer studies. Do you think that Loyola Campus-JWL Trincomalee is able to offer an education that is different from any other institute in Trincomalee?

It is true that in Trincomalee a number of education institutions are present. They offer different courses which are either professional or academic in nature. Despite the number of such opportunities offered in Trincomalee, still students face a number of challenges in pursuing their education in such institutes. While some families are not able to afford the fees of some institutions, others question the quality of education offered. In the name of education, many Institutions earn money although they profess to help in educating the next generation of students. Loyola Campus - JWL Trincomalee solely operates for the benefit of the students in and around Trincomalee. The institute does not limit itself to the conventional understanding of an education institute, but journeys with the students in helping them to discover and reorient themselves. The education provided at Loyola Campus - JWL Trincomalee is holistic. Students get the opportunity to expose themselves to a challenging learning environment that help them to grow and blossom. The institute not only motivates the students to excel in the areas of their studies but also to become better human persons in the society who are more sensitive to the needs of others and who are ready to offer support and assistance.
3. How do you find teachers who are competent to maintain the academic standards of the Institute?

One of the main concerns of the Centre had been recruiting and maintaining staff who are both qualified and committed to the ideals of Loyola Campus in educating, empowering and transforming a generation of young women and men. What is important for Loyola Campus is not just academic qualifications. While it plays a significant role in identifying suitable candidates who could become Facilitators at the Centre, they are expected to be the agents of change and transformation, first and foremost in their own personal lives and then manifesting it to the generation next. Loyola Campus- Trincomalee has a balance of young energetic and senior qualified facilitators who provide an enriching experience of education and learning. The commitment and the professionalism of the Facilitators and the staff of the centre has always inspired me and those who come into contact with the Centre.

4. Can you tell us some of the concerns and problems faced by students in Trincomalee?

The students who come to Loyola Campus- Trincomalee pass through important stages of their lives. The Centre feels privileged to have been able to be a part of their journey and accompany them. There are two main groups of students who come for classes: post Ordinary Level students and post Advanced Level students. Although these two groups have got a number of unique features, there are a number of similarities in the way they think and the way they behave. Given our cultural upbringing, many students even after Advanced Levels remain fully dependent on the parents and elders even for simple decisions in their lives. They experience a prolonged childhood and it significantly hampers their growth and maturity. Added to this there is a sense of fear and confusion about their future. Many find difficult to choose what they would want to be in the future. Notwithstanding all these challenges, more than ever, the youth today are in a search. They search for something deeper and meaningful. Loyola Campus too hopes to accompany these young students in their search towards meaning and fulfilment.

5. Being in Trincomalee town, Loyola Campus is accessible only for those in the town or the ones who have facilities to travel. There are more deserving students who might find difficult to come to Loyola Campus due to distance. How would you plan to integrate such groups of students who are in the real margins?

I think this is an important question that we have to ever keep in mind. The collaboration of Loyola Campus and JWL is to bring quality education opportunities in Sri Lanka for the least. To put it in JWL terms ‘The best for the least’. This constantly challenges the institute to evaluate and redesign its approach and strategy. While Loyola Campus hopes to sustain its effort in tertiary and higher education, it also makes a fundamental choice to locate itself in the margins. While bringing the best of Jesuit education for those who deserve it the most, Loyola Campus hopes to establish itself and offer students a learning experience that is more credible, recognized and affordable. While at present Loyola Campus- Trincomalee remains in the heart of the town, the Centre hopes to establish two study Centres in Nilaveli and Kantale.

6. We also heard about the plan of Jesuit of Sri Lanka in starting a Hotel Management and Language school in Trincomalee. Can you tell us about this project and how Loyola Campus is connected to it in the future?

This project is still in an early stage. The Jesuit province of Sri Lanka envisions to form tertiary education Centres offering skill oriented professional programmes that aim at preparing the students for the demands of modern industries. As it was implied in the question, this proposed Centre would have multiple sections dedicated to hotel management, language and culture.
LOYOLA CAMPUS

Mannar, Trincomalee, Vavuniya, Puthukkudiyiruppu, Hatton, Batticaloa and Mullaitivu
There are many unknown heroes in the world today, more so in our country. People sing praises of great activists, soldiers, Nobel Prize winners; yet somehow, we seemingly forget the heroes in our own lives, in our community or even neighbourhood.

But my opinion of the society is, a father is the male parent of a child. Besides the paternal bonds of a father to his children, the father may have a parental, legal and social relationship with the child that carries with it certain rights and obligations.

Children generally understand their father as a real hero and a good friend who always instruct to go on the right path. My father is also a real hero to me because he is the most special person in my life. He is a very good athlete and an artist. He works in foreign. At his every vacation, he loves to play with my sister, brother and me the whole day.

He works hard and spends maximum time working at his office. He is amongst the top ranked employees of his company and has won many awards for the same. He tries his best to keep our family happy. He works hard to make money for our family. He loves me a lot and always tries to cheer me up whenever I am sad.

He has always taught me good values and did not spoil me by buying all the things that I wanted. At the same time, he has gifted me many things that I always wish to have. My dad has always tried his level best to make me a good human being.

He is very careful regarding what I eat. He always insists me to eat healthy stuff such as fruits and vegetables that are rich in vitamins and minerals. He is an extremely loving dad. I always enjoy spending time with him and learn new things about him. My dad helps me with my studies too. He does not allow me to take tuitions instead he personally sits with me to get my problems solved. It is because of his grace I perform well in studies.

My dad is the most precious gift of God for me. He is a loving father and the most gracious person I have ever seen in my life. He wants me to become a good human being like him. That is why he always teaches me to differentiate between right and wrong.

Every vacation he allots little time for me at night to talk about day to day activities and problems if any. He is my best friend. I can discuss everything with him without any hesitation. Things that I fail to reveal to my close friends can be easily discussed with my dad.

Whenever I need his help he is always available for me. He is a hero for me. He is a funny, cool, adventurous and smart human being. He loves to travel and that is why we both always prefer long distance places to travel during his vacation.

Dad says that he started roaming in the world when he was a college student. According to him, his experiences have helped him to broaden his horizons. He wants me to experience the world because he believes that travelling is an education in itself. When I was at that age of 10 I took my first flight to Sydney. I have learnt a lot of things under my dad’s guidance which education fails to teach. The most important lesson that dad has taught me is to be disciplined and hard-working in life. These two things are the key ingredients to achieve success in life.

Today I am just 19 years old and at this tender age, dad has taught me a lot of things that people at the age of 20 fails to understand. He has taught me what life is. He has shown me the way to achieve success. He has shown me the opportunities that exist in front of me. He is very confident that his efforts to make me a good human being will never go in vain. Seeing his confidence one day I want to make him proud. I thank God every day for giving me such a loving and caring father.

Ann Romella Vincent
Loyola Campus – Batticaloa
Each human on this earth has their own role model or any inspirational person. An inspirational person or a role model has the ability to shape a better life and a better future. Some call them heroes. Hero means a man of bravery and leading male or female character in a story. Our society also has identified these people such as Abdul Kalam, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru etc... I think hero means not only these but also those who contribute to our lives silently and the ones who encourages. They are the real heroes. I would prefer to pen about them because in my life too I have come across a silent hero.

He is my Grandfather. He is a big support for me. His name is Alaguthurai Dharmarajah. He was born on 1949 February 21. He is 68 years old. He is a retired cinema manager and a Justice of Peace. He supports not only my family but also my village. When I was a child he started to care for me. He taught me a lot of things about society. He always encourages me to involve in sports. Because of him, I have turned up to be a good sports girl in my school. He even encourages me in my studies. It truly makes me to study well. He often helps me to express my talents in school. He grants lots of freedom for me. He taught me to respect others. Because of him, I am a good person in the society. I am sure I will always be a good person in the society. I thank my grandfather for caring for me and helping me to grow as a good girl. He is the real hero in my life.

We come across these type of people in every life. So they are the real heroes. But no one notice them. We should really respect them and changes in us.
So many heroes live in the world. I know a person in my village. He is a real hero in my life. He is Rev Father Jude Croos. He was born on 13 March 1967. He is 50 years old. He has two sisters and a brother.

His hometown is Vankalai. Now he is in Thoddaveli parish. He is the Parish Priest of Thoddaveli. He was ordained on 03 March 2000 at St Sebastian’s church. He wanted to become a priest and serve the people from his childhood during his childhood, he always went to church. He helped the poor people. After he finished his A/L exam he went to Don Bosco seminary. There he started his seminary studies. After 10 years he was ordained. His family was extremely happy to see him becoming a priest. He is good and honest. He likes children. So, he spends more time with children. Sometimes he gives some gifts to them. I like his attitudes and values. He teaches us many valuable life lessons through his silent and humble service. Every day I talk with him and I receive good advice from him.

R Menalin
Loyola Campus - Mannar

Life is a journey. We are all part of this journey. On our way, we meet different people. There are different heroes. I too have an experience with one special person who is an example for me.

The hero is my uncle. His name is Nishanthan. He was born in 1988 at Mullaitivu, Sri Lanka. During his childhood, he studied at Mullaitivu Maha Vidyalayam. During his school life, he was a good sportsman.

Two years ago, he went U.K for a job. After one year he got married in U.K. In my life, I have met different people. But he is the only person who loves me more than anyone in my life. He always talks with me. He always remembers me. If I am sad he cares for me like his child. When he is in Sri Lanka, he always meets me. But now I really miss his love, care and protection.

I continue to study. I want to get more experiences. I also want to improve in life like him. He is my inspiration. I have realized that when a person becomes our hero in life, their love and care is enough to keep us going. He is my real hero. I miss my uncle.

M. Kishaliny
Loyola Campus - Mannar
My hero is my A/level teacher Vijayakumari. She lives in Mannar. She teaches Christianity. She taught at St. Xaviers girl’s college. She is from Avanam. She is married. She has two children. I love my teacher. Because her teaching is interesting for me. She is very talented and she has good habits.

After school I went to her house. She taught me but she didn’t take fees for Christianity classes. She said ‘I don’t sell education. But I just give my knowledge. So, I don’t like to take fees from my students’.

I think my teacher is a gift from God. She encourages me. I miss my Christianity teacher. I think she is an unforgettable person in my life. I love my teacher.

My Christianity Teacher
Seinudden, My Father

He loves me and my mother very much. My father calls me at any time by my pet name. Every weekend we go for an outing with my family. That is a memorable experience. My father is the best father in the world for me. I love my father very much. I wish him success throughout his life. He is a true hero for me.

M S Maheesa Begum
Loyola Campus - Mannar

Sebastianpillai - My Grandfather

My unforgettable hero is Mr Sebastianpillai. He is my grandfather. Manuvel Sebastianpillai was born in Vidaththalathivu, Mannar. He was born 2 February 1938. He studied at Vidaththalathivu Roman Catholic Tamil mix school & St. Partick’s College in Jaffna. He studied up to G. C. E. A /L. He is very intelligent. He was a Tamil teacher. He taught in Kandy. Afterwards he taught his children and his grandchildren. Later in life, he worked as a conductor of Ceylon Transportation Board. Now he is an administrator in Vidaththalathivu Roman Catholic Mix School, Mannar. He is also a bookkeeper in the church.

Everyone in the village respect him and his family. He has brought up a very good family. All his family members are educated. He is not afraid of anything. He is a very strict person. He doesn't like those who gossip and talk ill about others. He is a hard worker.

I respect him very much. Always he gives advices to my family and to me in many situations. He is very talented in mathematics and Tamil. Always he tells Tamil stories such as makaparatham, ramayanam vikramathithan, thempavani. Those stories helped me during my O/L & A/L studies. I like his life, behaviours, his strictness and his teaching style. I love him very much.

M E Kayani
Loyola Campus - Mannar
I met many people from my birth till now. But some people are unforgettable. I will write about an important person in my life. He is a great person. I am very proud and happy to write about this person. He is a minor staff of St/ Xavier’s Boys’ College, Mannar. He has completed 31 years of service in this school. He was born on 26 June 1961 in Nedunthevu. He is the 5th child of his parents. His activities are very different from his brothers and sisters. Because he was kind, generous from his childhood. He does his duties perfectly.

He is not lazy. He is always energetic and active. He studied at Madhu G.T.M.S. He joined as a minor staff on 7 October 1986. He is a very honest person. He was married on 22 August 1988. His wife’s name is Vathany. They have three sons and two daughters. He brought up his children in a good way. He moved with others in a friendly way. He doesn’t curse others. He always worked hard for his family.

He worked at Sent Xaviers’ Boys College Loyola Campus under many principals. He has met many students and teachers during his service. He was awarded Xavertes Merit Award [2010] and The Lasallion Merit Award [2015] for his service. I like this person. And I think he is a hero.

M Maristella
Loyola Campus - Mannar

Many like famous people. But the world-famous people are not from my village. I remember a person who had left so many loving memories and inspired my life. When I was ten years old, he came to our village to teach us. That time we were small children. He taught me very well. He talked with all students. He is a Tamil teacher. He taught the O/L class.

He comes from Jaffna. His mother had died. His mother died when he was two years old. His father and his older sister brought him up. He has two brothers and three sisters. He finished his advance level exam. After that he studied at the College of Education in Jaffna. He is a hard worker. He cares for us. Because he always told us that we are his daughters.

In 2014, we were studying for O/Level exam. That time he was my class teacher. He taught the Tamil subject. He gave many works for us and he encouraged us all the time. I am inspired by my teacher very much. I like him. There is one incident that I will remember for the rest of my life. One day our class was given some responsibility in the school. But none of the students came. The work was delayed. The principal was very angry with the students. My class teacher started working alone. Once the work was done I saw him crying. I was shocked.

B Toniya
Loyola Campus - Mannar
Many heroes live in the world. But I know a hero. I think he is a real hero and best human being in the world. His name is Lawrance Anthonas Alwaras Coonghe. His Short name is Antonys. He lives in Pesalai. He was born on 8 June 1960. He is little fat and short. I think he is a gentleman.

He works hard for his children. He had some bank loans because he had borrowed money for children's higher studies. So, his family faced some financial problems. Therefore, he often works over time in his office. Daily he visits his customer's houses. He collects customer's money and he deposits the money in customer's own bank accounts.

Not Just a Postman

He is 58 years old. He works at Thalai Mannar post office. He is a postman. He is the best employer in his office. Because he is dedicated. He is very happy and he has more experience in life. His wife is a religion teacher. She works at St. Fatima M M V Pesalai, Mannar. They have two children. The first child study in Colombo. Second child finished A/L exams and he is waiting for his results.

He received two awards for his service last year. He had collected 94 lakhs during the year. He dedicated himself and worked for the last 38 years in his office. He is an honest man. He is a real hero for me. He always helps poor people. I never miss him because he is always there with me.

C Mithun
Loyola Campus - Mannar

A Teacher who Left a Lasting Impression

I have seen many people in my life. But one person is an unforgettable person. He is also an important person in my life. He is our English teacher A R Ruban Revel. He was born in 1982. He lives in Vankalai. His father's name is Arbel Revel. He was a Zonal Director of Education in Mannar.

Teacher Ruban came to our school 7 years ago when I was studying in 6th grade. My school is Uyilankulam R.C.T.M.S Mannar. It is a small school. Many students are not interested and didn't like the English subject. We didn’t have a good English teacher in our school.

After sir Ruban came to our school many students improved their English knowledge and their studies. Many students participated in English day competitions and won prizes. He taught us many new methods of using English which were very interesting. He works hard for the success of the students. Many students like him.

Now he is transferred to another school. Many students felt his absence. I am happy to find a good teacher like Ruban Revel in my life. I really thank God. Because sir Ruban is a great gift for us. So I am really happy. Always I pray for his health and his teaching career.

S Mariyaseeli
Loyola Campus - Mannar
There are many heroes in our lives but I have a very special person in my life. I remember him with love and admiration. My forgotten hero is the A/Level teacher Mr T Kirubananthan. He lives in Navaladi, Jaffna. He was our class teacher. He taught commerce. He is thirty-two years old.

He is married but he has no children. So my teacher is friendly with all students in the school. My teacher is very talented and a good person. He is very systematic in his duties. When I find it difficult to solve a problem in commerce he would help us. He goes to kovil on Fridays. So I like my teacher.

One day I was getting ready for an exam. I was very upset and cried at that time. He encouraged me and he taught me many questions. It really helped me. He always wanted to be a useful citizen. After school, taught commerce. It was so useful for our exams.

My class teacher is a poet. He writes poems for different programmes. I like his poems. I think my teacher will one day become a famous poet in Jaffna. This month my teacher celebrates his birthday. So I will go to his house with my classmates. I am really happy. He can manage classes very well. He has a talent in communicating with the students. Students listen to him. One day my accounts teacher didn’t come to school. At the time he managed the class well. Sometimes he does school accounting and he works with my school principal. I think it’s a great experience to know him.

J N Jenifer
Loyola Campus - Mannar

I would like to meet many heroes in my life. But my role model and hero is Mr A Anthonimuthtu. He is my lovely grandfather. He was born in Vidathaltheevu on 19 August 1944. He studied at St Patrick’s College Jaffna.

My grandfather is talented. He wrote stories, poems, songs, children activity books, school anthems, newspaper articles. In the past, my grandfather was a good Tamil teacher.

Then he became the principal of Murunkan M.V. After that he was appointed as the Director of Education of Trincomalle Education Department. My grandfather was awarded "Kalapushanam Anthonimuthtu". He has another surname given to him as a respect, ‘Mannar Amuthu’. In my childhood, I didn’t know what was Tamil. He encourages me to learn languages. I like his attitude because every day he is regular for his personal activities. I am proud to be his granddaughter. My grandfather dedicated his life for our mother language. He was interested in Tamil language. He encourages more people in Mannar to study Tamil. He has developed many talents in his life. But today he is forgotten from this world. He is aged and weak. He is my role model and hero.

M Roxey
Loyola Campus - Mannar
A Genuine Thinker Committed to the Cause of the People

Although it’s not easy to forget heroes, many heroes are forgotten since they had lead a silent life and their achievements are not that important for the present consumerist world. We would like to remember one such hero. He made a special contribution in terms of research, culture and the struggle of plantation community. He is none other than Mr Saral Nadan. But sadly, he is not well known even in Sri Lanka.

Saral Nadan’s original name is Karupaiyah Nallaiah. He was a writer and a researcher. He was a prominent voice of plantation community or the upcountry Tamils. He inspired me through his writings and he encouraged me to explore the talents within me.

He was born to Mr Karupaiyah and Mrs Verammal at Saaimalai-Minsin Estate on 9 May 1944. He was the fifth child in his family and he had five sisters. He began his primary education in Saaimalai Tamil School and he continued his intermediate education at Highlands College, Hatton. At Highlands College, he was inspired by his teachers, Mr R Sivalingam and Mr Sebasteian (both were former principals of Highlands College) to research on upcountry Tamils. After finishing his General Certification Exams, he entered Peradeniya University for his graduate studies in Arts and Social Science. Unfortunately, he was unable to continue his studies because of poverty. He discontinued his studies and then worked at Asoka College hostel for a year.

A few years later, he took a training programme for tea factory officers in Saaimalai - Kuyvilvatha estate and he worked as a tea factory officer for 35 years in Panduloya-Dunsinane, Pussalalwa-New peacock, Kotagala - Drayton and Pathana-Keliwatha. While working as a factory officer he wrote essays, short stories and short novels.

They are mostly about upcountry people and their culture. His first short novel was Pinam Thinnium Sashirangal (the Rituals that Eat the Dead Bodies). He wrote short stories in local newspapers such as Malai Murasu, Malapori, Malar, Radha, and Seiythi and National newspapers like Sinthamanai, Veeraakeasari, Thinagar. He is fondly known as ‘Saral Nadan’ for his contribution to Tamil culture, literature and for his research on the plantation community. This name was taken from the ancient Tamil Sangam literature.

In 1994, he gathered all his short stories and published as Malai Kolumnthu. He took interest in unearthing the hidden treasure of folk literature of the upcountry Tamils and the forgotten heroes in the struggle of plantation workers. He collected information about the trade unionist Mr C V Velupillai and wrote a book on him. The name of this book was C V Sinthanigal (The Thoughts of C V). In 1988, he published his second book, Desapakthan Nadesaiyar (Mr. Nadesaiyar, the Patriot) and those two books were awarded by Tamil Sahithiya Mandaal. In 1990- he published a research book on upcountry Tamils named in Tamil Malayaga Tamlar (Upcountry Tamils) and in 1997 Malayagam Varartha Tamil (Tamil Nurtured by the Upcountry).

He retired from his work in 2000 became he was interested in pursuing his full time literary involvement. In 2000, he published a book Malavaga IllakiyanThotramum Valarchhi (The Origin and Growth of the Literature in Upcountry). He recollected the short stories of C V Vellupillai and published it as Vallvatra Vallyu (Lifeless Life) in 2001.

It was not easy for him to write and publish books. He could not get proper support for publication. So, he started ‘Saral Publication’ and encouraged the young writers to publish books. In 2003, he published Malavaga Tamil Varalarru (History of the People of Upcountry). In order to write this book, he worked so hard in collecting materials. There were less material available on this topic. In his enterprise on publishing research and literature on the upcountry Tamils a few were very supportive: his wife Mrs Pushpam Nallaiah and his close friends Mr Antony Jeeva and Mr Malligai C Kumar. He collected information from various sources: from people, university professors, National gazetteer department and Tamil Language department.

During those days, there were a number of researchers on upcountry Tamils who had earned University degrees. But most of them lacked depth and rigour. There was a disconnect between the academic research and the real aspirations of the upcountry Tamils. Mr Saral Nadan filled this gap and his works on upcountry Tamils will be remembered for ever in the literary circles.

Upcountry Tamils are in need of such researchers who have the ability to discover the riches in the culture of the Upcountry Tamils. We wish that the youth be imbied by his passion for research and publication. This will tremendously boost the struggle of the upcountry Tamil community.

S Kayaliniie, A F Diyorina, R Hamshavani, V. Nithyanjali
Loyola Campus - Hatton
There are so many people who make a silent contribution to the world. They dedicate their lives for a common task but they are often forgotten. Although we need them most in making our lives more comfortable and pleasant, we do not want to recognize their contribution. We met a group of people who are often disrespected and neglected in our town. Their service and contribution is often forgotten. We decided to meet this group of people, the sanitation workers of Hatton. We spoke to them and asked about their work, life in Hatton. We are convinced about the heroic service they have done and continue to do.

They usually go to work at 7 O’clock in the morning and it is impossible to predict when their work ends. They are not well educated. Most of them are educated only up to either 7th or 8th grade. In each family, they have at least three or four children. Their children study in the estate schools and they are not well esteemed by their teachers and other students. They carry the stigma of being the children of sanitation community along with them. And this stigma affects their studies and they become dropouts at an early age.

Sunday is their usual holiday and they can have two days as holidays during any festival. Though their salary is more than Rs. 30,000 per month, only around Rs. 8,000 to Rs.10,000 reaches their hand. They depend on loans and they have to pay back the borrowed money with interest. Sometimes they pay heavy interests for the loans they had taken. They lead an unhealthy lifestyle and there is no interest in saving. This leads them towards greater indebtedness to local money lenders. Their lifestyle is very different from many other people. Their houses are constructed in close proximity. They are congested and unhealthy. It does not provide an environment for the education and growth of the youngsters.

Despite the alienation and ill-treatment from the society, they continue to provide their services in keeping the city and the houses clean. For centuries, these families have toiled in this fashion. The political leaders and trade unionists often use these people as pawns in their political projects and fail to listen to their plea. Despite all the injustice, this community passionately fulfil their duties. I think they are the real heroes who can teach us so many life lessons. We need to listen to them and be inspired by their life and dedication.
A Teacher with a Difference

A good teacher is like a candle. The candle burns itself to give light. An ideal teacher is someone who has sound knowledge in his subject, ability to effectively manage his classroom and possesses good communication skills. Such teachers genuinely enjoy teaching and deals with students in a transformative fashion.

I am going to talk about such a teacher who made a difference in the lives of many students. He is Mr Nagappan Sadayan Balamohan. His father is Mr Nagappan. His mother is Mrs Jeyalatchumy. He was born on 23 July 1960 at Koslanda. He studied at Koslanda Tamil Maha Vidyalaya and St Joseph’s College Badarawela. He completed his graduate studies at Peradeniya and Colombo Universities.

He worked as a teacher in Puliyawatha Tamil Maha Vidyalaya, Talawakala Tamil Maha Vidyalaya and Highlands Central college, Hatton. He got his first teaching appointment in 1984. He became a member of ISA (International Surfing Association) in 1998 and is working as an ISA member in Hatton zone. He is the chief examiner for Science, additional chief examiner for chemistry and he is the chemistry teacher’s instructional manual writer.

The Science Academy is the oldest private educational institute in Hatton. Mr Bala Mohan has taken many responsibilities to shape this institute. Since 2009 he teaches Zoology, Botany and Chemistry. He was a member of the discipline committee when he taught at Highlands College. He supported the sports activities of the students.

He’s a good teacher in Hatton. He gives notes and handouts freely for poor students. He helps poor students and gives scholarship to continue their studies. He is available at all times to help out students. He always tells us that teaching isn’t just a job but a service and a mission. He has never minded about fees. If a student doesn’t understand any lesson, he is always ready to help the student out and explain the lessons again. I think he has never got bored teaching. He is a great example for the younger generation. Truly, he is an inspiration and a guide.
Her name is Banumathy. In her early life, she was a plantation worker. She worked hard every day and earned money. She was a motivation to my father. She led a wonderful family life. She was always cheerful and happy. She had been married for 18 years. She was short and fat. She was very beautiful. Her face was oval and nose was straight, small and a little. What made her really amazing was her small shiny black eyes. She had a beautiful smile. Her skin was soft and pale. Some people say I look like her. When she was young she looked good in almost every picture. She always wore sarees.

I admire her because she was very intelligent, ambitious and she had many goals in her life. I think she fulfilled most of them. She was very strong. She could handle any tough situation with ease. My mom was my inspiration. She was an iron lady. She handled lots of critical problems without any fear. Once my uncle got arrested in connection with LTTE and my mom went alone to the Police Station and bailed him out. Because she believed that he was innocent and an innocent should not be punished under any circumstance. Thus, she didn’t wait for any one’s help. She was fearless and strong.

She has done many remarkable things which still leaves memories of her. One of her achievements during her life time was our home. Earlier my family lived in a small house and suffered of poverty. My mom worked hard and built the house where we could live now without any worry. Every brick and wall of our new house was soaked with my mom’s sweat and now it gives us shelter.

She helped others also. It was great fun to be with her, because she had a great sense of humor. My mom had many talents. Mom was a warm and friendly person who loved social life and went for parties. She was also very patient and meticulous with everything she did.

During 2006 she was detected with kidney failure and we immediately did the transplantation. But after that she often fell sick and went through almost 19 surgeries for various illnesses. She never showed her pain. She bore all of it silently. She was an unbelievable person. She did all her work and managed the whole family very well.

Mothers give up their own comfort and happiness for the welfare of the family especially for the children. Mothers carry their children in their womb before they are born and then continue to nurture them throughout their childhood and even into adulthood. Mothers have unconditional love towards their children. In fact, most people do not understand unless they become mothers themselves. Mothers give incredible support to their children, whether it involves very visible support or simple background encouragement.

My mother is the best woman in the world. No one can replace her in my heart. ‘Mom you gave me everything but you never asked me to pay them back. You are the best and the greatest woman in this world and in my heart. I love you forever. I will be a successful person in life and I can take care of myself. But I can’t accept the reality that you are gone. It is always painful that I’ll never hear your voice again and I will never see that beautiful smile again. I love you and miss you.’
Rt Rev Dr Rayappu Joseph

In 1992 Rt Rev Dr Rayappu Joseph was ordained the Bishop of Mannar by the Bishop Thomas Sawndharnayagam. He was from Jaffna. His spiritual life attracted many people to follow him. After the year 2000, civil war in Sri Lanka intensified. It affected the north part of the country. At that time, the Bishop was very concerned about the ordinary people, the innocent civilians, who were mostly suffering due to violence. So, he started his new mission to help them.

He visited the affected areas and talked with people about their life. It was so painful to witness the struggle of people. He was always ready to help them. He gave land to them to start their life new. He struggled at that time. He was disappointed with the Sri Lanka Government’s response to the situation in the North. At times, he was in conflict with the Government of Sri Lanka for taking the side of those brutalized by violence and war.

He was very active. He dedicated his time and energy for the benefit of the people who suffered due to war. He wasn’t afraid of anyone. When he spoke out he was bold, clear and courageous. He wasn’t confident about several political processes in the country during the post war era. He raised his voice against the killing of innocent civilians during the last stages of war.

In 2015, when he was 75 years old, he became seriously ill. Still he cannot walk. Also, he finds difficult to communicate as he used to do. But people haven’t forgotten him. People still remember and appreciate his dedicated service. He will definitely remain in the hearts and minds of people forever.

J Roxsan
Loyola Campus - Trincomalee

My Hero

A hero is a person, especially a woman or a man who is admired by many people for doing something brave or good. Everybody can’t be a hero. In order to be a hero there should be a unique quality in a person. A hero is very important for children. Because children desire to be like them. For me, there is a hero, who inspires me and, indeed, I want to be like him. He is my father.

My dad is a simple person. He was born on 30 January 1966. His name is Bothalage Rohitha Jayalal Fernando and he is not a well-educated person. He studied only up to grade 11. But he is well-educated in fishing because that is one thing he keeps on doing to make our lives better. Although he is 51 years old, he still has the energy to work in the sea. My dad has gone through a lot of suffering, pain and sorrow. Those experience made him stronger than ever before. When he has free time, he uses it to talk to me about his childhood and past life.

He has done a lot of good things to others, especially he has sacrificed himself for others in many ways. Through his love, sacrifice and service, he became a person who is admired in our village. He attracts people by the way of his behaviour, attitudes and values that he demonstrates in everyday life. Although he might not be famous, still he has inspired so many people in my village, including me.

A Brian
Loyola Campus - Trincomalee
Fettereso (Peththarasi) is my birthplace and I still remember that there were no proper transport facilities at that time. It was very difficult to reach the main road and it was not an easy task for the children and elderly people to walk on the roads during the rainy season as the roads were not in good shape. The village was too interior. For the ordinary human beings it was very difficult to survive. So imagine how it would be for a pregnant woman. Still my village is like as it was.

“Aayamma” (the midwife) is the one who stays and works for the people in the village and takes care of all the medical needs of the villagers. The Aayamma of Fetteresso was short and fair. She was a Sinhalese. She wore white dress and we could even recognize her from far. She speaks Tamil with a Sinhalese accent. She was the first Midwife of my village. I did not know her name and of course most of the villagers had forgotten her name. We call her Aayamma rather than Nurse or Midwife because the word Aayamma suits her.

Aayamma (The Midwife)

Whenever she visits the villagers, that would be the happiest moment for the children because of what she brings- ‘Samaposa’ the nutrition food for every child. She visits the village every day, whether it is rainy, windy or sunny. She never stopped visiting us.

It was my 12th birthday, I only could remember the words which I heard from my mom. I asked her how and where I was born. It was to be the best birthday gift that I could ever get from anyone. My mom said that I was born at home and not in the hospital. I was shocked and surprised. Because only in movies I have seen deliveries at home. Those were far difficult and risky than hospital deliveries. I asked my mom if there were doctors during the delivery. She said that although there were no doctors, the delivery was assisted by Aayamma. Then I asked about her and finally I got to know who she was. Aayamma who was with my mom during my birth was the Aayamma who gave me Samaposa packets whenever she met me. She only knew the exact time of my birth. I guess it was only for a few minutes that I was on her lap, she was the one who carried me to my father and she was the one who checked me properly and cut the umbilical cord. Unfortunately, I forgot the shape of her face and I was unable to find her name still.

She was always around the village side. She was always there for the people. If anyone wants to meet her for any sickness, they could go to her at any time. Whenever I meet her she asks, “Have you eaten?” (kehwada lamayo). She was the one who taught me to greet people with a smile.

She was very strict to give “Polio” anti-biotic medicine to children. She visits the school once in every week to check the water and toilet facilities. She helped not only the children and pregnant mothers but also she worked for everyone in the village.

Occasionally I remember her and as it happens, many have forgotten her. She was and is the real heroine in my life. Whenever I walk in road side and about to pass the local hospital suddenly my heroine comes to my mind and her face appears with the same smile and with the golden words that she always used to greet me. “Kehwada lamayo”.

A A S Ilonthan
Loyola Campus - Vavuniya
Every time I think of a hero, I am reminded of my father. The people who know about us best are our parents. They have the greatest influence in our lives because they are the people we see us most and have known us for the longest period of time. They sacrifice many luxuries to give their children the best life possible. My father has had a huge impact on my life, and on my village too. And it is because of him that I have been the person I am today.

Most people say that I am like my dad, physically. From observing my dad’s behavior and listening to his lectures, I’ve noticed that he has influenced my life, my choices, and our villagers’ life too. My dad is short, fair, and the sweetest man in my village. He is responsible, kind, happy, and most of all he doesn’t give up. One day one of his poor friends Selvam came home and asked, ‘Ganesh, I’m suffering from poverty, so I would like to go abroad, can you help me?’. Suddenly my dad replied without any delay, ‘I can’t lend you the money, but after going you should return it’. At that point I understood my dad’s desire to help others. He likes to help others when they have problems because he doesn’t want others to go through what he had gone through.

My dad Ganeshalingam was born on 23 March 1965 in Samayapuram Vavuniya. He had a traumatizing experience in his childhood. Because his mother has 10 children including my dad. After the birth of my dad his father died. So, he didn’t study because of poverty. But his life changed when he found my mother in Jaffna. They were not married and very young. My mom was sixteen and my dad was twenty-six. He was not educated. But he tried to work hard in farming. After my birth, his life became full of worries about paying bills and getting food on the table. But he never lost hope and kept on working hard in farming to improve his family’s quality of life. When I came along, he decided that it would be the best to move to Iraq for employment in 2005. He started working as a cook in an American Army restaurant until 2010.

He worked in Baghdad during the period of war. But he never gave up his hard work. In 2006 my mom and I moved to Paththiyarmahilankulam nearby Samayapuram. A new house for our family was built with the money of my dad. It was a huge struggle getting used to this new life without my dad. But eventually, we all adjusted. Finally, after 5 years of effort of my dad, again we became economically stable. We are catholic but my dad helped and donated a lot of money to build an Amman Kovil in Samayapuram. Therefore, he had a good name inside our village. No matter what problems in life comes our way, he doesn’t let anything bring us down. My dad’s story makes me realize that there are no excuses for me not to reach my goals. He has made me a determined person.

As the proverb goes, ‘Give a man a fish, you have fed him for today. Teach a man to fish, and you have fed him for lifetime’, I believe my dad taught me how to never go hungry again in my life. Growing up, I believe this to be the most important lesson he passed on to me.

My dad always says, ‘All of us have worries. I am not mother Theresa or a super hero. But I embrace life and focus on what is most important’. I’m very proud to be his daughter. Now he is a three-wheel driver. He has done and is doing many good things for my village the help of my mom.

G Keshayini
Loyola Campus - Vavuniya
Sarasamma

Because of such people, still we witness humanity in this world. They are not famous as the others. But they serve others silently. While there are so many popular heroes, I would like to share some of my experience about a real heroine from my village who has been with me from my childhood. My grandmother is the heroine of my life and village. Her name is Saraswathy Arulampalam but she is well known as ‘Periyamma’ among the young generation and ‘Sarasamma’ among the older generation.

My grandmother’s native place is Karainagar. Due to war my family was displaced as refugees to Vavuniya. During the war Vavuniya was a forest and there were no basic facilities for the refugees. Some refugees were attacked by the Sri Lankan Military. So, they badly needed some first aid. But at that time there were no medical facilities for them. She is the one who took care of the patients who needed help. She was not a medical doctor or a graduate. She helped those people through her life time experience. She used Ayurvedic medicine for the wounds. Still she gives Ayurvedic medicine for the people who come for treatment. She is at the age of eighties but still if any one comes for treatment, she treats without any hesitation.

Not only she gives medicine but also, she teaches the younger generation about Tamil tradition and ethics. She is an inspiration for many in my village. She has a special talent in dealing with children. If any child makes a mistake she never scolds them. She simply tells a story and that story will remain forever in their minds.

She is an important person in my village. Whenever there is a problem in my village, she stands by the villagers. She supports our people to overcome many difficulties they face in life. And also she tells stories about LTTE, Sri Lankan Army and how they survived through the war.

Although she selflessly serves people she does not expect anything in return. She is not rich. She is not popular. But I am sure that many people of my villages remember her as a lady who was always there to care for others. She was a real human being. She is my heroine.
Everyone has a hero in their life and there will be someone who has made an impact on their lives. My mother is my greatest influence for several reasons. She has supported me always. She showed me that success comes through hard work. She taught me how to believe in myself. Whenever I face a problem I ask my mother to give some ideas and suggestions to overcome it. I know she will be there for me forever.

My mother’s name is Koneswary Thevathas. She was born on 05 February 1974 to Kanmani and Nadaras, in Jaffna. My mother is the best woman in the world. No one can replace her from my heart. I admire my mother. Although she is always busy with daily chores, taking care of my family but she will never say that she is tired. When my father goes to work, and I go to school, my mother stays at home and do all the home works. When my father and I come back home, there will be always some delicious food prepared for us. After the dinner, my mom washes all the dishes alone. Sometimes I try to help but she advises me to do my studies well. She loves us more than herself. Her love for us is greater than the ocean. The universe and nothing in it can replace it. She is not only my mom, but she is my best friend. She is a person with whom I can share all my problems and experiences of my life.

My mother was unaware of the things that take place in the school until there was a parents’ Meeting. She was shocked when she saw my report. My grades were going down. She asked me why my grades went down. I was speechless and looked at her. It seems that my mother knew the reason. She understood that I was busy with my friends. I had lost my concentration in studies. I had made a big mistake.

She always gives me great advices, just like any other mother does. They always know what to say and when to say it. My mom gave me the best possible advice and helped me to pass the exams. She told me many times that I shouldn’t play games too much. I needed to focus on studies, but I ignored her advices earlier. When she cried, I felt so sorry and guilty. I wasn’t brave enough to face her. Then I came to her slowly, hugged her and said, ‘I am sorry mom, I knew that I had made a big mistake. I am so sorry mom, please forgive me’. She was very calm.

T Kamsika
Loyola Campus - Vavuniya

Everyone has some one in their lives whom they look up to and want to be just like them. I also have such a person who inspires me and keeps me going. She is my mother, Suthahary. She is forty-seven years old. My mother is my favorite person in the world, because she is always there when I need her the most and I do not know where I would be today without her. She has been blessed with a great life and I am forever thankful for all that she does for me. Nobody could be ever compared to my mother. She is the most caring, loving, and genuine person whom I know and that is why she is my heroin.

When I think of a hero, I think of someone who is brave, strong, hard-working, trustworthy and unselfish. I think of someone who can protect me and make my life better. My mother has all of these qualities. My mother was raised by two great parents and had a very good life growing up. She lived in a small village called Saravanai in Jaffna District.

She has completed her post graduate studies. She is interested in handicraft and tailoring. Whenever I asked anything from my mother, she always brings them and help in my education. I learn many things from my mother such as cooking, handicrafts, tailoring. She was very helpful in my life, encouraging to be a better person. She taught me to be helpful to others. On my birthday, she makes it a point to help poor people besides taking me to the temple. She always encourages me. She is my inspiration.

S Arany
Loyola Campus - Vavuniya
Mr Subas Muthulingam

Out of every one who has come in and out of my life the main person who impacted me the most is Mr Muthulingam Subas. He is one of my honorable teachers. I studied at v/Rambaikulam Girls’ Maha Vidyalayam. I was taught by him for 5 years. He is my neighbour also. Therefore, I knew about him from my childhood. He is such a loveable person. He is humble and honest. In my point of view, he is a real hero. But many people might not know about him as he is not famous. I have lot of memories of him. For example, I was the best student in ordinary level. I always received the first rank. But in one term I received the ninth rank. I felt sad. I gave up my effort in studying. But during that time my sir came near to me and cheered me up. He said a story about Captain Napoléon. When Napoléon fell down, he never said ‘I fell down’. He tried to get up. After that he said ‘Now I have got up’. He compared it to my situation. He advised me not to give up. He encouraged me to work hard and achieve the dreams I have. His words motivated me a lot. So, I worked hard during the next exam. I got the first rank again. I will never forget this incident. It changed my life.

I was selected to become a school prefect and was given a challenging responsibility. I had to prepare for the common meetings, exercises, and other functions in the auditorium. I didn’t know how to do them. I felt shy to move in front of a large number of students. But he encouraged me to come out of my fear and hesitation. He has helped me in many ways to improve myself. I am more confident today. He is not only a teacher, but also he is a photographer, farmer and a social worker. He was born in Neduntheevu. Therefore he knew the value of food. He maintains a paddy field. He always says that we want to protect our nature. He is a nature lover. He does social services. He donates to the Sivan orphanage on his birthdays. He takes care of the elders. He is one of the living heroes I admire. He is my inspiration.

R Rebekka
Loyola Campus - Vavuniya.

Dedicated through his Humble Service

Whenever I hear about heroes, I like to share some experience of mine about my hero who is no more with us now. But he has definitely made a big difference in my life. Out of everyone, who has come into my life, I love and respect this person the most. He has made an impact on me. He was a good human being that I met in my life.

Although he is not famous and not known in our town or country, I like him very much. Through this article I am going to share about him and his life with those who do not know him. My hero’s name is T. Maheswaran. He was a Post master. He is my Grandfather. He was born on 20 December 1938. His native village is Karainagar. He was brought up in a poor family. His family was a big family. His wife’s name is Kamalathay. He has two sons and seven daughters.

Because of his job, he became a memorable person in my village. He went through many difficulties in his life. He overcame most of it. His village was very small. They lacked many facilities. There was a small school for the village children. There was a small hospital for treatment. His house was by the sea. So there was lack of drinking water for the people. But there are many temples in his village. The village people are very kind and loveable. They gave more importance to God. He was also a devotee. He was a devotee of the Amman temple in his village.

His first appointment was in Bandarawela post office. He was very talented. He was the first post master in our village. He was always with a smiling face. It was because of his positive attitude. However, we had a lot of fun during the festival times. Even though he was busy at times, he used to spend more time with village people. He treated me like a friend. He died in 2015. He is one of the unforgettable person in my life. I miss him very much.

T Aarani
Loyola Campus - Vavuniya.
I have so many memories about my hero. My hero was not a famous person in this society. He did many services to the society. Till now, some people speak good about him. Whenever I hear good things about him, I feel proud. His name is Thadchanamoorthy. He was a Medical Laboratory technician. He is an inspiration who helped me in improving my life. He was self-confident and hard working. He was very interested in studies. But his family was poor. When he was 10 years old, his parents planned to discontinue his studies. Then, he was sent to a shop to work. But he didn’t like to work there. So, he planned to escape from the shop. He went to his parents and said, ‘I like to study, because studies only can improve our lives’. Parents understood him and agreed with him.

He earned money for his education. He sold vegetables before going to school. They were very poor. He had only one dress to wear. But he never gave up on his studies. He studied Biology in the Advanced Level in English medium. There were times when he had only one meal a day. But he never gave up. He earned money by teaching his class mates. He studied only at night. Because he did different jobs to earn money for his family and for his education during the day. Later, he became a Medical Laboratory Technician. He is a great example for hardwork and dedication.

During the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka, he went to Colombo for the laboratory work. After that, he returned to his village, Karainagar in Jaffna. He worked in Jaffna base hospital. At that time, he taught many young doctors. He never thought about caste differences. He treated all with love and respect. After his retirement, he taught English to poor children. He continued to help poor people. He worshiped God every morning. He liked Mahatmaa Gandhi very much. He always talked about Gandhi and taught Gandhi’s golden words.

I like to call him ‘Mahathma’ because he is a great soul and a human being. He is a good example of how we can achieve success amidst poverty and other challenges. He is not in this world now but he is living in our hearts. He is a great man. I love him very much.

T Puvithira
Loyola Campus - Vavuniya

I would like to share about a hero who is not famous but a person who possesses real heroic qualities. Many people admire him. He is not a politician and he is not a famous person. He is J Kokulabavan. Unfortunately, he lost his father at the age of five. He was born on 20 July 1984, in Mulaitivu. His father’s name is Jayaraja. He worked as a postman. His mother’s name is Naguleswary. She was a house wife. He has two brothers and a sister. He is the youngest son in his family. He faced many financial difficulties. At that time luckily his grandfather was alive and his maternal uncles helped his family and their education.

After the death of his father, he shifted to his mother’s native place, Mankulam. He and his family lived in Mankulam for 9 years. He was educated in Mankulam. Due to the war they were unable to be in Mankulam. So they shifted to Vavuniya. Then he continued his studies at Vavuniya Tamil Madya Maha Vidyalayam. Having completed his advance level examination, he with his brother started an educational institute in Vavuniya. The name of the Institute was Express Academy. It was located in Vairavapuliyankulam. It was one of the famous institutions in Vavuniya. He handed over the institute to his brother and he left to Malaysia. In Malaysia, he faced many difficulties in finding a suitable job. After one and a half years he gave up his job and returned to Sri Lanka. Again he started another Educational Institute, Oxford academy at Vairavapuliyankulam. He adopted a new technique to develop the institution. Through this venture he helped many students. Students who are poor were admitted free of charge. One of the students from his institute entered the medical faculty. There after he left to London in 2013 with the purpose of earning more money. He got the visa and he started his own business in London. But he never gives up helping the University students. Besides, he helps others in many ways. He is kind, generous and helpful. He has a soft corner for those who suffer from poverty. He is a real inspiration for me.

S Jathursana
Loyola Campus - Vavuniya
The hero of my life is none other than my cousin brother. He is my aunt’s son. He is Christy, and he is thirty-five years old. He is a professor of biology at Jaffna campus. He has got married and he has got a cute little baby girl named Akshana. The wife of my brother is Tharmila. She is also a lecturer of biology in the same campus. Both of them make good life partners.

I like my brother because he is very intelligent. I think, he is really a scholar and I am proud of him. My brother is a great gift to us. He is the most influential person in my life. In his childhood, my aunt’s family was very poor. They faced many challenges in their life. But his father and mother supported him to study. His father worked for a foreign company. Later he resigned from his job and came back to Sri Lanka to stay with his family. He worked very hard. He always made his parents proud and happy. He never wasted his parent’s money. During his A-level he only went for one tuition class. The other subjects he used to study by himself. He was aware of his family’s financial situation.

During his A-level exams, he studied very hard and he got good results. He was selected to the University. After completing his degree, he was appointed as a lecturer in biology. He was conducting a research on some plants and he got selected for a doctoral program in London. He studied hard in London for three years and completed his PhD. He is a real hard worker and he is determined to achieve his goals in life. He is a real hero and a role model for me.

A Ann Nilukshi
Loyola Campus - Vavuniya

My hero is Sunhtarrankan. He is very intelligent. He always wears white color shirts. His eyes are small and he is very handsome. When I was studying at grade seven, he came to our school. He smiles with all of us. His walking style is very nice and he looks very attractively. The first time I saw him I thought he is arrogant. Because when I smiled for the first time, he didn’t give a smile back. He didn’t respond to my greetings. So I was sad. I didn’t expect that he would come to our classroom as a class teacher. First, he introduced himself. Then he asked about ourselves one by one. During that time, I was the monitor of my class.

Early in the morning he comes to school by bike. He attracts everyone by riding his bike like a cinema star. Whenever he walks through the corridor students remain silent. Our school students were very afraid of him than our principal. Because when we make mistakes, for example, if we didn’t do our homework, if we didn’t sweep our class rooms and if we didn’t follow our school rules he would punish us. When he takes the cane, his eyes become red.

When he teaches, he always says, ‘If you are not clear of any section of the subject, please inform me, I will teach you again and again until you are familiar with the subject’. He understood our feelings. If we are in trouble, he will solve our problems as a father. He works very hard. He never minds about time and he spend a lot of time in our school. He loves us very much.

He is a good guide and also, he taught us to succeed in life and not to become too proud of our achievements. He taught us the importance of accepting success or failure with openness. He often teaches students different sports techniques that can win games. He encourages everyone.

He is a good human being that I have ever met in my life. He had impressed me by teaching moral and ethical values. He taught me how to deal with the problems and over come them. He became a mentor and guide for many students. Of course he became my real hero and my role model.
In Focus

An Unexpected Journey

A long time ago a kingdom was situated in an island which was beautiful. Not only the island looked very beautiful but also the people of the kingdom were nice. They had a king who was lazy. He couldn’t identify his people’s needs. He always spent his valuable time with his friends who often misguided him. He drank liquor with them and danced with them.

One day a gang of thieves entered the island and changed their dresses as priests. They went straight to the king and said, ‘My Lord, we’re from heaven and we want to recover people’s souls back to god. God sent us for that work’. Every normal person could understand that they lied. But the stupid king failed to understand it.

So, he granted permission to the thieves to meet people. After that the gang of thieves went into the kingdom and met people. When they were speaking with the people they observed everyone’s homes carefully. They also explored all the exits from the kingdom.

Soon the people were fooled by the thieves. But one man, Daniel noticed their ulterior motives and doubted them. So, he went to the king and said, ‘My Lord, the priests are not true priests. I think they came here to rob us. I am sure that they are dangerous’. But the mindless king objected and ordered the guards to put Daniel to the prison. The guards arrested Daniel and threw him inside the prison cell.
One day the king organised a festival. All the people of the kingdom were busy in preparing to celebrate the festival. All wore different traditional dresses and gathered in one place. Hales who was the leader of the gang of thieves understood that this to be the right time to execute their plan. So, he called all of his partners and briefed them about his plan. Their plan was to steal all the wealth belonging to the kingdom. During their stay, they had noted the things that they could steal and how they could steal them. At the end, they fixed time bombs in a number of places of the kingdom that would explode in 30 minutes. The thieves wanted to escape through a ship.

The Chief Commando of the kingdom sensed that something was going wrong. By the time he realized what the thieves had done, the gang had moved far in the sea. He was not able to catch them. At that time, he remembered Daniel’s words and he started running towards the cell where Daniel was locked. When he arrived there he called Daniel and asked him for details about the thieves. Daniel told all what he overheard from the thieves. Then the Commando went to his armies and commanded them to arrange as many ships as possible. Then the Commando instructed the people to board the ship. But he didn’t disclose the information about the thieves and the bombs as the people might begin to panic. All people boarded the ships docked in the harbour. The king was left alone in the kingdom. As the ships moved away from the harbour of the kingdom, people could see the kingdom in flames.

G Pavithran
Loyola Campus – Mannar
Boredom: A Path to find Meaning

Boredom is a universal phenomenon that affects human beings irrespective of their age, occupation, upbringing and life style. It is something that everyone tries to avoid but finds unable to do so. Children, adults and aged experience feelings dominated by boredom. Most of us are concerned about ways and means of getting rid of this ‘sickly feeling’, as some call it. But how many of us have taken time to reflect on this human phenomenon rather that condemn it as an evil force, a degenerative occurrence. Does boredom necessarily means a condition that we need to overcome? Or have we misunderstood this whole rich experience of ‘being’, away from the busy ‘activity’.

Boredom, as we have comprehended at present, is a dominant feeling of being listless, tepid, and disoriented. People believe that it comes sudden, when we least expect. I have heard a friend of mine sharing the difficulty in coping up with being bored as it consumes most of our energy and leaves us frustrated, anxious and disappointed. Although a person desires to engage in some activity, he/she finds that such an involvement is not so interesting. People at home, school, office and even during the peak of activity complain of overwhelming feelings of boredom.

Notwithstanding the general perception of boredom, I feel it as an experience of being with oneself, alone and reflecting on the reality of ‘my life’ lived on this earth. It is not being lonely, which is a negative response to the demands of the world. However, the word ‘boredom’ does not sufficiently represent the complex human experience, which is a unique encounter of human beings. Are we afraid to be alone with ourselves? Have we become obsessed in occupying ourselves with some activity to avoid any kind of discomfort experienced in the moments we are intensely connected with ourselves? This kind of a mal-adaptation would be greatly supported by the advanced technology and its incessant activity.

I believe that feelings of boredom that have steadily risen over the past few decades can be significantly attributed to the advanced technology, a technology that transforms human life to a busy organism. Instant access to distant places of the world, expertise in multitasking, consumption of the high dose of information and instant stimulation through the worldwide network connection have sacrificed the capacity of human beings to concentrate, to think deep, to involve oneself with the core issues in life, and the quality of life lived. Instead of the depth, we have come to appreciate the breath in our life experience. The kind of activity that we are engaged in becomes a priority over the life that ought to be lived. This is why I believe that technology overly concentrates on human activity giving importance to being occupied all the time. That is why many of us are disinterested in recalling and evaluating our daily experiences at the end of each day.

Open mic

Here I do not wish to present advanced technology as a means of human degeneration. There are numerous occasions where life has been a better experience due to the advanced technology and its modern inventions. However, the technological boom has facilitated human beings to become beings who are overwhelmed by their activity or “doing”. Consequently we have forgotten the value of life. Life has become a race, where there is no time to stop and think. We have sacrificed a life to a mere set of activities.
Moreover, incessant human activity promoted by the addiction to modern technological equipments gives a euphoric feeling of being safe, happy and away from the problems of life. The common medicine for happiness and a life free from anxiety is believed to be a life lived in the peak of ceaseless activity. Many hold on to the belief that, it is being alone-being bored-with oneself that initiate many of the psychological, psychosomatic and dysfunctional ailments. The hyped up state of life has no memory of the daily dose of problems, difficulties in families, anxieties in the office, challenges to the future, and significantly barriers the core questions of life, ‘who am I?’, ‘why am I here?’, ‘What I ought to do?’ It is a pseudo-life that we have learnt to live with an imaginative happiness and satisfaction.

Boredom is a moment spent with ourselves alone. It is a moment in which we deeply examine about ourselves, life, future, relationships and commitments etc. This unique experience is called boredom because people who are glued to their work and task, who do not have time to think, reflect and challenge oneself is the need of the lopsided modernization process. Experience of being alone with oneself will lay foundation to a healthier society and towards better interpersonal relations. Boredom is a unique human experience that we need to reconcile with as we will never be able to run away. To run away from boredom is to run away from life itself. We might ‘do’ many things, but to face life alone requires courage and to see the truth of my life needs wisdom. Those who have resolved the problems of life and developed guts to be alone with themselves everyday for sometime will discover the occurrences of boredom as nothing distracting but aiding the inward search for meaning.

We have come to realise the futility of exaggerating human activity over the life to be lived. All human activity should aid life rather than forget the reality of life. When we speak of boredom as something to do away with, we most often mean escaping from the problems of life, challenges of the future and the reality of ourselves. Our attempts to escape cannot take us through the life journey as we are not truthful to the life we have received. Moreover, it is a deep-seated fear within ourselves and there are few who bravely face it. It is my conviction that we are called to live more than to do.

It is the human life with all its conditions that takes precedence over the things we do. Let’s learn to live, face the problems of life, to solve difficulties and plan for our future rather than run away from these realities of life.

Thiranjala Weerasinghe
Director
Loyola Campus - Mannar
Mr B Raveendren is our school Advanced Level mathematics teacher. He was born on 1 August 1973. He studied at Jaffna Hindu College. After his A/L studies, he taught some students to get an extra earning. He finished his degree at University of Jaffna. After his undergraduate studies, he joined Karainagar school as a mathematics teacher. He taught there for some years. After that he was transferred to Jaffna Hindu Ladies College.

In 2002, he started a private institute with three students. Those three students passed the exam and they got good results. So, next year many students came to him for class as his reputation had spread in the city. Every day he prepared himself better to teach the students. If some students asked any doubts, he used to help them to understand. He didn’t mind spending more time in clarifying the doubts of students. He was student oriented in his teaching. After few years he became popular. For that reason alone, he had to face lots of problems. Many education institutes are in Jaffna. They fixed their timetables against his timetable. So, some students didn’t come to his class, because he taught only combined mathematics. But other institutes offered all subjects.

But he didn’t lose his confidence. He continuously taught. In 2012, he broke all the barriers and became a recognized teacher in Jaffna. Many students registered to study in his institute. Now his small institute has grown. It’s name is VCM institute.

I like his confidence and his spirit of determination. Sometimes he told about his past life. Many students were amazed, listening to his life story. His life was marked with many challenges and difficulties. But he was ready to work hard to achieve his goals. I have studied under him for the last three years. I have learned many good qualities from him. For an example, I went to his home with my friends for his last birthday. He was shocked and at the same time he welcomed us. When I entered his house, I was shocked. Because it was very small. I didn’t expect it. There is one room for him and one kitchen and another room for his mother. It was a very old house. He earns more than eight lakhs per month. Then I came to know some details about his life. I came to know about another side to his life. He helped many blind people with the money he earned. I was so happy to have known such a person. These days we rarely meet people with such qualities. I am really proud to be his student.

K Vijayarupan
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