

THE BEAUTY THAT BRINGS OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Ramya Sugumar

Community Reporter

What do you think of when you think of your community? What do you think a community has to have to be a community? I think about people that have a similarity that bring them together. When I looked it up on dictionary.com it meant a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage. In Malvern there are many things that we share and things that occur that bring us together.

One of the things that bring the Malvern community together are the community gardens. There are a total of three gardens located at Littles Road Park, Neilson Park by Neilson and Finch, and on Blackwell Avenue for the residents that live in the building. Gardening normally occurs in the summer time.

The community gardens are in the process of developing a fourth site, which will be the largest of all. The proposed site will be at the corner of Morningview Trail and Old Finch Avenue, where Malvern meets Rouge Park. It is hoped that this urban farm will be moving ahead by Fall 2013 and celebrating its first full season by summer 2014.

The gardens were conceptualized in April 2009 by Alex Dow from Malvern Action for Neighbourhood Change, Auriel Haynes and a number of other community members. In summer 2010 the Blackwell Children's Garden was planted, in Fall 2011 they broke ground at Neilson Park and Littles Rd. Park and the first planting season for these gardens was the Summer of 2012. The gardens were promoted through community meetings and by handing out flyers. Now through word of mouth and promotion of the community gardens, more people are involved in the planting and gardening.

The main reason why the gardens were created was due to the fact that the community saw a social need to bring everyone together. As a community there needed to be a purpose of which the community could come together. They also needed to create a positive reputation. Dow and Jonathan Chan-Choong a Malvern ANC steering committee member, wanted to build the gardens in order to bring members from the community and neighbours together. They saw that a positive place was



necessary to build a positive community.

The Malvern community gardens is possible due to funding provided by the United Way and the City of Toronto. The City of Toronto has allowed the Malvern community to use the land. The gardens have taught members Malvern responsibility, gardening skills, how to take ownership, cooperate with one another, organization and many other positive skill sets. People in the community get to meet people that they may not see on a daily basis and possibly make new friends while they are at it. The community gardens is somewhere for everyone to connect. No one's opinion is put down and everyone's ideas are listened to. These gardens give more importance to public spaces.

These gardens give people within the community an opportunity to socialize and feel as if they are part of something greater. We are social beings, so we need to be around each other. This helps the community create a positive identity. Looking at the community gardens show how much we can accomplish when we all come together.

All volunteer community gardeners that take part in maintaining these spaces get to share what is grown. "Self-gratification, sustainability and they are accountable for their input" says Chan-Choong. There is also a portion that goes towards the food bank. Not only are these community members growing food for themselves they are giving back to the less fortunate. They are educating themselves on how their food is grown and how their hard

work pays off at the end. As a result they learn how to appreciate what they consume.

The community gardens welcome anyone from the community to help maintain and grow the items in the gardens. The youth have been involved in these amazing activities and are learning critical skills. Most importantly the people involved in these initiatives have something to be proud of.

The vision of the community gardens is to keep the gardens standing and to get more people involved. If you or anyone you know would like to participate in the community gardens just go down to one of the locations to discover how you can play a role.

In the summer time when it is warm outside it is nice to get out and take in some fresh air. Gardening is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and see what nature has to offer. It can also be a new hobby so come out and be part of the gardening team.

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consolidate its five current locations under one roof to meet the growing and changing needs of families in the area. The province of Ontario will also contribute \$800,000 towards construction of the new building. This investment is part of the government's Open Ontario Plan to stimulate economic growth to build strong communities in Ontario.

"The Resource Centre will be a landmark in the community and will be highly maintained so we do not anticipate any vandalism," the memo said. "We will be bringing programs and services which would be of value to the community."

OUTSTANDING STUDENT OF THE SEASON

Hilori Kaloti

Community Reporter

"If you think balancing high academics, and extracurricular is hard work and too much, it's not. Plan everything out before you act, because nothing is impossible." – Rachel Banaag

According to her teachers and peers, Rachel Banaag has left her mark on St. Columba Catholic School. As a young leader in her academic community, Banaag has developed a reputation for herself as a responsible, hardworking and ambitious young girl. Now in eighth grade at St. Columba, Banaag has taken on numerous roles within her school community which include Co-Prime Minister of Student Council, member of St. Columba's Me to We team, a leader on the Tap-In Team, one of the leaders of the Tech Team, and playing on the volleyball and basketball teams while managing her academic achievements.

Banaag says she decided to take a pro-active approach to her academic and extra-curricular activities. "I just thought I wanted to do all of this along with academics because I didn't want to just go to school but I wanted to do more...I also wanted to do something for the school instead of the school doing something for me."

Her eighth grade teacher Eva McCarthy Marshall echoed her contributions to the school by describing her as "an outstanding student who always gives 100 percent in everything that she does...She is motivated to reach the highest of standards not just for herself but for her school community also. Rachel is always ready with a smile and a kind word for students and teachers alike. The younger kids look up to her and the older kids love to be in her company. She is a constant positive influence in our classroom and will be truly missed when she moves on to high school."

Among Banaag's extra-curricular activities, she describes her role on the Tech Team as one of the ways she has been able to make a positive contribution back to her school community. "The Tech Team helps all of the classes and we impact all of the students. We do monthly presentations on what went on in the month and we present them to the school. It is important to the school because technology is used so much now and we need to teach everyone else how to use it before we leave."



»»» RACHEL BANAAG

As Co-Prime Minister of her Student Council, Banaag says she was inspired to take a leadership position by the former prime ministers of her school. "I wanted to be like them when I was young so I ran for the position." She describes the qualities of some of the former Prime-Ministers as friendly and active students who also managed high grades.

"Multicultural Day was one of the events we held that I felt had the biggest impact on the school. We first started it last year and this year, each class was assigned a country and they would do a presentation on that country...My classmates said they thought it was a good experience where they were able to learn about something they didn't know before," describes Banaag.

The Tap-In Team at St. Columba has also allowed Banaag to contribute to the physical health and wellness of her fellow students. "It started in grade five where we attended a health action team workshop and one of the initiatives was to have a daily physical activity routine for the school...We were inspired by another school that used dance as the daily activity so we thought we should

do it at St. Columba," said Banaag. Now as one of the leaders for the Tap-In Team, Banaag's responsibilities including choosing a song and creating a dance to teach to other intermediate leaders who will then teach it to the whole school as part of the daily fitness routine.

Banaag's contribution to her school has also been recognized by Toronto Catholic District School Board Superintendent of Strategic Planning, Student Learning and Achievement for area seven, says Barbara McMorrow.

"Rachel Banaag is a very impressive young woman who readily embodies the expectations that we have for our Catholic School Graduates. She is most certainly an effective communicator, a reflective and creative thinker, a collaborative contributor and a self-directed learner. This was clearly evident when Rachel presented to the School Learning and Improvement Team a virtual tour of St. Columba that captured the tremendous spirit and sense of caring that characterizes this vibrant Catholic learning community," she explains.

As Banaag prepares to graduate from elementary school in June, she will be attending Blessed Mother Teresa Secondary School in the fall of 2013. Combining her interest in computers and mathematics, Banaag hopes to pursue a career that will allow her to mesh her favorite subjects.

Banaag has many insights about what she wants to leave behind with her peers who may also want to be leaders in their school community. She says "I would tell them not to procrastinate, and to stand up for everything and just to take on the lead and don't stand in the crowd."

Please send your nominations to:

malvern.youth.roots@gmail.com

MALVERN ALUMNI: DR. NAVEED MOHAMMAD

Dr. Naveed Mohammad grew up hopping his backyard fence to get to school at Lester B. Pearson Collegiate Institute and today holds the position of Vice President of Medical Affairs at William Osler Health System and is an Emergency Physician.

A hardworking, determined and exemplary individual, Dr. Mohammad shares advice, encouragement, and entertaining stories of growing up in Malvern. Most recently, he was nominated for a Queens Jubilee Award, which is a commemorative medal served to honour significant contributions and achievements of Canadians. We proudly congratulate Dr. Mohammad for all of his accomplishments and for representing Malvern well.

Q: Tell us about the neighbourhood you grew up in.

A: I grew up in the heart of Malvern, in a semi detached single lottery home, on Unita Grove. This was a quiet street and still is with only 18 homes. Our backyard backed onto the fields of Dr. Marion Hilliard Public School and Lester B. Pearson Collegiate. We would hop our fence to get to school!

Q: What are some of the positive memories you have from your days at Pearson?

A: The new school, it opened in 1978 and we were the first grade nine class, and the first graduating class that spent all five years there. It was so fresh, so new, so different with it's modern design. We were all lost on day one! I have many memories of our tremendous talented basketball teams and football teams, our ethnic diversity, the great teachers. We did many unique things there, including the year we broke the Guinness Book of World Records for the longest street hockey game, played throughout one march break!

Q: How did you go about exploring your career options? Did you have support from within the community?

A: I had a tremendous amount of support from my biology teacher (Mr. Sheppard), my family doctor (The late Dr. M. Ingber), and our guidance counselors at school. My family was always there for me, helping me find time to just study, while they did everything else for me.

Q: Tell us about your work today.

A: Currently I am Vice President of Medical Affairs at William Osler Health System, a 3 hospital corporation. I am an Emergency Physician as a clinician and was the Corporate Chief of Emergency Medicine at William Osler for the last 7 years. I am also the Local Health Integration Network Lead in Emergency Medicine for the Central West LHIN. I am a partner in a business called the Urgent Care Centres (www.urgentcarecentre.ca), which is a group of 5 Urgent Care Centres in the northwest part of the GTA.



»»» DR. NAVEED MOHAMMAD

Q: What advice do you have for students interested in pursuing a career in medicine?

A: Don't give up, work hard, as hard as you can, devote almost ALL of your time to school and do your best to attain the best marks you possibly can. There will always be time to play and enjoy yourself. When I was in school, before I got into medical school, I only took Friday nights off to play hockey, and Saturday nights to watch hockey, all other times I slept, ate, or studied. This was especially true in grade 13 and my 3 years in University! Lastly don't give up on Canadian Medical Schools, apply here, and only if you don't get in, then apply abroad!

Q: What is the greatest, challenge or setback you faced along your path to the success story you have created today?

A: Initially there was a significant challenge to get into medical school for minorities in Canada. I attained the highest standing in Life Sciences at U of T Scarborough Campus in 1983, I graduated Magna Cum Laude, and was not able to attain a medical school position at University of Toronto which had the most spots in Canada (250) after applying 2 years in a row. I was selected at the University of Ottawa, which only had 78 spots. That still bothers me, I thoroughly enjoyed Ottawa and am forever grateful for the opportunity, but to this day I suspect my ethnic origin and religion played a part at University of Toronto. I can't be too upset, it all turned out ok in the end.

Q: You wrote a letter to the Toronto Star about their negative coverage of Malvern 7 years ago. Tell us about what inspired you to do so and what you wrote.

A: I felt the Toronto Star unfairly portrayed Malvern as a place where only a few graduate from high school. It was upsetting. I wrote to them to explain my frustration, and listed just the people I knew who had gone onto professional schools, becoming doctors, dentists, pharmacists, engineers, computer scientists, movie and TV stars, professional football players who were Grey Cup Winners, and even one who became VP of Wendy's Tim Hortons and now owns all of the McDonalds in one suburb of Edmonton, these were all kids from Pearson, making their mark on the world! All from those Lottery homes!

Q: Do you feel that the media coverage of Malvern has changed?

A: Slightly, there is more accountability now, but I still find they write whatever they want, then correct it or back track it the next day and by that time it's too late!

Q: In one word, how would you describe Malvern?

A: Home!

Please send your nominations for the Malvern Alumni section to malvern.youth.roots@gmail.com

WHY MUST CHILDREN LIVE IN POVERTY?

Written by:

Krystal Sukhu one of the winners of the MY ROOTS Annual Writing Competition (High school category)

Today's society, there are many social justice issues that occur worldwide. However, the one issue that is important to me is child poverty. For those who are unaware; child poverty is when children who come from poor families or have been orphaned are being raised with limited or in some cases no resources to survive. Child poverty is definitely one of the most important social justice issues.

Children living in poverty are unable to be treated like a normal child. Some children, who are 5 or 6 years of age, are forced to grow up and take care of themselves and sometimes other family members. These children are deprived of their childhood and have no choice but to survive with little or no resources. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, also known as UNICEF, they define child poverty as such; children living in poverty are those who experience deprivation of the material, spiritual, and emotional resources needed to survive, develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society. Children who are living in poverty are not granted full education in order to complete their degree or diploma. They also suffer from lack of healthcare and nutrition. These children have no place to call home and are not given a fair chance in life. Child poverty is actually very sad and upsetting because children are suffering and dying each and every day.

Every child dreams of growing up and becoming something or someone in life. However, without the educational background, many people are not easily employed. Children who live in poverty have a low chance of finding a job without their educational diploma or degree. These children do not have a career goal in which they can achieve; which will also mean that they will be unable to have any finances. Children who are not educated sometimes get sold to work as slaves. 200,000 child slaves are sold every year in Africa. There are an estimated 8,000 girl-slaves in West Africa alone (sources: BBC 5 October, 2001 & Anti-Slavery Society). Only 57% of African children are enrolled in primary education, and one in three of those do not complete school (source: World Bank/UNICEF). Education is very

important for a person. It sets you up for the future and teaches you different skills in which you could use in your life daily.

Health care is very important to everyone; however, some people are unable to seek help because they have no money. Children especially, have a high chance of getting various types of diseases because their body is not immune or have not been vaccinated. 64% of children in Sub-Saharan Africa do not have adequate sanitation (source: UNICEF). Nearly 2 million children under 14 years old are HIV positive (source: UNICEF) and between 12 and 14 million African children have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS (source: World Bank/UNICEF). These children are aware of the need of health care but, they cannot afford it or sometimes, the health care is not even provided in the place they are living at.

Nutrients are a substance that provide nourishment, essentials for growth and maintenance of life. Children in Africa who live in poverty lack a good, nutritional diet. 43% of children in Sub-Saharan Africa do not have safe, accessible drinking water (source: UNICEF). These children do not have proper food to eat which will lead to starvation. The sickness and lack of food will end up killing the children. To survive, some have to live off of whatever they can find; which could be wild berries, unclean water, etc.

Child poverty means that these children do not have a proper place to call home. Some children go from place to place until they find something to shelter themselves in like a cardboard box. They strive to find the basic necessities needed to survive in life such as food, clothing, shelter, water, etc. The hardest part for a lot of these children who are living in Africa in poverty do not have any family members to help them out. They live alone by themselves at the tender age of 6 or less and have to make a living in order to survive. If these children do have family members, they are either in severe conditions and are unable to look after the children.

The children who live in poverty are not given a fair chance in life. They have to survive for themselves and are not being treated with respect. About 120,000 African children are participating

in armed conflicts. Some are as young as 7 years old (source: Africa Children's Charter). These children do not have a childhood because they are forced to work and serve only to help others.

If children are the future generation, why are they being treated with no respect? They need support and care to survive. Child poverty is something that should be decreasing and paid more attention to. A lot of children are suffering worldwide. However, the increase of child poverty is more focused in Africa. These children are deprived of having a childhood because they are not given a chance to get their education, they lack good healthcare and nutrition, they have no place to call home, and they are not given a fair chance in life.

I would support this cause by raising awareness for the children who have wanted to say something but are unable to. Joining forces with foundations such as "Free the Children," is a great way to make a difference in someone else's life. Some children are slowly dying and being put to work at such a young age. It really hurts to see children starve and die from serious sicknesses. We could help be the change for child poverty. With this being said, I hope that slowly but surely we can decrease child poverty worldwide.

»»» ANOTHER WINNER IS FEATURED ON PG.6

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUBMISSIONS

MY ROOTS would like to thank everyone who submitted an essay or article to the MY ROOTS Annual Writing Competition. We had a number of external judges who read through all of the submissions and decided on the final two winners: Krystal Sukhu (17) and Sanjana Diwanji (10).

A Special thank you to **Professor Ellen Zweibel** who offered writers coaching to both the winners!



MY ROOTS presents...

FREE Media Workshop at Malvern Family Resource Centre
on Saturday, April 27th, 2013 from
11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Are you between the ages of 12- 19?

Then mark your calendars!

Join us for an informative, engaging, and fun day at MFRC
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The day will include a free lunch and certificate of participation. Pre-registration is encouraged or get there early to avoid missing out.

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Meet Denise Balkissoon, a
freelance journalist who has
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and International magazines
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the Toronto Star. Join her
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101"

Learn about the
art of production
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For more information or registration
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MY ROOTS

Malvern Youth- Recognizing Our Opportunities To Succeed

MALVERN FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE BREAKS GROUND ON NEW BUILDING

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MY ROOTS MEDIA WORKSHOP ON APRIL 27TH

"I have worked with the Ontario government for over 2 years to secure the 1.3 acres of land for Malvern Family Resource Centre's new location. " - MPP Bas Balkissoon



MY ROOTS EXECUTIVE



LAXMI PARTHASARATHY
Director/ Co-founder
malvern.youth.roots@gmail.com



HILORI KALOTI
Managing Editor/ Co-founder
malvern.youth.roots@gmail.com



DEVIN PERSAUD
Sponsorship Director/ Co-founder
malvern.youth.roots@gmail.com



NATASHA RAJARATNAM
Public Relations/ Co-founder

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Spring! It's that lovely time of year again and we have plenty to look forward to. As we've shared on our cover the Malvern Family Resource Centre will be raising funds to build a new Centre to house all of the incredible programs they have been offering our community for over 30 years. There were some resident concerns surrounding this announcement that we hope this article will address.

This winter MY ROOTS launched our 2nd annual writing competition and would like to thank everyone who took part. Congratulations to our two winners, we hope you enjoy reading their work. As always pay close attention to our Outstanding Student of the

Season and our Malvern Alumni sections, both individuals are wonderful ambassadors for what Malvern has to offer.

Finally, we invite all of you to our MY ROOTS media workshop, which will be hosted at the Malvern Family Resource Centre on April 27th. I would highly recommend this free workshop on Saturday afternoon to help develop your writing skills, learn more about the field of journalism, and meet friends of MY ROOTS currently in the media industry. All the details can be found on page 8 or on our website. Don't miss out!

Happy reading,

Laxmi Parthasarathy

MFRC RECEIVES LAND FOR NEW BUILDING

Camile Singh
Community Submission

February 13, 2013 the shovel made a clunk and the flashes went off to capture a new chapter in Malvern Family Resource Centre's (MFRC) history. It was a bright winter's day and many gathered to support MPP Bas Balkissoon, Councilor Raymond Cho, and MFRC's Executive Director, Girmalla Persaud, in breaking ground on the new community centre at the southwest corner of Sewells and Littles roads.

MFRC has been operating within the Malvern community since 1983. They provide an array of diverse programs to the community, but in rented locations. The new two-storey building will provide room for the expanding needs of the community: a gym, a computer lab, multi-purpose rooms and seniors centre.

In a statement to the community, MPP Balkissoon stated:

"I am very pleased to be part of this exciting time with Malvern Family Resource Centre who has been providing excellent programs and services to the residents of Malvern for over 30 years. I have worked with the Ontario government for over 2 years to secure the 1.3 acres of land for Malvern Family Resource Centre's new location. I am thrilled to be involved in the ground breaking ceremony, and I look forward to the grand opening of the new facilities.

MFRC has managed to gain the approval of city council for the project,

despite the fact that many of the nearby residents said the building, immediately east of St. Bede Catholic School and facing streets of single family homes, would be in the wrong place. Local residents who attended the groundbreaking appeared to be more welcoming to the idea.

"I think a lot of people obviously have a natural aversion to change. They have the "not- in -my -back -yard" sentiment," said Darin Singh, a local resident. "the new centre will bring a lot of benefits to the youth of the community, and the resources it will provide will be great".

MFRC is still fundraising for the new building and will strive to continue to serve the community in the manner it has been for the last 30 years. It presently consists of seven centres which include; the Early Years Centre, Middle Years Centre, Youth Centre, Seniors Centre, Women's Place, Family Centre and ANC (Resident Engagement).

MFRC now offers programs in 20 locations and has expanded services into new areas, and its records show it serves 198 families "from the immediate area" around the proposed site. In a memo to the community the MFRC has also said that "there will be no issues" with traffic flow, parking, TTC or garbage when the building is completed.

The new building will allow Malvern Family Resource Centre to

»»» CONTINUED ON PG 6

TOO MUCH LITTER

Written by:

Sanjana Diwanji one of the winners of the MY ROOTS Annual Writing Competition (elementary category)

I think that there is too much litter in our community and that if someone doesn't stop this, the entire planet Earth will be full of litter. The Earth relies on us and its surroundings, but who can say that some people don't litter once in a while?

Every little bit matters. Every little bit makes a difference to help the earth, the plants, the animals and the air. Each and every piece of litter that is thrown carelessly on the ground, eventually gets stepped on, squished and kicked until it's completely worn out. Just imagine a small animal such as a squirrel comes by looking for food and it sees the piece of litter thinking it to be food. Then later, it eats that litter and chokes on it! That could happen to any other animal that comes across some litter because most litter like candy wrappers and soda bottles have a scent of sugar that attracts small animals.

Litter can affect animals and humans, too. When one person makes a mistake

by not throwing their trash in the proper place, another person gets hurt when going near that litter. For example, a guy throws an empty glass bottle on the road. Then a car comes by and runs over the glass bottle and gets a flat tire because that guy did not throw away his bottle in the right place. There's worse to come in the future if we don't stop people from littering the roads, the classrooms, the beach and their own home!

Litter affects people everywhere and anytime. Litter also is preventing animals from finding good homes and this leads to the extinction, hunger and loneliness of all animals.

That's why we have to stop everyone we know from littering before the entire earth is full of litter. We can all do something to help the environment. Each and every bit makes a difference and I have ideas to solve this problem.

To help, we can just do regular things like throw your friends' trash into

the trash bin even if it's not your own. Then you can tell him/her to throw their trash into the trash bin and not to litter. See! Every bit makes a difference and helps the environment.

Another way to help is by starting a cleanup team club to help pick up the bits of trash on the ground. You could start a cleanup club at your school, too. Or, you could just invite your friends over to create a cleanup team at your own house. You could clean up the park or your own garden. That way, you can have fun enjoying the fresh air outside and when you're done cleaning up, you can enjoy your clean grass. Other things can be done to. You can start a campaign to prevent littering across the country. Then you could get more people to pay attention to some of the NO LITTERING signs and save the planet. There are many other things you could do to make this planet LITTER-FREE but you can first start with small steps and then work your way up to make Earth a great place.



THANK YOU...



United Way
Member Agency



Action for Neighbourhood Change

BUILDING STRONG NEIGHBOURHOODS TOGETHER

Malvern