



UMT Spotlight

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Our Journey;

- Menik Farm (May-Sept '09)
- Jaffna & Kayts (April '10)
- Kayts (June '10)
- Vidutaltivu & Mannar (Sept '10)
- UC 1 - Colombo (Dec '10)
- UC 2 - Mullaithivu (Jun '11)
- Ray of Hope - Colombo (Oct '11)
- UC 3 - Mannar (Dec '11)
- UC 4 - Tharanikkulam (Jun '12)
- Zoom In 1 - Colombo (Sept '12)
- UC 5 - Kandy (Oct '12)
- Zoom In 2 - Colombo (Dec '12)
- Zoom In 3 - Mullaithivu (April '13)
- Zoom In 4 - Kilinochchi (April '13)
- Ray of Hope 2 - Colombo (Sept '13)
- Power ONE Hundred (Sept '13)
- UC 6 - Kilinochchi (Oct '13)

Unity Mission Trust

Highlights: Ray of Hope 2 & National Unity & Integration Awards



Unity & Integration Award Winners with Founder of UMT, Chief Guest & Chairman of UMT

On the 13th of September 2013, Unity Mission Trust presented a fusion of culture and talent as it brought together one hundred young leaders representing different regions of Sri Lanka at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute in Colombo. The occasion was graced with the presence of the First Lady of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Shiranthi Wickremasinghe Rajapakse, who attended the event as the Chief Guest. The evening unfolded with a beautiful procession of all one hundred leaders who were present dressed in their traditional attire for the occasion, each of them carried in their hands a white lotus, . . .

Contd on page 3

The Experience of a lifetime: Unity Camp 6

In October 2013 from the 17th to the 20th I joined the crew that piled into 3 buses, 2 vans – as head of the Media and Publicity Team. 500 student leaders aged 15-20, and 40 teachers from 70 schools all the way from Jaffna to Matara gathered at Kilinochchi Central College (KCC) for Unity Camp 6. What I am going to do is try to articulate the feelings that stir the depths of your soul when you realize that 4 days can change lives, bring people together, that there is hope.

Being a part of the team that undertakes projects of such a scale is another experience in itself. . .

Contd on page 4

Power ONE Hundred

Initiated in August 2013, UMT's Power ONE Hundred program gathered one hundred leaders specially selected from the Regions to participate in an overnight programme captioned as 'stepping out into the world'. The schedule, as always is the case, was intense and involved a lot of interaction between guest speakers and students with the intention of creating a closer strung network of Regional leaders who would form the nuclear basis for UMT's . . .

Contd on page 3



Group discussions in session

Incoming Trustee



Incoming Trustee - Mrs Nirmali Wickremasinghe

Mrs. Nirmali Wickremasinghe is no stranger to working with the youth in our country having worked at a number of educational institutes both in the North and in Colombo, and even abroad. Her experiences

of thirty nine years started at the tender age of twenty two when she got her first teaching assignment at the Sinhala Maha Vidyalaya in Trincomalee straight out of university. Having taught at a number of schools in both Sri Lanka and in the Republic of Seychelles Mrs. Wickremasinghe moved in to Bishops college as its Vice Principal and took up her most recent assignment as the Principal of C.M.S. Ladies' College, Colombo. Following the conclusion of her time at Ladies' Mrs. Wickremasinghe joined the Board of UMT as its most recent Trustee, thereby adding a new and important dimension to the Trust. She is a strong believer in healing and reconciliation amongst the youth of Sri Lanka . . .

Contd on pg 8

Unity Camp 6 contd...



Contd from page 1

Logistics for nearly 600 people to sleep, eat, and carry out the camp itself in Killinochchi took up much of the teams free time for months. This is an entirely volunteer run organization – not one of us who stayed up, sometimes past midnight organizing, packing, planning, doing files, raising funds - are paid. It's done for a greater reason upon which no value can be placed.



Then comes the day when at 5am we pile into buses and drive to Killinochchi with stops along the way to pick up people, stretch our legs and finally you arrive. No resting – over the next few days team members run non-stop working tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of the numerous activities, challenges and mountains of work that comes with such a project. But through it all the most amazing experience is watching the students slowly form bonds with one another. They turn from the nervous, uncomfortable faced girls and boys that sit - near-silent, awkwardly smiling with one another, to hugging and crying on the fourth day when they are leaving. One has to see this with their own eyes to realize that four days can break barriers, that the youth has a lack of inhibition when it comes to embracing new opportunities and really are the hope of our nation.



The talent that comes from them blows you away. They sing, dance, act, create, speak, excel athletically, - all with just a few hours at most to prepare. Trophies are awarded to the most outstanding group leaders, campers, and based on a points system - a winning group emerges.

But nothing touches your heart like the very end of camp. Students who speak about their experiences at the open forum begin to cry, overcome by emotion. They

hug their new found friends and have to be nearly forced to board the buses. You realize that human connections are beyond language, race, religion, socio-economic backgrounds, gender, and any of these limitations we place upon ourselves. You watch the candle ceremony and can't hold back your tears when you see a sea of light shining back. This light is carried by remarkable young men and women who sing our national anthem with pride and then chant in one voice "Sri Lanka" repeatedly.

You realize that the future of our country has hope, the dream of one people is tangibly close to a reality. You realize that you are a part of a much bigger picture – but what you can do in your small capacity can make real change.

Sometimes we need to step out of our little bubbles and start releasing the potential we harbor. We can do so much more than just talk, and more than can – we need to. The change we leave behind is the real legacy we leave. Not how popular you were, how much money you made, how big your CV and accomplishments were – but by how many lives you touched and transformed.

~Sharanya Sekaram



Trustee Reyaz Mihular leading the workshop



The Unity Candle Lighting Ceremony



The Group Leaders and the Seniors members of UMT

Power ONE Hundred contd...

Contd from page 1 . . .

Nationwide operations. The intention of holding such an event, which is easily associated with UMT's Zoom In programs, is that POH has school graduates as the participants. Fresh and sparkly, straight out of school makes working with these youngsters a vibrant experience. The passion and commitment to be better involved at a grass root level with the integration work of the UMT makes POH the gateway towards such an opportunity.

By way of the POH program, UMT is able to create a vast and integrated network of regional leaders that keep UMT student members within each district strung together into one communicative grid that is directly linked to the heart of UMT – the Executive, in Colombo.

The POH students are then, over a period of time and performance elevated to the Regional Youth Council and later selected onto the National Youth Leadership Council, both of which are to be implemented formally in 2014.

From mental grooming, to social etiquette, on to inspirational and motivational talks and seminars, UMT provides power to the hundred, equipping the youth and future of Mother Lanka with the mind set to persevere and attain success; keeping in mind of course that unity, healing, reconciliation and integration must be attained in the process, making our future as a country more successful!

~ Sasha Pinto Jayawardena



The Guest Speakers at POH who lived up and enriched the day's programme



Jehan Jayasuriya - on the development of leadership skills, used illustrations from sports, drawing on his experience as a Former Sri Lanka Cricket Captain Under 19 and as a boxer.



Rozaine Cooray - on the importance of dedicated commitment to a cause



Nilakshi Gunathileke - on the importance of volunteerism



"I found this programme to be very useful. It has given me a fresh, new perspective on making important life decisions, that involve my future career and also my role in contributing towards a better Sri Lanka"

Kuveeniya Kumarasuriya

"The speakers touched on the essence of becoming a leader and how to equip oneself when stepping out into the real world. This helped us in decision making and gave us direction; in simple terms - not to merely exist but to be"

Elon Newton



"Being a longstanding member of UMT has taught me many important lessons in life; of unity, friendship and leadership. I am thrilled to be a part of the first ever Power One Hundred; it has helped enhance my experiences and taught me how to succeed in life after school"

Eric Evans

Ray of Hope 2 contd...

Contd from pg 1 . . . symbolizing the beauty that can even rise out of mud. What followed were two beautiful hours that unveiled to everyone present the rich culture and the wonderful untapped talent in our country. The audience sat mesmerized by the impressive performances that were brought to life by the Meikhandan College Jaffna, dance troupe who came to Colombo specially to open the nights performances with a wonderful display of music dance and the UMT all male choir who sang a beautiful cover version of A.R Rahman's Vellai Pookkal, a song he had composed specially for Peace in Sri Lanka and the amazing talent of one of youngest members, Kuveniya Kumarasuriya of Mullaithivu who sang an original composition that she had dedicated to her motherland. This was followed by the wonderful dance and drum exhibitions by the Hillwood College Dance Troupe and the S. Thomas' College Hewisi Band respectively. The highlight of the night was the inaugural Unity and Integration National awards that were presented to the winners by Mrs. Rajapakse. The Unity and Integration National awards, is being introduced to Sri Lanka by the Unity Mission Trust in order to recognize and encourage the youth of our Nation to make their contribution to foster Unity and Integration, thereby help build a New Sri Lanka!

~ Bhagya Wickramage



Reaching Further in Unity: Davidson College Conference

Unity Mission Trust is well known for our efforts to unite, heal and integrate within our Sri Lankan communities, especially among the youth. Last November a whole new shade of events took place at the hotel Ramada, which was the hosting of 22 visiting students from Davidson College along with their Programme Director Dr. Kenneth Menkhaus from the 4th to 6th for a conference on "Unity, Integration and Harmony Building in Sri Lanka". Davidson College which was established in 1837 is situated in North Carolina in the United States of America and is one of the top 10 liberal Arts College's in USA. "Semester in India" is an annual programme where they visit India as part of their curriculum and for the first time the Institution decided to extend the programme by visiting Sri Lanka for 10 days.

The 3 days of the Conference was filled with informative lectures by eminent speakers included Major General Udaya Perera – Commander Security Forces, Killinochchi, Dr. Safras – Psychosocial Advisor at Office of the Reconciliation Advisor to the President, Professor Rohan Gunaratne – Head of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research of Singapore, Shyamala Pinto-Jayawardena – Principal of Shyamala School of Art and Founder Trustee of Unity Mission Trust, Mr. Nandana Wijesinghe – Social Affairs Director to the President, Professor Rajiva Wijesinghe – Member of Parliament and Presidential Advisor on Reconciliation and Mr. Bertal Pinto-Jayawardena – Founder Trustee and Co-ordinator of Unity Mission Trust. The students were also given the opportunity to interact and exchange ideas with some youth of UMT and they really enjoyed getting to know each other, understanding the different cultures and embracing the similarities. Both parties shared unforgettable memories in their lives and established new friendships to carry on for tomorrow.

This event proved as stepping stones to create international relations for the young UMT leaders that may also pave the path to endless opportunities in the future. Mr. Rukshan Perera, the Music Director of UMT, wound up the programme with a mixture of English notes and "Baila", which the visiting students enjoyed really well and everyone had a good time. Once the programme at Colombo came to a close on the 6th, the students proceeded to begin their tour in the afternoon to visit major historical and cultural sites of our country. Young leaders of UMT from Jaffna welcomed the students when they travelled north and a brief seminar and a site seeing tour of all the places of cultural and scenic interest in the peninsular were arranged for the Davidson college students by them.

After having a wonderful experience of Sri Lanka the team concluded their visit on the 13th of November. It was a first time visit to the island for many of them and they enjoyed the culture and people very much. It was a great honour for the Unity Mission Trust to host the team from Davidson College and give them an unforgettable experience of our beloved nation, to which they eagerly wait to return again in the future.

~ Anfal Nilar & Firnaz Najimudeen



Students and Professors from Davidson College with Team UMT

Regional Update: Jaffna

It gives me great pleasure to summarize the events that followed the visit of students from Davidson College to Jaffna. On the 11th of November 2013 we received the students along with their accompanying professors at Tilko City Hotel. Plans and programmes were discussed with Prof. Henze, and everyone turned in for an early start the next day. The following morning we toured the Jaffna Fort, our precious heritage site, which they thoroughly relished. We explored the colourful streets of Jaffna town, visiting popular shops and picking out merchandise unique to Jaffna. Following a scrumptious lunch back at Tilko, was the conference which continued into the evening.

Amongst the many topics discussed education and future projects of UMT were the highlights. Views were exchanged on the promotion of education for children from financially stricken backgrounds. The possibility of starting teacher training workshops was discussed in order to introduce fresh perspectives to improved teacher-student interactions for a more conducive learning environment. The biggest restraint for post A/L students is the lack of awareness of the various opportunities available to them with regards to pursuing tertiary education. As a result, higher education workshops and individual counseling sessions were considered in efforts to counter this issue. Scholarships schemes for deserving students

were also included in the discussion.

With regards to upcoming projects by UMT, the importance of increased foreign media support was deliberated in order to spread awareness and possible financial support. The possibility of hosting a local fundraiser under the guidance of Davidson College professors was discussed so as to kick start funding for a few seminars targeted at youth pursuing higher studies and job opportunities.

Following the conference we visited Manipay Hindu College, Point Pedro Methodist College and a retired Australian lecturer currently residing in Jaffna. After these immeasurably valuable visits we spent some time unwinding with a game of soccer and ice cream from the well frequented Rio parlour. After a final tour around Jaffna we returned to the hotel and bid farewell to our new friends

with the hopes of seeing them again in the near future.

~ Sajisangar Karunanithy



Davidson College group in Jaffna

Achievements & Milestones

The following UMT members have reached for the stars, in various fields be it, academia, aesthetics or on sports field;

We are very proud of and congratulate our Best Results achievers from UMT at the last G.C.E. Advanced Level Examination;



Ann Roche,
Marawila



Leo Pressley
Mannar



Shehani Rajendra,
Colombo



Pamudi Maheshika,
Marawila



Sasha Pinto
Jayawardena,
Colombo



Yasodha Selvaraja, a long standing member of UMT from Vishwamadu, gained entrance to the University of Batticaloa to pursue higher studies.

Sinthuja Vijayarajah entered the University of Uvawellassa, Badulla for her tertiary education.



Saambavi Sivaji, from Uduvil Girls' School, Jaffna, was the Winner of the American Center 'Write for Reconciliation' Contest in 2013. We are very proud of her achievement.

Hiruni Weerasekere has completed her Cadet training, and has been commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Sri Lanka Army, the 1st from UMT.



Krithiha Rathneswaran of Girls' High School Kandy, won one of two awards for being an Outstanding Unity Camper at Unity Camp 6, held in Kilinochchi, in October 2013.



Rasinka Jayasinghe of S. Joseph's Girls' School Kegalle, and Rushdi Hannan of S. Anthony's College Katugasthota, won awards for the Best Group Leaders at Unity Camp 6.



Sushmitha Ramesh of S. Therese's Girls' College, and Sundaralingam Selvakumar of Kilinochchi Central College were rewarded with special Unity Awards for contributing to the success of Unity Camp 6 at Kilinochchi. These awards were donated by Major General Udaya Perera, Security Forces Commander, Kilinochchi to be presented by UMT to two selected campers.

The following UMT members performed well at the SAARC Junior National Athletics Championships held in Ranchi, India in November 2013;



Shivanthi Ratnayake who was re-appointed National Womens' Team Captain won Gold in the 400m sprint and another Gold in the 4x400m team relay, which she anchored to victory.

Harshini Wathsala, from Sumana Balika Vidyalaya, won Gold in the 4x400m team relay.



Malin Udayakumara from Prince's College, Ratnapura (Recently the most outstanding camper at Unity Camp 6, Kilinochchi!) won the Silver medal in the 110m Hurdles and the Bronze in the Long Jump event. In addition he was also one of two winners of the Outstanding Unity Camper Awards at Unity Camp 6.

Samith Lakmal, also from Prince's College, Ratnapura won a Gold in the 4x400 team relay and 2 Bronze medals in the 100m and 200m sprint events.



A Camper's Perspective

To say that my experience at camp was like falling into the deep end of the pool and learning how to swim wouldn't quite cover it. It was a first on so many levels – first time at ANY kind of camp, first time in Killinochchi (or any other region of the North for that matter) and to top it all off ; My first time getting involved in anything related to UMT. So to say I was unprepared would be an understatement. I had no idea what was heading my way. Since it was my first time, I clung tenaciously to my friends for dear life as I had no idea what was going on – until we were separated into groups and I was summoned and invited to be a group leader. I then walked up to where my group was, a good 20 minutes later than when they got there, completely flustered and scared, only to be laughed at because I seemed so clueless and I was supposed to lead a group of people, most of whom were older than me! However I managed to turn it around, mostly because our boy group leaders a pillar of strength despite our language barrier, which caused most everything to be lost in translation!

Day two turned out to be better than day one as the sports involved little talking and the competitive spirit of my multi talented group members won through and all differ-

ences were put aside. However it was day three that was the most daunting, as we needed to make a drama, group song, logo etc. adding bits of all three languages into them. This time our group supervisor came to the rescue and we were able to follow through with things despite all the odds. Day four saw us all very sad to leave and to my delight we came overall second in the group standings which was amazing. The best part was when one of the boys who teased me mercilessly on day one came up to me and said “you a good group leader”. I was too thrilled for words. Everyone felt sad to leave but I know I speak for everyone when I say that we all found strengths we never thought we had and came together almost miraculously. All in all it was the experience of a lifetime.



Kaveesha Fernando
Ladies' College, Colombo

New Beginnings

The country is at a cross roads, and time has arrived for us to write a new chapter in the history books, a chance for a new and better beginning. It is our duty to make use of this opportunity. Today, as the future leaders of our country we hold the future of our Nation in our hands. I have been fortunate to feel the warmth and see the light that is spread by the flame that is this opportunity. You may wonder what it is that I am attempting to convey. I am trying to tell you about the wonderful experience that is Unity Mission Trust; Unity Camp 6 which was held in Killinochchi in October of 2013.

I was a first timer, not knowing what to expect; afraid and feeling lost, my feelings were of anxiety and excitement all bundled together. On the first day of the four day camp I was appointed the leader of our group and as afraid as I was this new responsibility encouraged me to understand and work with a group of new friends whom I have never met before. The camp ran under the theme powering your dreams and that is exactly what the UMT team did, I was amazed at the way they used examples both that were alive as well as objects. The story of the eagle mesmerized me, a creature with such elegance so much courage, determination and clear direction is an inspiration for, an example on how to follow our dreams.

Never having spoken a word of Tamil, nor understood a letter, in just four days we learnt , we took the first steps in building not only friendships amongst ourselves, but a

bridge of love and understanding between the North and the South. We have laid the foundation and it is with great pride that I claim that it is the Unity Camp that helped us take this step in the right direction.

All the activities at camp helped us to come together, compelled us to work together, it made us look beyond our differences, beyond our barriers of language in order to understand each other at a much deeper level. Be it sports, drama, the speech contests, the lectures, arts and crafts, and the thoroughly enjoyable music sessions at each step UMT made us realize more of our similarities and forget our differences.

On the final day we had a candle ceremony. My feelings cannot be explained in words, but this was the event that left the biggest impact on me. For four days we lived, laughed, worked, and competed as one family of brothers and sisters, as friends beyond all barriers. It is an experience that has changed my life and an experience I am positive I will never forget. I wish UMT all the strength and courage needed to continue this wonderful work, and to become the driving force behind this wonderful change in the future leaders of our country.

Ashan Sameera
& Dishan Chamika
St. Thomas' College,
Matara

Unity Camp

It gives me immense pleasure to pen this article as a proud participant of Unity Camp. My first experience as a participant on Unity Camp was in December 2010. Thirty students from Uduvil Girls' College went for a three day unity camp in Colombo organized by the Unity Mission. It was an exciting experience for all the girls and teachers who accompanied us. As soon as we reached Colombo we were welcomed by a team from Unity Mission and were taken to Bishop's College. After the breakfast we were taken to Wesley College where we were briefed on the programme and introduced to participants from all over Sri Lanka.

On the first day the campers were taken on a tour of the city of Colombo. On the second day we were divided into groups and each group was assigned a specific task such as poster making and jewellery making to name a few. Our team was tasked with jewellery making and we made lovely chains and bracelets using beads and stones provided by the Unity Mission. After we finished, all of our hand made products were exhibited beautifully. That evening we were taken to Ladies' College, Colombo, where each school performed a short programme. We sang Michael Jackson's famous song 'Heal the World', which was very well received by our audience who gave us loud applause and enjoyed in the song. We had a lovely time that evening witnessing the performances of other participants as well.

On the final day we were taken to Zoo and then to 'Snow World'. It was a really fantastic experience for us to dance amidst the snow and we had so much fun. When the time came to say good bye to our new friends we were very sad. The Unity Camp was truly a wonderful experience filled with laughter fun and joy. Again in 2012 clouds lifted for us to travel to Kandy for another wonderful Unity Camp. We started our journey on Monday, 26th October, and travelled in a bus with students from several other schools. As always the journey was a lot of fun. We reached Trinity College at about 6 pm, by which time the programme had already begun. After many speeches by the dignitaries, we were divided into groups comprising children from different ethnicities, cultures and religions. I was appointed the group leader of Group No. 14 and was sad to see that none of my friends were in my group. I introduced myself to my group members and then we listened to the instructions given by

the Organizing Committee.

After all the formalities the girls were taken to Mowbray College. Each group was assigned a room, but none of us stayed in the assigned rooms as we all wanted to be with our friends who were in different groups. The next morning we were taken to Trinity College. We sat with our groups and listened to speeches delivered by several guest speakers. After lunch there was a fun filled sports session. We took part in the Tug - O - War and our team made it to the Semi Finals. In the evening the premises of Trinity College were filled with music. After the end of the day's programme we were taken back to Mowbray College.

On the third day we got into our groups and headed off to Trinity College once again. It was on this day that all the competitions were held. I took part in the English Oratory Competition and was selected for the finals where I placed 2nd Runner Up. Poster making competitions and Logo competitions also took place and we made 'love spoons' using paper and string. All these groups had to come up with plays related to the theme 'The Power of One'. Our group acted and sang Michael Jackson's 'Heal the World'. We were thrilled when we were selected for the finals! It was amazing to witness the talents of all the students from different schools. When the results were finally announced, our team was placed fourth overall and we were given books and certificates. The programme ended at around midnight and we were taken back to Mowbray College to sleep, although my friend stayed up taking photographs for quite some time!

The next day was our last day at the Unity Camp. Unity Mission team thanked all the participants and we took lots of photographs and bade our new friends goodbye.

Meeting students from all over Sri Lanka and witnessing all of their different talents and abilities was wonderful, and getting to share it with my school friends and teachers made it all the more special. The Unity Camp experience was truly amazing and it is one that I will cherish for a long time to come.

~ Saambavi Sivaji
Uduvil Girls' School, Jaffna



Rukshan Perera Live in Concert IV

Rukshan Perera Live in Concert IV was held on the 19th of January 2014 at the Bishop's College Auditorium for the 4th consecutive year. Once again, all proceeds were in aid of the upcoming projects of UMT for 2014.



Join us. Partner with UMT!

Would you like to know more about the work of UMT?
Are you interested in joining as a volunteer to help with future UMT activities?
Contact us for more details!

The Unity Mission Trust truly appreciates the collaboration and encouragement of caring and supportive individuals and 'far thinking' Corporate Houses. Interested in forming a strategic partnership with UMT to strengthen Sri Lanka's future? We invite you to consider the following and communicate to us your corporate preference.

- (✓)
- Sponsor a one day Zoom-In programme at Rs. 250,000/= or 1 student at Rs. 1000/=
 - Sponsor one (or more) student(s) attending Unity Camp 7 at Rs. 5,000/= each
 - Sponsor English classes per location in Wannai at Rs. 12,000/= per month for 4 months
 - Sponsor Education of 1 student in Wannai at Rs. 4500/= per month

| Credit cash/cheque to: **Ekamuthu Oray Makkal Unity Mission Trust** | Bank: **People's Bank** | A/C No: **014100180004373** |

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*Campers sharing the light of one candle during the Unity Candle Lighting Ceremony
—Unity Camp 6, Kilinochchi*

Completed & Upcoming Events

- Programme with UMT Youth Leaders and Northern Province Education Ministry coordinators, completed during January 2014.
- National Youth Leadership Council comprising 30 Young Leaders established in Kandy, on the 14th February 2014.
- Zoom-In 5, successfully completed in Kandy with 135 Young Leaders from Kandy and the North. Event organized by UMT Kandy Regional Leaders' Council.
- Zoom-In 6 and 7 and Gifts of Love Programme is scheduled for the 2-4th of May, in Vavuniya and Mannar respectively.

Incoming Trustee

Contd from pg 1... and believes that it is only through integration and understanding that this can be achieved. Mrs. Wickremasinghe speaks passionately about the importance of spreading awareness and encouraging the young leaders of our country to be connected to each other. We are grateful to have her on board and believe strongly that she will add an important new perspective to our work here at UMT!

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Founder Trustee/ Coordinator; Bertal Pinto-
Jayawardena

We want YOUR feedback!

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