



Kerala Association of Washington

Annual Report, 2008

Dear members of the Kerala Association of Washington:

Kerala Association of Washington had a very successful year in 2008. On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to thank you, your family and friends for making 2008 a memorable year, a year of some historic achievements.

The KAW Executive Committee of 2008 was chaired by the energetic leadership of Mr. Ojus John, the youngest President of KAW and I, Jyothish Nair, served as the Secretary of the Association. Mr. George Daniel, who has always been instrumental in helping the Association all these years, served as the Vice President and the highly methodical Mr. Biju Skaria served as the Treasurer. Biju also made significant contribution in getting community sponsorship for all our programs. Mr. Pradeep Unny, played an excellent role as the Jt Secretary especially in my absence during the preparations of the Onam event and he also did an awesome job behind all the Movies we brought last year. We had the privilege of receiving guidance from Mrs. Neeni George who served as the Ex-Officio member and Mr. Madhu Kangara served as the Auditor. Other Executive members included Mr. PM Mathew, who played a significant part in successfully conducting many of the KAW programs in 2008, and Mrs Jayashree Narayan, who played an outstanding role in every single event organized by the Association last year. A tireless Mrs. Ajita Gopikrishnan, Mr. Viswanathan Changarath, Mr Sreeram Vaidyanathan, Mr. Jacob Thomas and Mr. Dilip Lukose played an excellent role in making every event successful. Mr. Dilip also led the efforts behind the highly successful Malayalam classes. Youth members, Mr. Ashwin Pranam & Ms. Angela Goraphy did a commendable job as the Youth Reps.

The Executive Committee had our inaugural meeting on Saturday, March 1st, 2008 to set a vision and detailed plan for the activities of the Association for the year. This report is in fact a brief score card of what we were able to do for the Malayali community in the Pacific Northwest. I am excited to say that we have achieved most of the major goals with incredible support from the community.

We had an outstanding year in terms of memberships. As envisioned, we exceeded the number of memberships compared to the previous years. Details will be made available in the Financial Report presented by the KAW Treasurer.

The Executive Committee in its first meeting called out that the extra activities that the previous committee started outside of the usual events, namely Sports Activities and Movies, are a great way to keep the Malayalee community engaged, entertained and connected. The EC decided to continue the Sports tournaments and monthly Malayalam movie shows. It is our strong belief that we have succeeded in our attempt to provide a mix of variety programs - the Stage Show, 11 Sports Tournaments and many hit Movies in the past year.

We kicked off the year's activities with "Prathibha Sangamam", a Talent Show & Musical Nite on May 31st, 2008 from 2:00 to 5:00 PM at the St Margaret's Episcopal Church in Bellevue. KAW's

bright young talents entertained the crowd with film/folk songs, dance and unique Star Singer event for kids and adults category. All the kids who attended walked away with prizes.

KAW hosted a grand stage show "Manikilukkam 2008" on June 15th which was a phenomenal success per feedback received from the audience. The show had a galaxy of 15 stars led by Kalabhavan Mani, bright young actress Bhama, the big small Undapakru (Ajayan), Comedy Kings Kalabhavan Shajohn, Kalabhavan Prajod, Nadirshah, Delsy Ninan etc performing to a full audience of about 450 at the Kentwood Performing Arts Center in Kent. The show included Comedy Programs, Ganamela (Karaoke) and eye-capturing Dance sequences. Our special thanks to Mr. John Titus, the grand sponsor of the show, and to all the organizations and establishments that helped us in making the show a reality. As promised, 50% of the profits from this show will be donated to KAW's various charity programs primarily supporting orphaned kids in Kerala and towards medical treatment supports.

This year's Annual Picnic was held on Aug 2nd at the East Sammamish Park in Sammamish. It was a day of fun in the sun while feasting on delicious (free) food, and cool refreshing drinks. The attendees also participated in a variety of games including a treasure hunt for kids and the traditional "Tug-of-war" event. All winners as well as all the kids who participated were awarded prizes. Similar to last year, the turn out at the event was very low at around 200.

KAW's biggest event, the Onam celebrations started with a potluck Onam Sadya on Sunday, September 28th, 2008 at the Renton IKEA Performing Arts Center. Due to Bellevue School District employee strike, we had to postpone this event from the originally scheduled date of Sept 6th. The Onam Sadya (Buffet lunch) was followed by the cultural extravaganza by KAW's talent. Special thanks to KAW EC coordinators & all other volunteers for coordinating such a successful potluck Onasadya for so many people and to the volunteers & participants for the outstanding stage show laced with 18 items. There was a shortage of rice at the sadya, but was taken care of in a reasonable time. We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience caused to the members.

In keeping with our tradition of extending a helping hand to the needy people, KAW organized a community service program to on December 13th, 2008. Twenty two KAW volunteers helped Hopelink Bellevue and Kirkland centers in sorting food and other gift items so that Hopelink's clients could come and shop for Christmas presents during the Christmas shopping days.

KAW conducted a charity fund raiser for a Malayalee boy Lenin to help his family meet the expenses for the boy's Leukemia treatment. We worked through Care & Share and thanks to generous support of our members; we raised \$5348.71 after employer matches. But the boy did not need the 7 cycles of Chemo that the doctors were originally planning for. The cash flow from newspaper ads is always unpredictable. Fortunately for Lenin, the response was good enough to meet the immediate needs. They got a good sum through the newspapers and the fund raiser at the Parish level and School level. So, we only had to send \$600 towards his treatment needs at the hospital. We kept all donors to Lenin's fund up-to-date with the information and all of them agreed to keep the donations with Care & Share for future needs that may arise. With the approval from the donors we donated \$800 (\$400 each) for 2 cases

- Case 1 - Leukemia, Saiju P Xavier from Chethy, Alleppy
- Case 2 - Brain Tumor, Joseph Vinith from Chellanam

Of the remaining \$3950, \$3750 (1.8 lakhs) was sent to Amrita Hospital, after getting approval from the donors, to help a boy, Adityan, who has been undergoing a series of reconstructive surgeries to correct the deformities caused by accidental flame burns. One of the donors, who

wanted to donate their contribution to a different cause, is working with Care & Share to deploy the remaining \$200 in Lenin's fund.

Because we could tap into the overflow from Lenin's fund, we didn't find enough requests to tap into the KAW fund that was promised to be used for charity activities – 50% of the profits from the stage show, roughly \$2500. We made a contribution to the treatment of a boy, Priyesh, totaling \$1000 and another request for \$500 that came through the Youth Recreational Club. The remaining \$1000 has been set aside for charity activities during the year 2009. We are requesting the new Executive Committee to make sure that this fund gets used for charity purpose.

One of the other highlights of this year was the successful staging of 7 Hit movies by KAW. Movie lovers have greatly appreciated this and the Movies are also becoming more of a social gathering with lucky coupons to be won too.

KAW also conducted 11 Sports Tournaments this year, more than what we had last year – Soccer, Cricket, Badminton, Tennis, Volleyball, Racquetball, Throw ball, Chess & Cards (28, 56 & Rummy). We continued to attract Sponsorships for most of the Tournaments. All the Tournaments were intensely and sportingly contested with Group Games like Soccer, Cricket etc drawing big crowds to watch too! We introduced Throwball tournament this year for women.

One of the most significant impacts the association has been making in this community is through its Malayalam Classes. This is the third consecutive year that KAW is conducting Malayalam classes. This year we enhanced the classes to conduct separate classes for adults and children. Special mention must be made to the Teachers of the Malayalam Classes for whom all the parents expressed their great appreciation. We would like to call out the outstanding contributions from Mr. Dilip Lukose, Ms Divya John and Mrs. Beena Giri.

KAW organized the final program of the calendar year, the Christmas/New Year program on Saturday, January 17th 2009, at the Interlake School in Bellevue. The celebrations started with a delicious Lunch (Biryani). KAW charged only 5 dollars as gate fee for adults and the lunch was totally free for kids. Food seemed to be the problem this year, we ran into another food shortage because our caterer overlooked the quantity we needed. We had to remedy the situation by ordering Pizza for the members at no cost to them. The association also expressed its willingness to refund the money the members paid for food. We are thankful to the understanding and cooperation of our members, no refund claims were made. Again, I take this opportunity to express our sincere apologies for the inconvenience caused. Variety entertainment programs performed by members exemplified KAW's gloriously higher standards with 15 distinct programs including Christmas Carols, Margamkali, Classical, Semi-classical, Folk & Cinematic Dances, Mime etc. We are happy to note that there was a high degree of participation from our young talents with some of the most wonderful performances of the year. We thank the parents and trainers of all the kids for their thoughtfulness and support. After the event, KAW office bearers for 2009 were elected.

Another achievement for the year was a new KAW Career Center at <http://groups.google.com/group/kawcareercenter> . This is an initiative by KAW for our members to network professionally to exchange information, ideas and primarily job-related opportunities. You are requested to use this venue to look for opportunities and post any openings in your team or company that would benefit our members.

Some of the other things that the Executive Committee 2008 was able to implement:

1. 2008 was the most profitable year for KAW in its entire history thanks to outstanding support from our event sponsors and well wishers. Our profits this year was almost equal to the combined balance sheet of last 17 years.
2. Through Care & Share, we made charitable contributions close to \$7000 (including fundraiser for Lenin) with another \$1000 set aside towards charity causes in 2009.
3. We were able to negotiate some discounted purchase options for KAW members at some Indian stores
4. We continued our investments in Malayalam Classes and we now have separate classes for adults and children.
5. We continued to collaborate with advertisers/sponsors to minimize, and in certain cases completely eliminate, the expenses for conducting sports Tournaments, printing Brochures etc. We even got sponsorships for our Onam and New Year events.
6. Gift cards and certificate of excellence were given out to our high school graduates. Also, our Malayalam Class teachers were given token of appreciation for their outstanding effort.

Some of the things that we had plans of doing, but didn't materialize were:

1. Getting 501 c 3 status. There is a higher level of scrutiny for this status and we have started our talks with other Indian organizations that have this status. The paperwork needs more thought around our charity contributions. We couldn't get the papers filed this year.
2. To start a periodic Newsletter for the community. Though we started with this item in our goals for the year, this did not work out due to lack of interest and ownership.
3. Work with Newspaper and Malayalam channels to get coverage for our programs and activities.

On behalf of all the members of Executive Committee 2008, I extend my sincere thanks to:

- All the volunteers who helped KAW organize the events
- All the family members of KAW Executive Committee members
- All the members who attended the events organized by KAW, and supported us with invaluable suggestions and comments
- All of our sponsors and patrons (including those persons and establishments who helped us financially and otherwise)
- All those especially the Teachers & parents of students who helped in Conducting Malayam Classes.
- All the winners, participants & sponsors for KAW's Sports Games
- All the performers who performed shows during Talent Fest, Onam, and Christmas celebrations

And finally, let me introduce the newly elected KAW Executive Committee members for the year 2009.

President	Mr. George Daniel
Vice President	Mr. Jyothish Nair
Secretary	Mrs. Jayashree Narayanan
Joint Secretary	Mr. Ashley Elenjickal
Treasurer	Mr. Dilip Lukose
Ex-Officio	Mr. Ojus John

EC Members

Mrs. Neeni George
Mr. Pradeep Unny
Mrs. Prema Viswanathan
Mrs. Renjini Prakash
Mr. Santhosh Pillai
Mr. Simi Paulose
Mr. Sreeprakash
Mr. Suresh Goraphy
Mr. Dinesh Nambiar
Ms. Aishwarya Nair

Auditor

Youth Reps

I consider it a privilege to handover the charges of KAW to this wonderful group of people. I am confident that the new committee will set the bar even higher and go many steps further than what the Executive Committee 2008 was able to achieve. We extend our whole-hearted cooperation in all your endeavors. On behalf of the entire 2008 Executive Committee members, I wish all of you the very best.

Respectfully submitted,

Jyothish Nair
Secretary, KAW
March 14th, 2009