

MALVERN TO MANITOBA: YOUTH PARTICIPATE IN EXCHANGE

Hilori Kaloti
Community Reporter

The Cree Reservation in northern Manitoba may sound like an unfamiliar place to most of us but not for twenty students from Malvern.

This April 20 – 27, students from the community of Malvern were chosen to participate in a one week exchange to northern Manitoba. Youth became familiar with their way of life and in May, the youth from Manitoba visited Toronto to experience a little bit of city life.

The exchange was organized by the YMCA and the Malvern Rouge Valley Youth Services in hopes of providing young people with the networks to start building long lasting relationships across Canada.

"I first started volunteering at the Rec centre and then I became a part of the Malvern Youth Advisory Committee where I helped plan the Christmas party and the community picnic. It was through my volunteering at the Halloween party that I was chosen to participate in the exchange," says sixteen year old Jakanah Sambavalingam from Lester B. Pearson C.I. "It was a huge eye opener and a culture shock going to Manitoba since this is the province right next to us—you can see how some of the Natives are slowly becoming assimilated into Canadian culture," she says..

Luke Muskego, a twelve-year-old boy from Oxford House, the partner

school in Manitoba, had a spectacular time in Toronto. "The population and size of Toronto is so big! There are so many different kinds of religions and people. We got to visit the CN Tower and the big Hindu temple in Etobicoke. I took so many pictures that my memory card is full," chuckles Muskego.

"When our buddies from Toronto came to visit us, we took them ice fishing, we volunteered at the Seniors centre, we did some bead work and we taught them about the natural resources for fern traps," explains fifteen-year-old Evangeline Day, from Oxford House. "Most of our activities are surrounded by nature so we hope they learned a bit about Aboriginal culture," she says.

Tenus Grieves, a chaperone and one of the special support workers from Oxford House says "This was even my first time out of Manitoba. I was shocked at how interesting and educational the Science Centre was."

"This whole experience opens up a different avenue of learning for the kids. It gives you different perspective of society and it enhances your scope of things," says Howard Grieves Sr, a guidance counsellor at Oxford House. "Our biggest facility in Cree is the school and the arena so coming to Toronto and seeing the Science Centre alone was a shock."

Rose Fox, coordinator of the exchange and secretary of the Malvern Rouge Valley Youth services says, "What we're trying to accomplish through this exchange is to look at it from a pioneer way in regard to immigration. Malvern village actually goes all the way back to the Natives; then the English and the Scots came and look at where we are today."

"I wanted the kids to learn about where we came from...I wanted to begin to connect youth of Malvern to others who are similar and different to them in order for them to appreciate and respect one another," says Fox.



» EXCHANGE PARTICIPANTS FROM MANITOBA AND MALVERN GATHER INSIDE THE MALVERN RECREATION CENTRE

EMBRACE YOUR RACE

Natasha Rajaratnam
Community Reporter

A part of a good community is a healthy one and what better way than to organize an athletic event. On Saturday, May 31, 2008 between 9:00a.m. and 3:30p.m. The community gathered outside of the Malvern Emmanuel Church to take part in The Malvern Bicycle Classic.

Through a partnership with the City of Toronto Community programs, Ontario Cycling Association, race director Rick Meloff and the 42 Division Toronto Police, youth were introduced to competitive cycling.

It consisted of several races which included the celebrity road race involving police officers, fire fighters,

politicians and the youth cup road series for children between the ages of 10-16.

"It's a great opportunity and I was happy to do it. It's a time killer and it helps promote a healthy lifestyle. We also got free bikes for doing it from 42 division so I was happy about that too," says Julian a participant of the youth cup series.

The children that participated were to train with police officers and prove their dedication to be entitled to their bicycles for the races. Surrounding the area were cheers from supporting parents and community members.

"There are school teams and rec teams that participate in time trials which are 500m and road races which are 2.7km. Overall it's a way to experience what road competitions are really like," says Marla Bailey, a summer student at the OCA (Ontario Cycling Association).



» WINNERS OF THE YOUTH CUP ROAD SERIES



» STUDENT PARTICIPANT AND HIS NEW BIKE

MY ROOTS- OUTSTANDING STUDENT OF THE SEASON

Devin Persaud
Community Reporter

"Everybody has a passion, and they should pursue it no matter what." -Lilly Singh

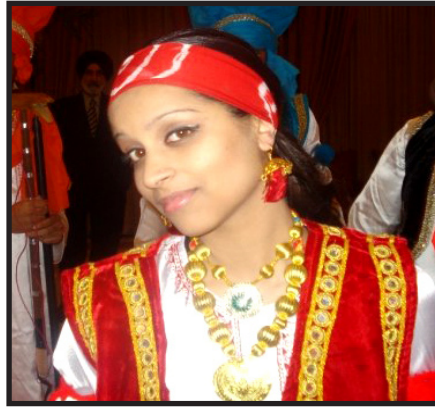
Born and raised in Malvern, Lilly Singh has never taken NO for an answer. Now a third year Psychology major at York University and captain/founder of her own Bhangra (Punjabi folk dance) team: "Nachde Tapde Punjabi", she has always worked hard to prove that even the seemingly impossible can be within grasp if you work hard enough.

Singh began her schooling career at Mary Shadd P.S. which she says has developed and shaped her most into the person she is today. "Some of the friends I made at Mary Shadd I am still close with today, and the two teachers who inspired me most to follow my strengths are there as well," says Singh. These two teachers: Mr. Ragoonath, and Ms. Hamid made a big impact on her, as they saw the potential in her and pushed her to get more involved in extracurricular activities and to develop her leadership skills, which would end up coming in handy later in life.

However, schooling is only part of Singh's life. Her other great passion, what she realized at a very young age, and what drives her is dancing.

Singh attended Lester B. Pearson C.I. from grades 9 - 12 and says that this experience is what made her strongest, and pushed her into trying different things. "In grades 11 and 12 I was the President of Pearson's International Night and it was tough. We were told by the administration that we couldn't open our doors up to the community, because of issues that occurred in the past. However, I felt that we were doing a positive thing and that the talent of Malvern deserved to be showcased and admired. In order to make International night a reality I had to go to TDSB officials, make petitions, talk to different Youth Workers, and eventually after three months of struggling, the school finally agreed," she says.

It was during international night that Nachde Tapde Punjabi (NTP), first formed its roots. Singh and her team performed to a great ovation during these school events, and what was once a hobby soon blossomed into



» LILLY SINGH IN THE TRADITIONAL BHANGRA COSTUME
a business venture. "When we first started NTP, I never intended it to be a long term thing. It was just myself and four other guys, but because of the great response we got from our peers we decided to carry it on... I was able to find and form a committed and very talented team."

Today, NTP performs at a plethora of different venues: Weddings, cultural shows and South Asian festivals.

Singh's job doesn't stop at performing either. When she first started NTP it was her responsibility to design outfits, do publicity, find sponsors, create choreography, and deal with team finances. "I've become much better with delegating responsibilities to the rest of the team, and although it's tough I've also found a way to concentrate on my school work as well, as that will always remain my top priority."

She draws her inspiration and motivation from many places. When she first started NTP she was the only girl in a group with six guys. She never thought that they would listen to her, but she emphasizes how great her entire team is and how large an impact they've made on her life.

In addition to this, Singh says that the two people who have inspired her most in life are her older sister, Tina, and her mother. "They are the strongest women I know, and more than anything else they've always supported my dreams, no matter how ridiculous. It's amazing

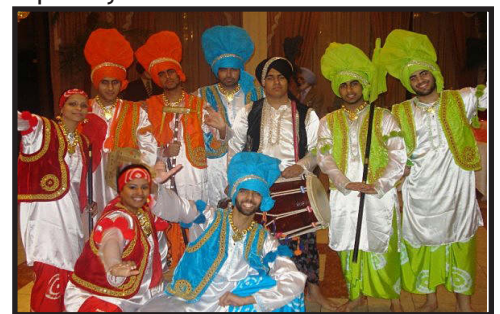
to have family members that support you, and I strive to be everything like them."

As for her future, she has plans to pursue a career in the field of occupational therapy and eventually she also plans to expand the team so that they will compete in competitions and hopefully open a school of dance for children.

"Most Bhangra dancers have learned from a dance academy, but I had to start off on my own, because they didn't really have an institution like that in this area. Hopefully we can open an academy that will teach the intricacies of Bhangra dancing: its structure, discipline, and creativity," she says.

Despite all of her success, She remains very humbled by her experiences in Malvern. "Malvern is my home town and I've lived most of my life there. I know it gets a bad reputation from some media, but some of the most valuable lessons I've learned about diversity and people, come from living in Malvern. I, myself, was motivated by this negative reputation, especially at Pearson, and I did my best to try and change it. I think one of the best ways to do this is through positive expression. Events that promote positive attitudes should be welcomed by schools and community centres as well."

To close, Singh carries a message for the other youth of Malvern, and that is to pursue your passion. "In life you'll always face adversity, but if you stick to what you want, and believe in yourself you can overcome it. The world will always have ways of trying to keep you quiet but you should never be afraid to express yourself."



» LILLY SINGH AND NTP AT A PERFORMANCE

Lilly Singh and Nachde Tapde Punjabi can be contacted at ntpbhangra@hotmail.com or on Facebook. For bookings and information call 647-868-4878.

MALVERN ALUMNI

Laxmi Parthasarathy
Editor



MERELLA FERNANDEZ: "ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE..."

As a reporter and anchor for CityNews at 5 p.m. and CP24 Merella Fernandez is an accomplished journalist from Malvern. Hard work, dedication and a passion for her job have always been first nature for Merella. She knows what it means to "get your foot in the door" as she worked her way from behind the scenes as a writer for CTV and CityTV to anchoring the news. She has covered stories from the streets of Toronto to the mountain tops of Tanzania but still calls Malvern her home. Merella is an ideal model of how we can express ourselves in alternative ways. Her tool of expression: Journalism.

Q: What elementary and high school did you attend?

A: St. Florence Elementary and Pope John Paul II.

Q: What was it like for you growing up in Malvern?

A: When I was a kid, it was great. It was a safe, working class area. I think the problems began when I was in high school.

Q: Did you always want to become a reporter?

A: No – loved writing and kind of fell into it.

Q: What sparked your interest for journalism?

A: Honestly, I simply knew I wanted to write for a living. Journalism was my way of doing it.

Q: Tell us about how you pursued this passion?

A: I went to Carleton University to take their Journalism Program, and did a Combined Honors in English. I did an internship at CTV just before I graduated. Eventually that led to my first job.

Q: Were the people in your life supportive of your endeavors?

A: At first, not really. There are no guarantees in this business. I think my family would have preferred that I pursued a more stable profession. But they let me choose, and supported me in school.

Q: Did you surpass any obstacles on your path to success?

A: There are always obstacles. I wasn't even sure I was going to finish university because it was such a financial strain to send me to Carleton. After graduating, I spent months looking for a job in my field. I sent out dozens of resumes, and received dozens of rejections. Once I got my foot in the door at CTV, I worked really hard to keep moving up.



»»» MERELLA FERNANDEZ REPORTING FROM THE SKY



»»» MERELLA FERNANDEZ REPORTING IN TORONTO

Both were unique, and wonderful. In Egypt we visited a local school. It was incredible to see how different the classroom setting is, and what the challenges are for students in Cairo. Egypt itself is inspiring, with its many treasures and amazing history.

Tanzania was rugged and beautiful. We built a school at the base of Mount Kilimanjaro and then hiked up. Mentally and physically it was tough. It was one of the most rewarding adventures I have ever had.

Q: Do you have any advice for the youth of Malvern?

A: You really do have to work hard to succeed. Harder than many others. But anything is possible if you are willing to do the work and commit.

Q: What was the most memorable story that you covered?

A: There have been a few. The disappearances of Cecilia Zhang and then Holly Jones – both heartbreaking, both unforgettable.

Q: Have you had any opportunities to report from overseas?

A: I've had an opportunity to do some series work out of Egypt and Tanzania about two years ago. It was awesome.

Q: At the end of the day what is your goal as a journalist?

A: To give the viewer at home perspective, insight, understanding – They can't go where I can in a day, so I am their eyes and ears.

In one word describe what Malvern means to you?

A: Home.



»»» MERELLA FERNANDEZ WITH SINGER STING

DIASPORA DIALOGUES: YOUNG WRITERS FROM THE MALVERN EDGE

Hilori Kaloti

Community Reporter

"Put it before them briefly so they will read it, clearly so they will appreciate it, picturesquely so they will remember it" said Joseph Pulitzer, originator of the Pulitzer Prize in literary achievement. With few organizations committed to fostering the growth of young writers in literature, Diaspora Dialogues Charitable Society continues to support the creation of new fiction, poetry and drama that reflect the diversity of its writers.

For three weeks, students at Lester B. Pearson C.I. worked hard learning from three professional writers/artists and on March 18, 2008 it all came together. Students shared short stories, poems and invoking literature at the Malvern Library with an audience of family, friends and community members.

Diaspora Dialogues aims "to provide an outlet for young writers and artists of under-represented minorities to help build their confidence and encourage them to write more," says Philip Adams, Manager of Public Events for Diaspora Dialogues. "Instead of bringing the people to us, we wanted to bring ourselves to the people," he says.

Diaspora Dialogues initially began back in 2005 holding their first event in Malvern. Now they have come back for the second time to host their Young Writers from the Malvern Edge series. With the booming success of Diaspora Dialogues, it has expanded to further communities such as Etobicoke with plans of stretching as far out to Vancouver and Halifax.

Some of the emerging writers included eighteen-year-old student Ewart Griffith who shared some of his poetry. "Initially I thought I wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement but this experience has given me confidence in my writing and it has showed me that I can put my work out there and get positive feedback on it," says Griffith.

Asma Rahman is a grade twelve student says "It was through my writers craft class that I learned about this opportunity and now I am a lot more aware of certain things in my writing that I didn't pay as much attention to before."

Ayesha Zafar also shared a short poem and she says "not only am I more confident in my writing skills but I feel like my writing can serve a greater purpose... Now I love to write and it has become

one of my favourite hobbies".

The event also featured pieces by professional writers such as Saghi Ghahraman, writer of several Persian poetry and short fiction readings and featured speaker of PEN Canada Readers and Writers events

Marcia Johnson, actor and playwright for Theatre Passe Muraille and Obsidian Theatre also shared a short drama piece. "In the first week we were trained on spoken word then we learnt the basics of playwriting and finally we learned about poetry writing," says Griffith. "I think this experience has really shaped me for what I would like to do in the future," he says.

Diaspora Dialogues is committed to creating an environment that supports and encourages creative exploration. "We don't watch these young people to shut up," laughs Adams. "We want to give confidence to these young writers to want to write more. We're focused on connecting, contacting and identifying the different needs of young writers in communities...we just hope that these new writers will be able to continue to develop their voice and craft in the future," says Adams.

TRUE COLOURS

Sharla Smith

Community Submission

Just when you think you know somebody...
The same somebody you've defended
And just like that, the friendship ended
What is this really about?
Are you jealous?
You want to be me, I'll sell it
Take my face, my looks, my traits, Your hooked.
Your annoying
It's boring
You do the same old things
Your lying
I'm dying because trust isn't what you sing
You think I'm perfect?
Your so not worth it
I make people feel low?
You're so slow
I was the only one that had your back
Now your friendless
How sad is that?
Have fun in the future
because I definitely won't know you
And my whole crew told me,
I'd out grow you
They were right...

SUMMER BEYOND THE BORDERS OF MALVERN

Natasha Rajanatham

Community Reporter

This Summer explore beyond the boundaries of Malvern. We live in a huge city and should take advantage of these two months of free time to explore the city. There are so many opportunities out there and it's up to you to grasp and take them back home to Malvern and to help set off your adventures. Here's a few places to go to help kick off your summer!

Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition

If you're one with crafty ideas then this is where you want to be! You'll be enjoying a variety of artistic pieces including glass, jewellery, paintings, photography, sculptures, watercolours and more!

When: Friday, July 11 at 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. , Saturday, July 12 at 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. , Sunday, July 13 at 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Where: Nathan Phillips Square

Toronto's annual summer play festival

You'll be able to experience plays along side with their scriptwriters. There will be plenty of plays and workshops of plays in development. It will definitely broaden your experience when it comes to the theatrics!

When: Thursday, August 7, Friday, August 8, Saturday, August 9

Visit: <http://toronto.com/arts/event/372041> for more info

Volunteer

Many places that need a helping hand and more over, you'll be able to gain loads of experience from it! Take the time to do some research on www.volunteertoronto.ca. There are so many open opportunities!



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EXPRESS YOURSELF!

Youth Express Their Culture

Laxmi Parthasarathy
Editor

A little support and encouragement can go a long way.

On May 15th a group of dedicated young students headed by Co-Chair Zermeeena Iqbal organized Lester B. Pearson C.I.'s annual International night.

What started out five years ago as a night to bring together the rich diversity of culture and heritage at Pearson, grew to draw in over 700 people from the entire Malvern community.

"We're so multicultural, I thought why not", are the words of George Chabrol a dedicated teacher at Pearson C.I. Chabrol is the support behind the enthusiastic group of students that organize International night yearly.

Chabrol shared that the students work very hard on this year-long project, their goal is to make the event as multicultural as possible. This can be a difficult task but "there is a very large South Asian population at Pearson and we want to represent everyone," said Chabrol.

The night is divided into two parts; a multicultural pavilion earlier in the evening and a lively and diverse show to follow.

Pavilions included the United Kingdom, Sri Lanka, India and many others. Cultural music and the scent of ethnic food could be heard and smelt from the front entrance of the school. It was a colourful sight as students were dressed in a variety of ethnic clothing while representing their traditions with pride.

Visitors and students were then directed to the auditorium. Overflowing with support, cheers, chanting, and a buzz



»»» MC, POOJA BHAGAT INTERVIEWING THE AUDIENCE

of various languages, the show began. "I've been working on it more than a year...it's been in my head and I just hope everything goes well... We give it our best," said Iqbal.

Performances included Gow's rap, a young Tamil student's positive rapping style, 3D a group of boys and girls dancing to popular Tamil music, the vocals of Lia Mariniou, and much more.

Behind the scenes is a committed audio visual team led by Yogeeta Devi, a grade 12 student. "This is a great experience because you get to work with people you don't usually get to know in school," said Devi.

The show closed with a bhangra (Punjabi folk dance) performance by SGS which closed the show with a roar of cheering, cultural flags waving, excitement emanating from the audience and a look of relief from the organizers.

Darren Ashton a gr. 12 student says he comes back to help organize this event for the crowds, the noise, and the idea of organizing something fun.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

>WRITER'S WORKSHOP - PG. 2

>OUTSTANDING STUDENT OF THE SEASON: LILLY SINGH- PG. 3

>ALUMNI: MERELLA FERNANDEZ -PG. 4

>DIASPORA DIALOGUES- PG. 5

>MALVERN STUDENT EXCHANGE- PG. 6

>MALVERN SPELLING BEE-PG. 7

The International Night has yet another chapter to tuck away for the summer. "Mr. Chabrol we did it!" said Iqbal before leaving for the night.

When the crowds began to leave Mr.Chabrol reflects on the past five years of the International night. "I do it because of the kids, it can be tiring, but to watch their energy and how emotional they get about it that is why I do it. If we [teachers] don't do it they'll miss out on things that they are capable of," said Chabrol.



»»» YOUNG DANCERS PERFORM FOR A FULL HOUSE

THE MY ROOTS EXECUTIVE



Left to Right: Sydney Elias, Natasha Rajaratnam, Laxmi Parthasarathy, Hilori Kaloti, Lindee Ballentine and Devin Persaud.

LAXMI PARTHASARATHY

FOUNDER/EDITOR
MALVERN.YOUTH.ROOTS@GMAIL.COM

HILORI KALOTI

MANAGING EDITOR/COMMUNITY
REPORTER
HILORI.KALOTI@GMAIL.COM

DEVIN PERSAUD

SPONSORSHIP CO-ORDINATOR/
COMMUNITY REPORTER
DEVINPERSAUD@GMAIL.COM

NATASHA RAJARATNAM

PUBLIC RELATIONS CO-
ORDINATOR/
PUBLISHING ASSISTANT
NATASHA_RAJARATNAM@HOTMAIL.COM

REVEREND SYDNEY ELIAS

ADVISOR/COMMUNITY OUTREACH
ELIASSYD@YAHOO.COM

LINDEE BALLENTINE

MY ROOTS/TDSB LIASON
LINDEE.BALLENTINE@TDSB.ON.CA

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From the Editor's Desk

What a year! MY ROOTS has
successfully brought four editions to
the greater Malvern area in the past
twelve months.

What do we mean by Express
yourself? Everyone has a passion, an
opinion or a talent that is waiting
to be revealed and nurtured. We
want you all to find that passion and
express it however you can, to your
friends, your family and your commu-
nity.

Lilly Singh, our outstanding
student of the season, always knew
she had a passion for her Punjabi

heritage and decided to express her
pride through dance.

For many, including myself,
writing is a very powerful form of
expression. When I am passionate
about an issue, I like to express my
thoughts through writing.

Similarly, I love helping others
find their passion and guide them to
pursue it. So, I hope this edition of MY
ROOTS will be a source of inspiration
and that you'll find just the right way
to express yourself!

Cheers,
Laxmi Parthasarathy
Founder/Editor -MY ROOTS



My Roots Presents:

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FREE writers workshop for all students!

Saturday, June 28, 9:15 am-12 pm
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Priya Ramanujam (Co-founder & Editor-in-chief of Urbanology magazine)
Julia Dow (Writer and former youth advice columnist at the Toronto Star)
Paul Nguyen and Mark Simms (Producers of “Lost in the Struggle” a CBC docu-
mentary & co-founders of jane-finch.com)

For more information and to SIGN UP come to the Malvern Branch Information
Desk or contact Malvern.youth.roots@gmail.com

Malvern Branch 30 Sewells Rd.
416.396.8969





Comic Drawing Workshops

Thursday, June 26, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 28, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Professional comic artist will teach you the art of comics.

Registration starts on June 2.

Youth Advisory Group

Tuesday, July 29, Aug. 26, 4-6 p.m.

- Earn volunteer hours
- Contribute ideas to the library's services
- Gain useful skills

Application form available at the circulation desk.

Computer Daze

Saturday, July 12-26, Aug. 9, 2-4 p.m.

Sign up to chat and play in the Le@rning Centre for 2 hours.

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Malvern Creative Writing Project

Thursdays, July -Aug. 7, 3:30-5:00 p.m.

A co-partnership with Diaspora Dialogues.

Teen Movies

Mondays, Aug. 11-25, 4-6 p.m.

Enjoy movies selected by your own Youth Advisory Group. Everyone is welcome.

Online Homework Tips for Teens

Wednesday, Aug. 23, 4-6 p.m.

Get a head start and learn to use Web based research databases from home and at the library. Grades 7-12.

Registration starts Aug. 1

Malvern Branch

30 Sewells Rd.

416.396.8969

Teen Programs Summer 2008 (Ages 12-19)

MALVERN'S BUZZ

Marshallin Paryani

Spelling Bee of Canada
Chapter President

The weekend of May 29 and 30, 2008 was very special for over 500 students and their families. The third annual NE4 Regional Spelling Bee at Malvern Town Center showcased the spelling talents of the participants.

Students from ten schools in the region vied for the chance to win cash prizes and trophies as well as to challenge themselves in spelling some very difficult words.

The event was a joint partnership with Spelling Bee of Canada,

Toronto District School Board and Malvern Town Center. Volunteers worked for many months preparing the students for the event as well as coordinating services to make the weekend successful.

In previous years, the spelling bee was held on a single day but due to the high demand, an extra day was added to accommodate the increased number of participants.

The primary winners were Kevin B. from Fleming P.S., Bravien A. from Mary Shadd P.S. and Shubham K. D. from Emily Carr P.S. Intermediate winners all attend Brookside P.S. and

were Kristen M., Safia K., and Ariel L.

On Sunday May 4 representatives from the Malvern spelling bee put their spelling skills to the test against other proficient spellers from across Ontario at Metro Hall.

The Malvern students spelled some very challenging words but unfortunately did not finish in the top three.

Residents of Malvern should be proud of the wonderful effort of the spelling stars. Many of those who participated this year look forward to it with great A-N-T-I-C-I-P-A-T-I-O-N!

Thank you for your support!

