

Good Evening Mayor Steve Parish and council members of the Town of Ajax, my name is Lavanya Pathmanathan. I am an active youth member of Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham and very proud to address this presentation to you on behalf of this well-known organization. TCASD has been given great community supporters since 2008, and we are thankful to Durham for providing us with ongoing support over the many years.

The purpose of Tamil Heritage Month Cultural Festival is to educate not only the Tamil population, but the general public, children and youth about our native geographic location, societal values, religion, culture, and tradition. By hosting this event and inviting the Tamils living throughout the Durham region, as well as ministers of parliament from all four cities, councillors, mayors, and their staff to this event, we hope to further educate the citizens of Durham on our beautiful Tamil heritage.

This is an excellent opportunity for the Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham to promote their organization, mingle with Tamil citizens new to the area, connect and network with other Tamil Associations and businesses. In the process, TCASD hopes to create respect, mutual understanding, and beneficial relationships with many Tamils as well as with those who live in the Durham community.

It is our hope to create an opportunity for Durham Tamils to come together and celebrate the Tamil culture with the people of Durham. We, who reside in Durham must bear in mind that these initiatives are aimed at promoting cultural understanding in our society as it is essential for a community to be aware of surrounding cultures and traditions.

Tamils have a great tradition of heritage and culture that developed over 2,000 years ago and still continues to flourish today. We must bring our beautiful history into the limelight and continue to promote and preserve the Tamil heritage.

Every year TCASD chooses a topic in which we focus on. This year TCASD has decided to focus on the famous Tamil poet and author, Thiruvalluvar. His work is well known throughout the Tamil community and in many countries across the world. One of his most famous contributions to Tamil literature is the Thirukkural, known as the "Sacred Couplets". It can be considered a guide for human morals and the betterment of life. There are three sections in the Thirukkural. The first section, Aram, states good ethical behaviours expected by oneself. The second section, Porul, discusses the right manner in which the government and society should behave. The final section, Kaamam, explains the love between men, women and all. In total, the Thirukkural contains 1330 couplets, which are broken down into many chapters.

The beauty of the Thirukkural can be translated into many other languages and can be relatable to all. Before I leave, I would like to recite a few lines from the Thirukkural to show you how graceful and hypnotic they are:

Loveless people hold everything to themselves.  
Those, who are filled with love, bear even their bones for others.  
Like life is linked to the flesh,  
Love is integral to life.  
Love yields affection for all,  
which leads to invaluable friendships.

THANK YOU

*Lavanya Pathmanathan*

