

March 2023

DIAMOND TIMES

toastmasters Journey

The Official Newsletter of Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club

CLUB NO : 2321352 | AREA 04 | DIVISION I | DISTRICT 82



Cover story: pg. 04

We meet

⌚ Every Second and Fourth Thursdays of the Month

🕒 05:30 pm to 07:15 pm

📍 Hexagon Boardroom| 315, Vauxhall Street, Colombo 00200, Sri Lanka



Since
1924

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Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club

Newsletter - March 2023

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Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club

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THE LEGACY

The Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club (ASTMC) was chartered in March 2012 as a corporate club of District 82. DTM Azam Bakeer Markar served as the club's inaugural president. The club received the esteemed Golden Gavel award from District 82 in its charter year and the Golden Gavel Plus honor in the following year. The Aitken Spence Toastmasters club was one of the rare clubs that did so during their charter year.

Since 2013, the Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club has earned the title of President's Distinguished Club continuously. This is the highest recognition in the Toastmasters fraternity. The ASTMC has also won numerous other awards such as the Smedley award, Talk Up Toastmasters award, Beat the Clock award, and the Triple Crown award.

In addition to holding significant administrative positions, our members have represented the club in competitions at the area, division, and district levels as well as held key positions in the administration.

Toastmasters International

Toastmasters International Mission

We empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders

District Mission

We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.

Club Mission

We provide a supportive and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth

Toastmasters International Core Values

Integrity | Respect | Service | Excellence

Toastmasters International Envisioned Future

To be the first-choice provider of dynamic, high-value, experiential communication, and leadership skills development.

Upcoming programs

Theme meeting | 30th April 2023

New member orientation and pathway induction | 30th April 2023

Ovation | May 2023

MEET THE EXCO

PRESIDENT



TM Rizmika Dahilan
Aitken Spence Travels (Pvt)
Ltd.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT



Dhilmini Palipane DTM
Aitken Spence Cargo (Pvt)
Ltd.

VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION



TM Nishantha Dodangoda
Aitken Spence Corporate
Finance (Pvt) Ltd.

VICE PRESIDENT MEMBERSHIP



TM Praveen Corea
Aitken Spence Human Resources
(Pvt) Ltd.

VICE PRESIDENT PUBLIC RELATIONS



TM Zaharine Hameen
Aitken Spence Travels
(Pvt) Ltd.

SECRETARY / TREASURER



TM Aneeka Edirisinghe
Aitken Spence Travels (Pvt)
Ltd.

SERGEANT AT ARMS



TM Janith Abeysekera
Aitken Spence Travels (Pvt)
Ltd.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

“The will to win, the desire to succeed, urge to reach your full potential these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence” (Confucius). We are always in search of that one thing that will ignite ourselves! To recognize and realize our potential, we must venture out. Take that walk down the unknown path.

Aitken Spence Toastmasters has not only achieved but surpassed our club goals. Our members have accomplished their educational objectives and are continuing to do so with unwavering determination. Their active participation and involvement made the Club popular among other Spensorians. Further, we represented at the Area Contest in International and Table Topics Speech and have advanced to represent at Divisional Level. Achievements of our Toastmasters in events conducted by Aitken Spence Group have continued. They were monumental in attracting 5 more new members for the next term which would make us contenders for Talk Up Toastmasters award in May 2023.

Notably, we had veteran toastmasters grace our meetings as Visiting Toastmasters. DTM Srianthi Salgado & TM Mohan Morais. They shared valuable words of wisdom on involvement & dedication, enthusiasm to learn, and helping each other on this toastmaster’s journey. Zig Zagler said, “When you catch a glimpse of your potential, that’s when passion is born”. I believe our members are passionate about their Toastmaster’s journey and we are keen to see them achieve personal excellence, smoothly and steady.



In line with our mission, we are determined to provide a supportive and positive learning experience, where members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills to achieve greater self confidence and personal growth.

I take this opportunity to warmly welcome our new members and wish everyone a happy Sinhala & Tamil New Year!

Good luck!

TM Rizmika Dahilan
President
Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club
Division I District 82
Toastmasters International

ASTMC FAMILY GROWING BIGGER & BETTER

The club has embarked on an awe-inspiring journey, marked by a remarkable surge in membership and a string of successes in competitions, propelling it to new heights in the Toastmasters voyage.

CLUB PROGRESS



1

TM Nimesh placed second at the International Speech & Table Topics Area Contest (A I4 - Div. I)

TM Nimesh, a progressive speaker in the club, showcased his outstanding speaking prowess at the International Speech & Table Topics Area Contest (A I4 - Div. I) on March 16th, 2023, earning a remarkable second place.

Ms. Dinali Alexander, the Assistant Vice President - Supply Chain, Aitken Spence Hotels, the supervisor of TM Nimesh commented, "I am proud of Nimesh's achievements in achieving his toastmasters' educational goals. Within this short time, he has shown his talent in the table topic area at area level by winning second place and not only making the club but the company proud too. His exposure to toastmasters has increased his level of confidence and excellent use of the English language not forgetting his compering skills. We wish him all the very best in his toastmaster career and hope he will keep shining like the star he is meant to be!"

CONGRATULATIONS

TM NIMESH FERNANDO
2nd Place winner of Table Topics

2

Moment Of Truth (MOT) Session

The MOT session delivered by TM Zaharine Hameen on the 24th of January 2023 was an interactive meeting which fostered discussions and reviews on membership orientation, fellowship and communication, as well as program planning.



3

DTM Dhilmini Palipane completed level 05 of Dynamic leadership pathway

DTM Dhilmini Palipane's accomplishment at Level Five of the Dynamic Leadership Pathway is a testament to her unwavering commitment to continuous improvement and growth as a leader.



CLUB PROGRESS



4

TM Zaharine Hameen completed the Level 01 of Dynamic Leadership pathway

TM Zaharine Hameen's recent accomplishment of completing Level One in the Dynamic Leadership Pathway stands as a testament to her unwavering commitment to self-improvement and growth as a leader. Her dedication to constant progress is evident in this impressive achievement, highlighting her steadfast determination to advance in her leadership journey.



5

Dynamic Leadership pathway - Completion of Level 01

TM Hasantha, TM Nimesh and TM Supun completed the level one of Dynamic Leadership pathway.



6

Membership renewal and new member enrolment

The club successfully renewed membership of fifteen members and enrolled five new members.



CLUB PROGRESS CONTINUED..



7

Toastmasters hailing as MCs at company events

TM Zaharine, TM Praveen, and TM Nimesh were entrusted with the esteemed role of Masters of Ceremonies at various events organized by different subsidiaries and the group to commemorate International Women's Day 2023.

TM Zaharine took on the role of the moderator of the panel discussion organized by Aitken Spence Travels. With her exceptional skills in guiding discussions and engaging the audience, the session was interactive and dynamic, leaving a lasting impact on the attendees.

Further, TM Praveen represented himself as the joint MC for the corporate program, setting the perfect tone for the occasion with his poised and professional demeanor. His commanding presence added a touch of elegance to the event, leaving everyone inspired and motivated.



TM Nimesh led the Women's Day program at Aitken Spence Hotels, serving as the joint MC for the day. With his warm and inclusive approach, he created a welcoming atmosphere where everyone felt valued and heard. His confident and engaging presence captivated the audience, making the event a resounding success.

Together, TM Zaharine, TM Praveen, and TM Nimesh showcased their exceptional skills as Masters of Ceremonies, adding a touch of professionalism and finesse to the events, and commemorating International Women's Day in a memorable way.



AREA DIRECTORS' VISIT



The club's 337th meeting was a significant event for its members, as it provided an opportunity to gain valuable insights from the newly appointed Area Director, TM Gishan Liyanage. As a seasoned professional in the field, TM Gishan Liyanage's presence and contributions at the meeting have been highly valued by the members.

During the meeting, TM Gishan Liyanage shared his knowledge and expertise that were of interest to the club members. The insights were informative and thought-provoking, enabling members to broaden their perspectives and enhance their understanding of a Toastmaster's journey.



JOINT MEETING WITH MILLENIUM TOASTMASTERS

THE MEETING IN THEIR EYES!



Joint meeting with Millenium TMC

The ASTM club was able to conduct a joint meeting with the Millennium Toastmasters on 07th of February 2023, at the Corporate Auditorium of Aitken Spence. It was an exciting opportunity to connect with them.

Here are their thoughts!

A Joint Meeting-A unique experience by TM Kauminie Samarakone, The Millennium Toastmasters Club

“The secret of success is to do the common things uncommonly well” said John D. Rockefeller. We, The Millennium Toastmasters Club, were looking at ways and means to spice up our meetings. “Let’s hold a joint meeting with a Corporate Club” was what we decided. We invited Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club for a joint meeting with us and “lo and behold”, they accepted.

This was the beginning of an event which was thoroughly enjoyed by each and every member from both clubs. It was evident from the fact that members from both clubs stayed on after the meeting chatting with each other.

At the beginning we assumed it would be just another joint meeting of two clubs, dividing the role players and the speech slots equally among their respective members. Little did I know how special this meeting was going to end up, so much so, that I’d like to sum it up as an extraordinary meeting!

I as Vice President Education, spoke with the very friendly President of the Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club TM Rizmika Dahilan to work out the modalities of the meeting. Who plays which role, how many speech slots allocated to a club, the date and the time. The venue, as we were the hosts was to be the Royal College Union Skills Center, Colombo 7, where we hold our usual meetings. Then, something special happened. Our President TM Amritha felt all of us needed to experience the corporate environment and suggested “why not meet at their venue?”



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JOINT MEETING WITH MILLENIUM TOASTMASTERS CONTINUED..



Yes, it did give us additional headaches. At The Millennium Toastmasters Club, we have an average of 25 members who regularly attend our club meetings. TM Rizmika and team had to find a venue that could accommodate all of us as the board room they usually meet was inadequate. That's when she found the Corporate Auditorium of Aitken Spence Tower 1 for the meeting.



As the meeting was being held in the heart of an office complex, we had to work out how our members were going to find the location, how to find the carpark, lift and the auditorium. TM Rizmika along with her team planned so meticulously that their members were stationed near the gate to direct us to the carpark, then lead us to the lift, and thereafter to escort us to the auditorium.

The Corporate Auditorium was on the 11th floor! As we entered, we were greeted by the beautiful view of the setting sun which had turned in to golden ball! TM Rizmika and the members of the Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club were so friendly and welcoming that all of us felt at home immediately.

The meeting went off as planned, and everything went smoothly. What was remarkable was the ease in which we interacted with each other. Members exchanged views participating in the Round Robin session and the Table Topics session with friendly banter. The prepared speeches were the most interesting as different views and thoughts were shared. At the end we learnt so much from each other! Most importantly, it showed the success to any event is dependent on how we give and take!

Thank You TM Rizmika Dahilan and each and every member from the Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club.

Together we made a common meeting in to an extraordinary meeting by doing it uncommonly well!





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MEETINGS WITH VISITING TOASTMASTERS



Utilizing the opportunities for thought showers, the club was able to conduct two meetings with two veteran visiting toastmasters.

Meeting with DTM Srianthi Salgado

The meeting, which took place on December 13, 2022, was deemed successful by the club, as it was graced by the esteemed presence of the immediate past district director, DTM Srianthi Salgado from Lyceum Toastmasters Club, who served as the General Evaluator. The invaluable ideas and feedback exchanged during the meeting have led to valuable insights to effectively manage future meetings at Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club.



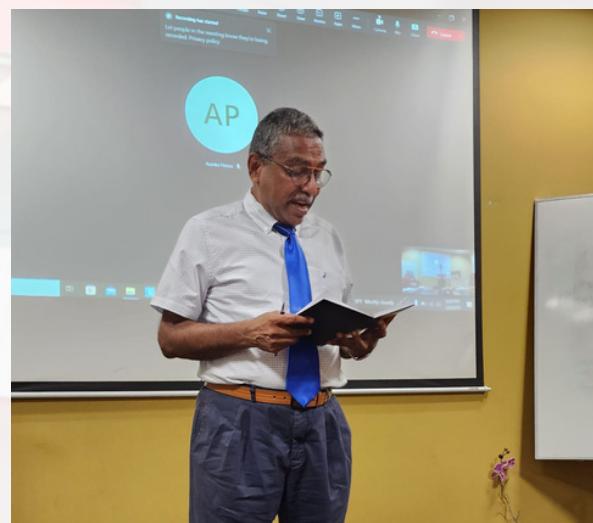
Meeting with TM Mohan Morais

The 338th meeting of the club was successfully concluded on a high note on March 9, 2023, with the esteemed presence of TM Mohan Morais, who graciously served as the Grammarian for the session.

Here is the meeting in TM Mohan's eyes.

It was good to be a guest at the Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club meeting. I was playing the role of Grammarian (a role I enjoy playing).

Coming from a club where we have 40 members at a meeting, the crowd here was 'small', But believe me I found the enthusiasm 'huge.'



MEETINGS WITH VISITING TOASTMASTERS CONTINUED..



The meeting started off (3 minutes late) and from that point it all went off seamlessly. All the elements were conducted efficiently, the Round Robin, The Table Topics and the Prepared Speeches. The Round Robin session had a Theme on Women's Day, (none of the men said anything bad about their wives).

Table Topics was quite novel. I believe that TT master is a huge fan of 'Sherlock Holmes or Dan Brown'.

The Prepared Speeches were all 'top drawer' stuff, and one particular speech on conserving and preserving the environment, was absolutely relevant and meaningful. (I remember this speech, because to me it had 'a take home message').

The evaluation session was 'so so' because as Toastmasters, we need to be more critical with our evaluations. You need to call a 'spade a spade' all with good intentions.



Besides the Grammarians report, I was called up to give a little talk on what I thought of the meeting. Having been a Toastmaster I shared my thoughts, being critical where I had to, and some words of advice (guidance) where needed.

Meeting concluded, and I left with a bag of gifts in my left hand and a Ambewella Kiddos drink in my right.

Thanks, TM Zaharine for the invitation.

Good luck to all of you."



CHRISTMAS THEME MEETING

Building on our enthusiastic momentum, ASTMC was able to conduct a multitude of engaging meetings. To stay up-to-date with the latest technology trends and make collaboration easier for our members, we took advantage of the opportunity to conduct hybrid meetings allowing members and visitors to join online and in person promoting Toastmasters within other Spensonians.



"O, come all ye, where stars are made" was the theme and invitation extended to all who attended the Christmas-themed meeting, under the guidance of TMOD Johann Steinwall convened on December 28th, 2022, and it was an event filled with joy, warmth, and affection.

Against the backdrop of a sparkling Christmas tree and members decked with Santa hats, the meeting began with an air of splendor, setting the tone for a festive gathering that would be remembered for many years. In keeping with the spirit of the season, attendees shared heartwarming stories of Christmases past, evoking cherished memories and merriment.

To conclude the evening on a sweet note, a delectable round of Christmas cake and steaming hot chocolate shakes were served, providing a delicious and satisfying finale to an eventful gathering. It was a wonderful reminder of the power of community, and a testament to the enduring spirit of the holiday season.



Christmas theme meeting
[Click here for a sneak-peak](#)



MENTOR-MENTEE

This section is dedicated to recognizing the mentor-mentee relationship within the Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club. The club has been able to foster strong bond among the members, while enabling them to co-learn and grow together.



Here is the Toastmasters journey of TM Shafiq Samsoodeen, under the mentorship of TM Zaharine Hameen

" Over the past six months, my journey with Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club has been nothing short of transformative, particularly in terms of my public speaking abilities. Under the guidance of my dedicated mentor, TM Zaharine, I have been able to push past my comfort zone and develop a level of confidence and skill that I never thought possible.

Throughout this experience, TM Zaharine has been an invaluable resource, always ready to offer insightful advice on how to improve my presentation skills and speech content.

Thanks to her guidance, I have been able to take on various roles during our club meetings and speeches and have received both positive feedback and constructive criticism. This feedback has helped me to avoid repeating mistakes and improve my grammar and language usage, allowing me to continually refine my public speaking abilities with confidence.

I must mention my immediate supervisor Mr. Vinodh for encouraging me to take on Toastmasters. I was a very shy and backward person who was happy to be in my corner of the world. He has been a pillar of support and inspiration always having more trust in my abilities than me. He has always encouraged me to push the boundaries of my potential, recognizing that Aitken Spence Toastmasters could be the perfect platform to enhance my leadership and public speaking abilities in a guided environment.

If you're considering joining Aitken Spence Toastmasters, I highly recommend taking advantage of this opportunity to confront your fears and develop your skills. Through Toastmasters, one can gain access to an exceptional pathway that can open doors to new opportunities, network within the organization and help achieve personal and professional goals.

I am incredibly grateful for the support and guidance that I have received from my mentor TM Zaharine & boss Mr. Vinodh. Their expertise and willingness to share their knowledge have been invaluable to me, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have them as my guiding lights.

TM Shafiq Samsoodeen
Emirates Holidays



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NEW MEMBER THOUGHTS



Read through the thoughts of our new members.
Great potential is awaiting to sail!



TM CHIRANTHA WIJERATHNE

Joining Toastmasters is the most significant step I have taken to overcome the "fear of public speaking and presentation." Apart from that, Toastmasters guides me in connecting with people, improving my language skills, storytelling, awakening the leader within me, and more. The friendly environment, encouragement and discipline, feedback for my effort, and mentoring are fascinating traits that excite me to join and participate actively. I would love to express my heartfelt gratitude to fellow Toastmasters and look forward to improving my skills by following the pathways.

TM THILINI EDIRISINGHE

I have joined Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club very recently as I believe that being a Toastmaster will support my career in developing the communication skills. I also have confidence that, it will also be a great advantage in growing competencies within as the process of developing a toastmaster is involved with many activities. I expect to take this as a great opportunity and actively be involved with Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club.



INTERVIEW CORNER



The Group Chief Human Resource Officer of Aitken Spence PLC, Mr. Suresh Muttiah and the Managing Director of Aitken Spence Travels (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Nalin Jayasundera shared their valuable thoughts and insights about the Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club.

"We can see the members of ASTMC have always contributed to the growth of the company, negotiations on behalf of the company, and they are very confident, and they will always try to get the best for the organization."

- Mr, Nalin Jayasundera, Managing Director of Aitken Spence Travels (Pvt) Ltd.

"Over the last decade Aitken Spence has been blessed with the Toastmasters initiative. Organizations spend millions of rupees in terms of building communication skills. I personally see how people have transformed through Toastmasters initiative at Aitken Spence"

- Mr. Suresh Muttiah, Group Chief Human Resource Officer of Aitken Spence PLC.

WATCH THE VIDEO! 



The video player interface features a red and blue geometric background. On the left, the text "AITKEN SPENCE TOASTMASTERS CLUB" is displayed in white, bold, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a circular play button icon containing a white triangle pointing right. In the bottom right corner of the video frame, there is a small portion of a video player's control bar, showing a progress bar and two circular control buttons.

Aitken Spence Toastmasters C

AITKEN SPENCE
TOASTMASTERS
CLUB



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CREATIVE FLYERS



Theme of the day
**STAY
HEALTHY
STAY
HAPPY** ☺

TM NIMESH FERNANDO
Toastmaster of the day

TUESDAY | 31ST JANUARY
05.15 TO 7.15 PM

9th Floor | Hexagon Board Room
via MS Teams

Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club



**BOLD &
BEAUTIFUL**
THEME OF THE DAY

TM MOHAN MORAIS
Visiting Toastmaster & Grammarian

THURSDAY | 09TH MARCH
05.15 TO 7.15 PM

9th Floor | Hexagon Board Room
via MS Teams

Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club



Theme of the Day
**GOOD
OR
BAD
LUCK**

TM Supun Jayawardene
Toastmaster of the Day

TUESDAY | 21ST MARCH
05.15 TO 7.15 PM

9th Floor | Hexagon Board Room
via MS Teams

Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club



THEME OF THE DAY
**EVERYTHING
STARTS WITH A
DREAM**

TM ZAHARINE HAMEEN
TOASTMASTER OF THE DAY

THURSDAY
23RD FEBRUARY
05.15 TO 7.15 PM

9th Floor | Hexagon Board Room
via MS Teams

AREA DIRECTOR'S VISIT
TM GISHAN LIYANAGE
AREA DIRECTOR
AREA 14

Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club



**COMPETITION
vs
COLLABORATION**

TM Hasantha Sooriyarachchi
Toastmaster of the day

13 TH DECEMBER
5.30 PM ONWARDS

9th Floor | Hexagon Board Room
via MS Teams

Visiting Toastmaster of the day
DTM Srianthie Salgado
Lyceum Toastmasters Club

Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club



**O, COME ALL YE, WHERE
STARS ARE MADE!**

TM Johann Steinwall
Toastmaster of the day

28 TH DECEMBER
5.30 PM ONWARDS

9th Floor | Hexagon Board Room
via MS Teams

Dress code: Red, green or something christmacy!

Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club



CAPTURES





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EDITOR'S MESSAGE



I am delighted to present the latest edition of our newsletter, which is brimming with updates and insights from the Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club. Our members have remained steadfast in their commitment to personal and professional growth, and this newsletter is a testament to their dedication and hard work.

This edition is filled with a diverse range of articles, including highlights from our themed meetings, perspectives from visiting Toastmasters, captivating joint meeting tales, and personal reflections from our members about their unique Toastmasters journeys.

Our hope is that these articles will not only inform but also inspire you on the Toastmasters journey and what it can do to you as a person for personal development.

Don't forget friends, I would like to remind you that it's time to renew your memberships and consider joining a corporate Toastmasters club such as Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club. This will provide you with valuable opportunities to enhance your public speaking skills, which will undoubtedly benefit your career development.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the talented contributors who worked tirelessly to bring this newsletter edition to life. Thank you for your dedication and hard work.

Warm regards,

TM Zaharine Rahaman Hameen

VP Public Relations

Aitken Spence Toastmasters Club

Division I District 82

Toastmasters International

WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK



Your suggestions are valuable to us.
Please scan the QR code to share your thoughts.



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