

Can you nominate someone as 'Champion of Chennai'?

KSA Trust is gearing up for the 11th edition of this initiative, and is looking for names in seven categories

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

If the real character of a city is defined by its people, then it is imperative to identify those in their midst that champion causes and have them honoured.

KSA Trust is inviting nominations from the public for the 11th edition of its flagship initiative 'Champions of Chennai' (CoC) that honours people from the field of arts, sports, education, science, health care, social initiative and enterprise.

The annual exercise usually begins this time of the year by inviting nominations, which are then shortlisted and presented to a jury. The winners are announced on August 17 every year.

A meeting of friends

The Trust was formed in August 2013 by Kalyanasundaram & Associates, a Chennai-based accounting firm, and its associate accounting and payroll services company Tandem.

In a virtual interaction with *The Hindu Downtown*, the core team members of the Trust – K. Kalyanasundaram, T. R. Gopalakrishnan,



Winners of the 2023 edition

R. Manikandan and Vijaya Kalyanasundaram – say the 'Champion of Chennai' awards has been evolving over the years. Exemplified through the CoC Trophy, where the logo represents the cross-section of a Conch, reflecting evolution and growth just like the journey of the champions.

In its early years, CoC started by inviting nominations by word of mouth. Today they have a structured process in place, and the website offers details for citizens to send nominations through the year.

A champion can be an individual or an organisation that has impacted people in the city with their work and is not already famous or popular outside their circles.

"We do some research on the nominee before making them part of the shortlist, and we do not encourage self-nomination," say us-

tees T.R. Gopalakrishnan and R. Manikandan.

Science was a category added in the later years, and the trustees are sincerely looking at identifying more achievers in this area.

"We are also looking at getting nominations from various parts of the city, especially north Chennai," says K. Kalyanasundaram.

Currently, the bulk of the nominations comes from non-profits followed by enterprises.

Over the years, CoC has added new features to take the work done by the champions to the younger generation.

Through 'Champions Talks', winners are taken to educational institutions to deliver motivational talks. The first of such talks was held at P.S. Higher Secondary School in Mylapore, where Thirupurasundari Sevel, who won CoC in the Arts and Culture category,

presented a talk on the city's heritage buildings and their conservation.

In another event, quiz master Naveen Jayakumar interacted with students of ASAN Memorial School. This month, a talk is scheduled with the students of Stella Maris College.

To encourage champions to network, they started hosting a meet-up where all the awardees across editions are invited. "Even those who were involved in the process are part of the meet-up," says Vijaya.

The Trustee have more plans in the offing. They are looking for corporates that would want to co-brand an award category.

They also want to revive the 'Champions of Kovai' edition that had taken a break due to the pandemic.

The Trust invites citizens to vol-

unteer with them in any possible way – such as researching about nominees, writing the story of the champion and helping with the other activities of the group.

Visit www.championsofchennai.org to know about earlier awardees and their contribution to the people of Chennai.

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