

This American is part of the campaign for Madurai Central

TNN | May 2, 2016, 08.15 AM IST



Madurai: She is the ‘mel naatu marumagal’ (foreign daughter in-law) of Madurai who wants to see the city grow. Margaret Thiagarajan, wife of DMK Madurai Central candidate Palanivel Thiagarajan, is ready for her new role as a politician’s spouse. An American citizen who has been living in India since 2007, she says she’s not surprised by her husband’s entry into politics. “It was part of our everyday conversation since we met,” she said.

Thiagarajan, a former Lehman Brothers banker, is part of the traditional PTR family, which still remembers the work his father and grandfather did. “I am well acquainted with Madurai and I love this place,” she said.

An industrial engineer, she gave up her job to become a homemaker after they moved back to India. Though her husband initially planned to stay in the US for longer, their plans changed when her father-in-law died in 2006. She recalls how her father-in-law PTR Palanivel Rajan taught her how to crack a coconut in two perfect halves by hitting it against the ground. That was the beginning of her “Indian training” and she can now lay a perfect south Indian meal on the table. “Chappatis, I have to master though,” she said, adding that her mother-in-law Rukmani

Rajan is an inspiration.

Her political debut also took place when her husband kicked off his campaign last Saturday. Magaret and her sons Palani and Vel were there to cheer Thiagarajan on. “I can say a few words in Tamil, and am willing to join the campaign and help in any way I can,” she says.

She’s aware that her husband’s political career would mean less time for the family and also less privacy. “When he becomes MLA, he would be here most of the time. My two boys and I will be here so I can help achieve something he has always wanted to do,” she says. Their older son Palani has started asking if he too can be a politician like his dad. “First, improve your Tamil before you even think of politics in Tamil Nadu, I tell him,” she says.

*<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/madurai/This-American-is-part-of-the-campaign-for-Madurai-Central/articleshowprint/52070186.cms> 1/2
9/24/2020 This American is part of the campaign for Madurai Central - Times of India*

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/madurai/This-American-is-part-of-the-campaign-for-Madurai-Central/articleshowprint/52070186.cms> 2/2