



INDIA COMMUNITY RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL CENTER, INC. (ICRCC)

A non-profit organization founded in 1984
1990 Meadowbrook Drive, Syracuse, NY 13224

www.icrcc.org | www.facebook.com/ICRCC | email: falguni@icrcc.org



Winter 2022

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Upcoming ICRCC Events Summary:

Event	Date	Place	Contact	Additional Notes
Holi	TBD	TBD	Falguni Vora	
General Body Meeting	19 Mar 2022	TBD	Falguni Vora	See info inside
International Taste Festival	9 – 10 Apr 2022	NYS Fair Expo Center	Sanjeev Kumar & Falguni Vora	See flier inside
Earth Day Activity	22 / 23 Apr 2022	India Center	Falguni Vora	
Art and Food Festival	Jun 2022	India Center	Falguni Vora	

Event information is listed at icrcc.org/ICRCC/EventList

1. President's Message

Namaste:

On behalf of India Community Religious and Cultural Center (ICRCC), I wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.

As the clock turns to 2022, we reflect on 2021. Year 2021 started with a rejuvenated hope that everything would be normal soon. But it turned out to be a year of new adaption, learning, and challenges. So, kudos to all of us for going through a very fast-paced, busy and eventful year.

Despite many challenges, ICRCC managed to keep a good balance between virtual, hybrid and in-person events following CDC guidelines.

And here we are at the start of year 2022 still dealing with the pandemic and its side effects.

In 2021, Holi was celebrated virtually, Earth Day was observed outdoors by cleaning our Community Center and neighborhood area, and Spring Festival was turned into a takeout food festival combined with an art exhibit by our talented local artists. India Day picnic at Clarks Reservation Park saw a big community presence due to low COVID impact at that time. Diwali dhamaka was a huge success at the downtown Syracuse Hotel where we had lot of fun, food, and entertainment. COVID-related safety precautions were followed at all in-person events. It was wonderful and humbling to organize the super successful and highly visible Breakfast Program for our County vaccine center staff and volunteers!

I would like to thank my fellow board members who worked extremely hard to make all this possible and to you all our community members who continue to encourage us with your participation and enthusiasm.

Let us all welcome 2022 with a new hope that COVID stays in abeyance, and we are able to fulfill our wishes and dreams. ICRCC has a vision of holding a big lineup of diverse events. With the support from our community, we can come together again, meet face-to-face and celebrate many festivals and also make a difference in our local community by reaching out in terms of volunteering efforts.

As always, your involvement, suggestions, ideas are very valuable. Please reach out to me using the contact information on the front page.

With love and warm regards,
Falguni Vora



Best wishes from ICRCC on the 73rd Indian Republic Day

2. Greetings from the Editor

Happy 2022 to all our readers!

New year, new beginnings, and new hopes. Optimism is the word for me. Very hopeful that the pandemic will be behind us soon.

Summer and fall times were beautiful as always, and ICRCC was able to hold a few in-person events, which were very well received. In this newsletter we are happy to report the highlights of a few past programs. We are also sharing reports from various committees. ICRCC board members are working tirelessly to improve OUR center. Please reach out to us if you would like to help in any way.

We welcome all newcomers to town. Please contact us for any help needed in settling down. ICRCC is OUR organization, and we would like to see more engagement from our readers. Please write to us and let us know your interests.

Regards,
Shridevi

3. Membership Committee Request

Are you a member of ICRCC for the year 2022? If your answer is yes, a big Thank You! If the answer is No, we are urging you to become members. Consider these advantages:

- Family membership is \$50, Individual is \$30, that is less than price of going out for dinner
- It brings you closer to a home away from home, thereby creating a close-knit family
- Opportunity to build strong relationship and friendship
- Create a path for future of our next generation to keep our roots
- Many events are held catered towards varied age group and regions of India. Some have discounted ticket pricing for members
- Membership makes you eligible to be part of the board of directors, contributing to the functionality of the organization
- Attend General Body Meeting and get a full overview of the functioning of the organization
- Participate to bring change; your involvement can further enhance the organization

More members we have, more perks can be offered. So become a member now, ask your friends and colleagues to do the same.

And here is the big incentive!!

5 free tickets to the International Taste Festival¹ will be given away to members at the end of February and March.

Become a member and qualify for the ticket drawing.

¹ ICRCC will be participating at this event to be held at the State Fair Grounds. [See flier on page 14](#)

ICRCC Membership: January – December 2021

- Regular Yearly Membership: Family = \$50, Single = \$30
- Permanent Membership: Family = \$1000, Single = \$750

Payment options:

- online: icrcc.org (preferred)
- check: ICRCC, 1990 Meadowbrook Drive, Syracuse, NY 13224

If you have any questions, please contact the membership committee:

Beena Kappil: bjkappil@yahoo.com

Shridevi Karikethalli: shridevi@icrcc.org

ICRCC is a Not-for-Profit Corporation under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Your donations and contributions to the Permanent Member Fund may be tax deductible. Kindly check with your tax advisor.

Connect with us:

email: falguni@icrcc.org

facebook: www.facebook.com/ICRCC/

Written Material can be mailed to:

ICRCC
1990 Meadowbrook Drive
Syracuse, NY 13224

4. General Body Meeting

Please plan to attend the annual General Body Meeting of ICRCC, tentatively scheduled on Sat, 19-Mar-2022 (due to COVID-19, specifics such as time | in-person or virtual, are yet to be determined). All members are invited to attend. In addition to other agenda items such as discussing past activities, expenditures, and budget, an important task at this meeting is to elect new members to the Board of Directors.

The Board consists of 15 Directors, each of whom is expected to serve for three years unless they are replacing a Director who had resigned before completing the full term of three years. This year, we need nominations for seven Directors.

Directors meet once a month to plan and organize various activities and events, as well as to oversee other aspects of the organization; regular attendance is required, since Board business cannot be conducted without a quorum. In their first meeting, Directors also elect the members of the Executive Committee, i.e., the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, as well as members of other committees. Directors continue in office until their successors are elected, unless they resign earlier. Whenever an event is organized by ICRCC, some Directors take the lead and others help in various ways; other interested members of the community may also take an active role.

There are seven open positions that need to be filled, and so far the following individuals have been nominated for election to the ICRCC Board of Directors:

1. Asha Bassi
2. Sunil Gupta
3. Shridevi Karikhehalli
4. Kishan Mehrotra
5. Surabhi Raina
6. Ajoy Roy

Several of these nominees have already served 3-year terms on the Board and would prefer if other ICRCC members would be willing to serve instead of them. Hence additional nominations (including self-nominations) are requested and can be made by emailing the Nominations Committee (mohan@syr.edu) and the current ICRCC President (falguni@icrcc.org).

Nominations can also be made from the floor during the General Body Meeting.

5. India Center: Building Committee Report

Submitted by: Kishan Mehrotra

Dear members of ICRCC. In our September 2021 newsletter I listed projects that need our attention. I am pleased to inform that two of the most pressing concerns have been successfully completed.

1. The parking lot – Thanks to the contractor, parking lot was fixed just before the snow arrival. Three big holes are gone, and the parking lot looks much better. In summer, we may want to readdress remaining concerns.
2. HVAC system -- One persistent concern about our inability to maintain comfortable temperature in the building is taken care of. This project mainly involved attic insulation and replacement of all broken pipes. The area above the foyer was also insulated. Overall, this project (appears) has made a big difference in maintaining the temperature.

In the September 2021 newsletter, I mentioned few other projects that we wish to accomplish.

1. The idea of combining the two basement rooms to accommodate larger gatherings, with flexibility to partition them, if necessary. Presently, this project is on hold.
2. To make the kitchen and eating areas more functional. This project is partially complete. Spearheaded by our dedicated board member, Sunil Gupta, an island has been built in the kitchen with utensils storage facility. A door to the kitchen from basement entrance area will proceed soon.
3. Build a covered porch just outside the current entrance to the building. This is our most ambitious addition to the building. Benefits of this addition are: e.g., in winter we can use it to hang coats, leave winter boots, and prevent cold draft of air from entering the main building; and in summer this place can be used for small gatherings as well as to manage crowd overflow. The cost of this addition is approximately \$50,000. This project is currently on hold.
4. Some additional projects, that we hope to accomplish soon, include securing the building by putting cameras inside and outside and covering the windows in the main hall using better quality shades.

Two of the three projects listed above are on hold due to lack of funds. As I wrote in the previous newsletter, the Building Committee proposes to embark on a fund-raising effort in the amount of \$50,000 to \$75,000. Unfortunately, things are moving at a slow pace due to waves of COVID-19 that prevents us, to our disappointment, from organizing meetings and events in the Center.

Thanks to some community members for donating money towards building improvements and maintenance after our September newsletter. We, the Building Committee, continue to appeal to community members for large and small donations for improvements and maintenance.

The building is OURS. Please suggest ideas and participate in efforts to improve the same.

6. ICRCC awarded NYSCA grant

Submitted by: Shalabh Maroo & Jayant Datta

ICRCC is excited to announce that it has been awarded a \$16k grant from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) for the calendar year 2022!

The grant strengthens ICRCC's commitment to preserving India's rich cultural and spiritual heritage by expanding our ability to expose an even larger population of the Central New York community to the vibrant traditions of India.

Through this grant, we look forward to teaching and promoting India's diverse dance and art forms by conducting classes at ICRCC's home located at 1990 Meadowbrook Drive, Syracuse, NY.

We were successful in receiving the grant due to the strong involvement of the Indian community in the Greater Syracuse area, the wonderful Indian artists we have in our community, and ICRCC's continuous dedication to hold numerous cultural events over the past decades! ICRCC is a 100% volunteer-run non-profit organization, and the Indian community's support is truly appreciated!

If you are interested in holding specific classes which can help expand India's art and cultural tradition in the Greater Syracuse area, please contact us at your earliest convenience:

nysca@icrcc.org

Let's discuss how we could work together to fund an initiative you are passionate about. The grant allows ICRCC to pay for your efforts to develop and conduct the classes.

7. Update on recent Community Events

Gandhi Jayanti

Submitted by: Shridevi Karikehalli

ICRCC celebrated Gandhi Jayanti on Saturday October 2, 2021. The event being on Saturday was fortuitous as it afforded the opportunity for many members of the community to participate.



A variety of programs were organized to celebrate this significant day. The program was conducted at our ICRCC Center.

The program started with a multi religious prayer (Sarva Dharma Prarthana), as Gandhiji used to do during his interaction with the people.

It is gratifying to note that the young children in the community participated enthusiastically in performances, which depicted the teachings of Gandhiji, which included amongst others the parable of the three monkeys, which

was very aptly done. The three monkeys stand for “speak no evil, see no evil and hear no evil”.

The children of Jnana Mandir association sent us pre-recorded versions of these programs. They had been practicing for a very long time and it was gratifying to see them perform.

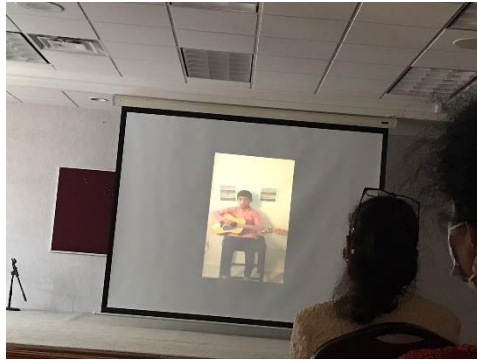
To top it off was a beautiful rendition by young Sureeta Das – of the Bengali song “Ekla Chalo Re” written by Rabindranath Tagore.

After the children’s performance, Gandhiji made a surprise appearance! As he walked into the room clad in his simple dhoti and holding a cane, he somewhat resembled our community member Chilukuri Mohan. Gandhiji spoke about the important role played by women in the Indian Independence struggle, and how his wife Kasturba had worked very hard in leading this effort. He exhorted everyone to speak out against injustice and use moral strength to make the world a better place.

Dr. Kumar Ashutosh then spoke about the current political situation in India, and expressed his concern that we may be moving away from the Gandhian approach to life.

There was also an enthusiastic response from the community to sign up to become volunteers for ICRCC which was befitting to the occasion in keeping with Gandhiji’s motto of community service.

We thank all the community members for their enthusiastic participation and support for volunteering.



A few images from ICRCC's Gandhi Jayanti event

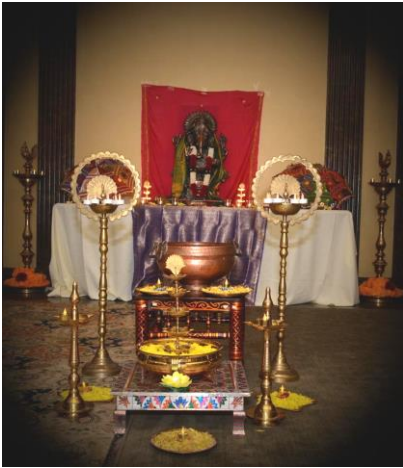


Diwali

Submitted by: Sunil Gupta

ICRCC celebrated Diwali in the Grand Ballroom at Marriott Downtown hotel on Sunday, November 21, 2021. The event went off very well considering the short time we had to prepare for this grand event due to the uncertainties of COVID-19 situation in the county. The event was well attended, and it was great to see many of our longtime supporters as well as some new faces. Everyone enjoyed the social hour with drinks and appetizers, followed by entertainment, dinner, and DJ dancing.

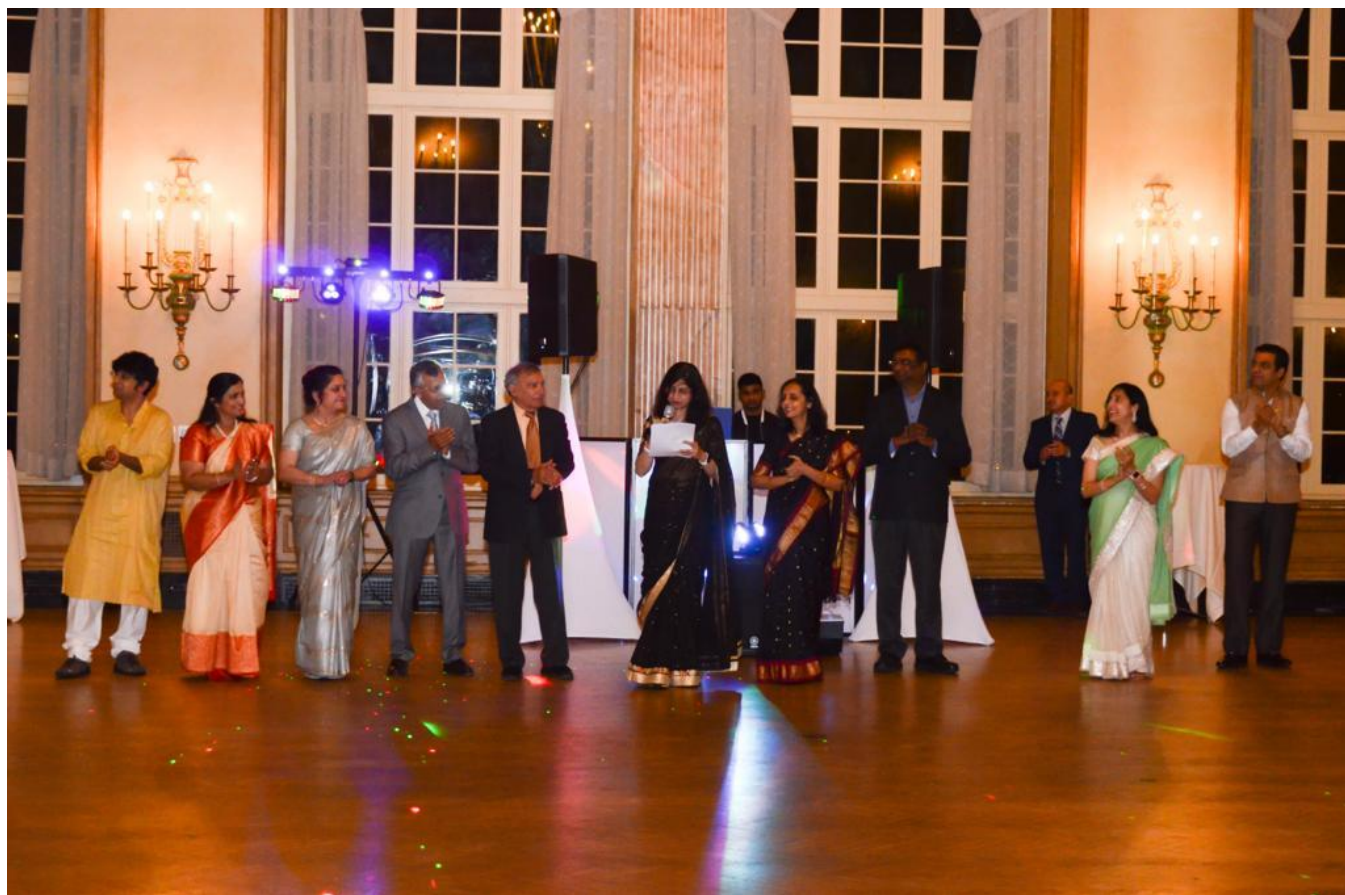
ICRCC thanks all the sponsors and community members who attended and contributed to this grand event.



Diwali dhamaka 2021







Christmas, Food Donation & Toy Drive

Submitted by: Beena Kappil

Christmas is a time of Joy and Peace! This year ICRCC organized the Christmas program on December 12, 2021, 4-6 PM.

Due to the recent increase in COVID-19 infections, ICRCC decided to hold a "Christmas open house". All local and CDC safety guidelines related to COVID were followed.

It was very joyous occasion with the ICRCC center bedecked in holiday decorations, Santa Claus onsite for picture taking, and joyous music in the background.

Snacks and beverages were provided, with the option of take-out containers.

We also had boxes for collecting new unwrapped toys to donate to Salvation Army Toys Drive. In addition, 116 pounds of nonperishable boxed food items and cans were collected and delivered to The Food Bank of Central NY. We would like to thank our community for the wonderful support.

Wishing everyone a healthy and Happy New Year!



Christmas 2021: A few board members (above), food and decorations (below)



8. Upcoming Events



NYS Fairgrounds – Exposition Center
Syracuse, New York 13209

Saturday, April 9: 12:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Sunday, April 10: 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm

In collaboration with the International Taste Festival,
India Community Religious and Cultural Center (ICRCC)
will be presenting a Cultural Program on:

Saturday, April 9, 2022 @ 6 pm

Visit our booth anytime during the weekend to get to know
ICRCC and sign up for 2022 Membership for additional Indian
Cultural Programs.

Tickets available at: www.showpass.com/internationaltastefestival

**Food
Entertainment
Family Fun**



Parking is FREE!

Community Activities

Jnana Mandir



Jnana Mandir program was initiated in ICRCC premises as of Sept 2019 by few members of Gita Vichara Group of Syracuse, in collaboration with Arsha Vidya Gurukulam (AVG) in Pennsylvania. Jnana Mandir's vision and mission are to promote spirituality and philosophy and devotion in the community. There are programs for adults as well as children.

- **Purna Vidya** – a children's educational program designed to give them exposure to our religion, culture, and spirituality. Children also learn Ramayana and Hindi. (Currently virtual)
- **In center program, 1st and 3rd Sunday, monthly** – Bhajans, Aarti, followed by Gita Pravachan by Swami Chinmayananda. Currently no in person activities.
- **Bhagavatam by Brhm. Surya Narayana** – on Saturdays at 7:30 pm (virtual)
- **Shri Vishnu Sahasranama by Brhm. Surya Narayana** on Wednesdays at 7:30 pm (virtual)
- **Hanuman chalisa** – Chalisa recital and Ram Bhajan on Tuesdays at 7:30 pm (virtual)
- **Festivals and poojas celebrations:** either virtual or in center based on circumstances

Contact: For more details, please visit www.jnanamandir.com and any questions contact Bala Murthy (jnanamandir101@gmail.com)

Please contact falguni@icrcc.org for inclusion of any Community News and Events in the ICRCC Newsletter for circulation

Email to let us know your interests

9. In Remembrance

Dr. Maheshwar Prasad Varshney



Our long-time community member Dr. Anju Varshney's father, Dr. Maheshwar Prasad Varshney, passed away in Aligarh, India on January 19, 2022.

Dr. Varshney was born on September 22, 1928, in Aligarh. He was a part of the first Electrical Engineering graduating class of Roorkee University (now IIT Roorkee). He completed his doctorate from the Sorbonne University in Paris in 1952. He was one of the founding professors of IIT Kharagpur, the first established IIT. After that, he became Head of Electrical Engineering at Moti Lal Nehru Engineering College in Allahabad.

In the mid-sixties, he joined the United Nations as a consultant to UNESCO. He helped establish engineering colleges in Baghdad and Mosul (Iraq) as well as in Bangkok (Thailand). He also taught at Syracuse University. He retired very early, after which he led a spiritual life and established a Gita temple near Aligarh. He wrote several books on the Bhagvad Gita. He donated his ashram to ISKCON who have now built the Gita Gyan Mandir (<http://www.iskconaligarh.com/>) at that site.

10. ICRCC Board Members (Current)

Executive Board Members:

Falguni Vora	falguni@icrcc.org	(President)
Shridevi Karikehalli	shridevi@icrcc.org	(Vice President)
Jayant Datta	icrcc.fin@gmail.com	(Treasurer)
Kishan Mehrotra	mehrotra@syr.edu	(Secretary)

Board Members:

Ari Chakraborty	archakra@syr.edu
Sunil Gupta	sunil4911@gmail.com
Beena Kappil	bjkappil@yahoo.com
Sanjeev Kumar	skumar@oswego.edu
Shalabh Maroo	scmaroo@syr.edu
Bala Murthy	vidyubala@yahoo.com
Surabhi Raina	sraina@syr.edu
Deepal Shah	shahdeepalr@gmail.com
Rachna Zirath	rachnazirath@gmail.com

Finance Committee: Jayant Datta (Chair), Ari Chakraborty

Membership Committee: Beena Kappil (Chair), Shridevi Karikehalli

Bylaws Review Committee: Bala Murthy (Chair), Surabhi Raina, Ari Chakraborty, Sanjeev Kumar, Shalabh Maroo

Nominations Committee: Chilukuri Mohan (Chair)

Building Committee: Kishan Mehrotra (Chair), Jayant Datta, Sunil Gupta, Sanjeev Kumar, Chilukuri Mohan

Newsletter: Shridevi Karikehalli (Editor), Jayant Datta, Kishan Mehrotra

Website: Sunil Gupta (Chair), Shalabh Maroo, Jayant Datta, Shridevi Karikehalli

Marketing: Sanjeev Kumar (Chair), Shridevi Karikehalli

The President is a member ex-officio of all committees except the Nominations Committee.

Connect with us:

email: falguni@icrcc.org

facebook: www.facebook.com/ICRCC/

Written Material can be mailed to:

ICRCC
1990 Meadowbrook Drive
Syracuse, NY 13224