



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

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

[www.icrcc.org](http://www.icrcc.org) | [www.facebook.com/ICRCC](https://www.facebook.com/ICRCC) | email: [shridevi@icrcc.org](mailto:shridevi@icrcc.org)

## August 2025

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### Upcoming ICRCC Events Summary:

Event	Date	Place	Contact	Additional Notes
India Day Picnic	16-Aug-2025	Onondaga Lake Park	<a href="#">Chilukuri Mohan</a>	<a href="#">See details here</a>
Diwali	25-Oct-2025	The Oncenter	<a href="#">Sunil Gupta</a>	<a href="#">See details here</a>
Christmas	13-Dec-2025	India Center	<a href="#">Shridevi Karikehalli</a>	

# President's Message

Dear friends:

ICRCC has been buzzing with exciting activities again this year. Thanks to the tireless efforts of our dedicated volunteers and board members, we have been able to host a variety of exciting events that have brought our community together in meaningful ways. In the following sections of this newsletter, you will find highlights and photos capturing the spirit and joy of these gatherings.

Organizing these events takes significant time, energy, and resources – including essential financial support. We are delighted to share that ICRCC has been awarded the Tier Three Project Support 2025 and Small Festival Grant from CNY Arts, totaling \$7,975. This generous support will allow us to partially fund some great cultural programs in the coming months.

While art and culture remain at the heart of ICRCC's mission, we continue to grow and serve our community in many other important ways. A key focus for us is to engage the young adults more actively, as the future of ICRCC depends on their vision and involvement. Increasing membership amongst this group is an important step towards this goal. Please see the [membership section](#) in this newsletter for more details.

As the academic year draws to a close, we are proud to honor the accomplishments of our graduating students. Congratulations to all, we are so proud of what you have achieved and excited to see what the future holds for you.

As always, we value your input and welcome any ideas you may have to help us grow and improve. Your continued involvement is what makes ICRCC strong and vibrant.

With heartfelt thanks and warm wishes for a joyous summer.

Shridevi Karikehalli

President, ICRCC

[shridevi@icrcc.org](mailto:shridevi@icrcc.org)

## ICRCC Board Update

We thank Chaitanya Halbe for his outstanding service as a Board Member and Secretary of ICRCC since January 2023. As he along with his family move to Seattle to begin a new chapter, we wish them the very best.

We are excited to welcome Falguni Vora as our new Secretary. She brings a wealth of experience, enthusiasm, and a strong commitment to the community. Congratulations, Falguni!

## Membership Information

If you are already a member of ICRCC, **THANK YOU** – we sincerely appreciate your ongoing support. It validates our mission of sharing India's rich heritage with the larger Central New York community.

As a 100% volunteer-run organization, we try to maximize the impact of your membership funds by planning a wide variety of events throughout the year to serve our community.

If you are not a member, please consider joining to enjoy the following benefits:

- attend ICRCC events at reduced rates
- attend the General Body Meeting (GBM)
- shape the future of ICRCC by becoming a board member

Membership details are shown below.

### ICRCC Membership

- Regular Yearly Membership:      Family =    \$75,              Single =    \$50
- Permanent Membership:              Family = \$1500,              Single = \$1000

Payment options:

- Online:      [icrcc.org](http://icrcc.org) (preferred)
- Mail:              ICRCC, 1990 Meadowbrook Drive, Syracuse, NY 13224

If you have any questions, please contact:

**Sanjay Sreenivasa Murthy:** [sanjayon19@gmail.com](mailto:sanjayon19@gmail.com)

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

## Update on ICRCC Events



### Music Event celebrating Mohammed Rafi's Birth Centenary

by **Chilukuri K. Mohan**

On January 18, 2025, ICRCC organized a celebration of the birth centenary of the renowned Bollywood playback singer, Mohammed Rafi (Dec. 24, 1924 – July 31, 1980). Several community members participated by singing upbeat and romantic songs made famous by Rafi, using Karaoke tracks of his recordings.

The evening was enjoyed by an audience of about 80 people, and was particularly successful, thanks to Mr. Navneet Kharbanda from Columbus (Ohio), the main featured singer at the event.

Other singers from the Syracuse Indian community included Lakshmi Kavety, Rajiv Kumar, Chilukuri Mohan, Jitendra Patel, Amar Swarnkar, Pramod Varshney, Falguni Vora, Rajiv Vora, as well as students Sahana Anand and Venkata Yashwanth Yellapragada.

In addition to many solos, a few duets were also performed, as well as everybody's favorite: "ramayya vastaavayya" involving several singers.





## Republic Day



On the 26th of January, 1950, the Constitution of India came into effect as the governing document of the Republic of India, following the work of the Constituent Assembly since 1946; the first draft of the constitution had been prepared by Benegal Narsing Rau, and the Drafting Committee was chaired by Bhimrao Ambedkar. 26th January was chosen because of the first proclamation of “Purna Swaraj” by the Indian National Congress in December 1929, declaring January 26, 1930 to be the day of Independence, beyond dominion status subservient to the British monarch.

Along with Indians and those of Indian origin living throughout the world, we in Central New York also celebrated the 76th Republic Day of India on 26th January 2025. ICRCC organized this event which was held in the India Center in Syracuse. The event was very successful and was attended by about 100 community members. In addition to short inspirational speeches by ICRCC members, we also enjoyed a cultural program, with melodious songs and beautiful solo and group dance performances by children and adults. Finally, we enjoyed a social hour, snacks and tea prepared and provided by several ICRCC volunteers.



# General Body Meeting (GBM)

by Shridevi Karikehalli

The Annual General Body Meeting (GBM) of ICRCC was held on February 1, 2025, at the India Center.

At the meeting, Secretary Chaitanya Halbe shared highlights of the various events organized over the past year. An update on membership status was also provided.

Treasurer Jayant Datta presented a summary of the organization's current financial status, along with a comparison to last year's budget. The proposed budget for 2025 was also discussed.

Sunil Gupta provided an update on the condition of the building and encouraged community members to get involved as volunteers and donors.

The election of new board members was held. I warmly welcome our new board members — Ajeet Gajra, Indu Gupta, Sanjay Sreenivasa Murthy, Falguni Vora, and Pardeep Zirath — to the ICRCC team. Each brings valuable experience and unique talents. I look forward to working with them and to the fresh perspectives, enthusiasm, and dedication they will bring as we continue to grow and serve our community together.

I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our outgoing board members — Ari Chakraborty, Surabhi Raina, and Bandaru Ramarao — for their outstanding service and unwavering commitment to ICRCC. Their leadership and contributions have made a lasting impact on our organization and community.





# Holi

by Jayshri Prasad and Ashok Sangani

ICRCC celebrated this year the popular colorful festival Holi on April 6 at the ICRCC Center. The program started with music and dance with Bollywood Holi songs, followed by early dinner prepared by volunteers. This was followed by lighting fire and playing with colors in the parking lot outside the center. This year's celebration was made special by Mr. Brant Martin, a commercial photographer, who captured many colorful moments by photos and videos at no cost to ICRCC. Overall, it was a fun-filled evening with colorful memories.





# International Taste Festival

by **Falguni Vora and Sunil Gupta**

The International Taste Festival was held on April 12, 2025 at the State Fairgrounds. We collaborated with Flavors of India for this event. The restaurant provided many delicious dishes and our volunteers helped sell and manage the booth.

From the onset of the International Taste Festival 3 years back, ICRCC has been actively participating in this popular event. Our cultural segment has gained immense admiration. Due to the colorful and vibrant nature of it, we usually get the most popular slot to perform. This year was no exception and we did full justice to it, thanks to our very talented artists. From classical, semi-classical to folk, patriotic and Bollywood, the platter we served was full of variety and creativity. The impromptu finale item of Bollywood Zumba on Bhangra music was a big hit and so much fun for participants as well as audience. The whole segment made audiences from all ethnicities witness our rich cultural heritage. Special thanks to all the organizers and choreographers for bringing out a wonderful program.

## Spring Festival

by **Falguni Vora**

Spring festival is one of ICRCC's biggest and most popular events. But this year it has taken leaps and bounds in terms of number of participants as well as attendance. The cultural program was a magnificent success showcasing diversity, unity and harmony.







Almost 100 participants (in 20 dances) presented the true essence of Indian traditional art forms. Each of the classical dances in the form of Bharatnatyam and Kathak were full of creativity and richness. A few semi-classical performances beautifully blended tradition with innovation by taking a contemporary approach.



Similarly Bollywood fusion dances were full of energy, power and versatility yet preserving culture. One of the unique things about this year's program was the variety of folk dances from different parts of India. Kumaoni from Uttarakhand, Lavani from Maharashtra, Garba from Gujarat, Koothu from Tamil Nadu, and Bhangra from Punjab brought the colorful, vibrant and diverse culture of India on stage.







The event ran extremely smoothly and on time. The QR code link of the program line up was posted at various locations outside of the auditorium which helped participants and organizers to be ready for their items.

Thank you to all the organizers, choreographers, participants and volunteers for making our Spring Festival a grand success.





# Community News

## Spellbound Journey

by Simran Sanders

I am Simran Sanders, an incoming Freshman at Jamesville-Dewitt High School and recently competed in the 2025 Centennial Scripps National Spelling Bee. This was my third consecutive year competing as the Central New York Post Standard Regional Champion. The Central New York region stretches from Syracuse up to Oswego, West to Auburn, South to Cortland, and East to Utica.

In general, the Scripps Bee starts in the Fall of each year with more than 11 million students from several countries competing at the classroom or school level. Through a tournament of school, district, and regional written and oral bees, those numbers are pared down to about 240 Scripps National Spelling Bee qualifiers in late May of each year. En route to nationals this year, I was able to answer approximately 80/80 written and oral spelling and vocabulary questions correctly.



I consistently placed in the top 60 at Nationals for the past three years, including this year's competition. JDMS Principal Andy Eldridge recently said this of my Spelling Bee run:

"Simran has been a spelling bee force representing Central New York on a national level for the past three years. I can speak for the entire school when I say Simran's dedication and work ethic serve as a fantastic example for J-D Middle School and the community as a whole."

I greatly benefited from the process and challenge of preparing for spelling bees since 5th grade. In that year, I placed second at CNY Bee. At first, I was upset to finish one spot out of Nationals, but eventually, I took the result as motivation to work harder toward a stronger base of word knowledge.

Now that I have competed in my last bee, I look forward to growing my horizons in other ways through science and math enrichment.

## Congratulations to our Graduating Students!!!

*We at ICRC are proud of our community members' families' achievements, and we celebrate with them the graduation of their children after years of hard work. We wish them all the best as they go out into the world achieving ever higher goals and successful accomplishments in years to come! Below is a compilation of the information about graduating students received by ICRC, arranged in alphabetical order (first name).*

**Annika Emily Dharwadkar** graduated from Fayetteville-Manlius High School, and plans to attend the University of Rochester, majoring in Financial Economics and Studio Arts. Her interests and hobbies include Studio Arts and Martial Arts. Her accomplishments include painting a Wall Mural at the Matilda Jocelyn Gage Center in Fayetteville, NY.

**Anushka Joardar** graduated from Jamesville-Dewitt High School, and plans to attend Binghamton University (SUNY). Her interests and hobbies include collecting and growing rare indoor plants, as well as crocheting different kinds of soft toys. She had worked on a full time summer internship at Syracuse University in 10th and 11th grade and co authored a journal paper. She had won Gold Medals in National Spanish Exam ( Level 4 and 5), and in Science Olympiad Regional Competition ( Anatomy and Physiology), and many others from 9th to 12th grade. She was ranked 7th in the NY State Quals Swimming Championship in 100 Y back stroke in 2025.

**Chinmayi Anilkumar Acharya** graduated from Fayetteville-Manlius High School, and plans to attend the University at Buffalo (SUNY), majoring in Neuroscience. She is a Bharatanatyam dancer, and has also been helping to run her family's food business during the weekends.

**Rishi Gudapati** graduated from Fayetteville-Manlius High School, and plans to attend the University at Buffalo (SUNY), majoring in Aerospace Engineering. He was an active member of the FM Rowing Team and the Chargers Rowing Club, where he competed at various levels and participated in state-level regattas. He is an avid skier, always eager to take on fresh powder and new slopes. His interests include learning to fly, and he hopes to help shape the future of air and space travel.

**Ruthvik Adabala** graduated from Liverpool High School, and plans to attend Binghamton University (SUNY), majoring in Accounting. He was among the highest ranked students in his high school, and received an academic excellence award and scholarship funding.

**Ryan James Clewis** graduated from Full Sail University (Florida) with a BS, majoring in Film. He is an award winning photographer and film editor, and is currently working as a freelance short film editor. He plans to work in film production. His hobbies include Poker, Ping Pong, and working as an Auto Mechanic.

**Samreen Mangat** graduated from Fayetteville-Manlius High School, and plans to attend Binghamton University (SUNY), majoring in Biology, pre-medical track. She has been a member of FM Varsity tennis team, and the National Honor Society. She enjoys reading and doing puzzles.

**Uday Singh Atwal** graduated from Fayetteville-Manlius High School, and plans to attend the University of Ottawa, majoring in Biology (Honours). He loves to play Ice Hockey, Ski, Hike, and Photography. He was a member of FM Student Council, and his accomplishments include winning the Scholastic Gold Key Award for Photography, Merit Award Storrs All High Art Show, Scholastic Silver Key Award for Photography, High Honour Roll, 5+5 Award for Perfect AP WORLD and US History Exams 5.

**Varna Aeleti** graduated from Fayetteville-Manlius High School, and plans to attend Rensselaer Polytechnic majoring in Biology (pre-Dental track), where she is going as a Student Athlete (soccer). She has been soccer captain for her club and high school. She has been the MC for FM Dance Marathon, and has won FMHS HSA School Spirit Award, NCAA Division III College Athlete Award, and FM Athletic Hornet Award. She loves to coach soccer to younger kids. and volunteers at Camp Good Days.

**Venkata Prahalada Sai Vamsi Adabala** graduated from Stony Brook University (SUNY), double majoring in Biochemistry and Mathematics. He is planning to pursue PhD studies at Upstate Medical University (NY).

## Jnana Mandir

by Vidyul Krishnan

Jnana Mandir (Temple of Knowledge) is a Syracuse, NY based organization serving globally, the spiritual and religious needs of the participants. Jnana Mandir conducts Purna Vidya, a children's class that teaches Yoga and Values, Hindi, and Mahabharata as well as adult programming that includes Vishnu Sahasranama, bhajans and Gita. To enroll in Purna Vidya, visit <http://www.jnanamandir.com/class> Registration for Fall 2025 begins now.

Currently, Bhagavatam web series which has been going on for 5+ years and Upanishad series which is onto the fourth session, 'Chandogya Upanishad' and group chanting of Hanuman Chalisa, which is hosted virtually every Tuesday, are ongoing. More details of our events are at <http://www.jnanamandir.com/events>

Several events are conducted to celebrate various festivals throughout the year. Ganesha Chaturthi and Krishna Janmashtami will be celebrated together on August 24, 2025 and Jnana Mandir Anniversary on September 13, 2025. For more information, please visit our website and for any queries, [Jnanamandir101@gmail.com](mailto:Jnanamandir101@gmail.com)

Jnana Mandir is a registered non-profit that works tirelessly for the community's religious and spiritual needs.

## Details on Upcoming Events

### India Day Picnic

A vibrant poster for the ICRCC India Day Picnic. The background features a large, stylized Indian national flag (saffron, white, and green horizontal stripes with a blue wheel in the center) and a subtle geometric pattern. At the top left is the ICRCC logo, and at the top right is a large Ashoka Chakra. The text is centered and uses various colors and fonts to create a festive atmosphere.

  
**ICRCC India Day  
Picnic**

*Celebrate the spirit of Indian Independence*

**Saturday, 16 Aug 2025**  
**3-7 pm**

**Riverview Shelter**  
Long Branch Park section of  
Onondaga Lake Park



**Patriotic Program, Food, Games and more!**  
**Bring a Dish to Share**

**HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY**  
**INDIA**

Visit our website:  
**icrcc.org**

Contact:  
CK Mohan: [ckmohan@syr.edu](mailto:ckmohan@syr.edu)  
Ashok Sangani: [asangani@syr.edu](mailto:asangani@syr.edu)

Made with PosterMyWall.com

## Diwali



The poster is for the ICRCC Diwali Celebration. It features a dark purple background with a gold border and decorative corner flourishes. At the top left, there is an illustration of three lit diya lamps. The text is centered and uses a mix of serif and sans-serif fonts. The date, location, and contact information are clearly displayed.

**ICRCC**  
*Diwali*  
Celebration

Sat, 25-Oct-2025

Grand Ballroom at the Oncenter  
800 S State St.  
Syracuse, NY

Program Details,  
Ticketing and sponsorship information  
to follow soon

Renew Your Yearly membership:  
[icrcc.org](http://icrcc.org)

Contact:

[sunil4911@gmail.com](mailto:sunil4911@gmail.com)      [shridevi@icrcc.org](mailto:shridevi@icrcc.org)

Made with PosterMyWall.com

## Bridge Announcement

We are attempting to form group/s to play Bridge at the ICRCC Center - probably on weekends (Saturdays or Sundays). If you are interested, please contact Ramesh Gaonkar: [gaonkar.ramesh@gmail.com](mailto:gaonkar.ramesh@gmail.com)

## Special Article

### Mahakumbh Mela 2025

This year India witnessed an event that happens every 144 years – Maha Kumbh. It was held in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh from January 13 to February 26, 2025. This was attended by 660 million people and few of our community friends were lucky to attend it all the way from Central New York. Let's hear from them.

#### **Mona Khurana's journey**

I cautiously treaded the river waters in Prayagraj as I waded deeper. In those stony beds, a long and soft object slowly wrapped around my ankles that were deeply submerged in the murky waters. I jumped up nervously. "Keep moving till the water reaches your shoulder" yelled a pilgrim ahead. As I untangled the bright red chunni around my leg, delicate offerings of flowers, leaves, diyas, and even a vessel or two twirled around me before flowing away. Mustering courage I pinched my nostrils tight and finally ducked in the deep end. The icy coldness struck my head with force and caused me to fall backwards. Quite apprehensive, my next few attempts were simply leaning over to wet my hair and perhaps console myself that I performed the Snan. Seeing my futile efforts, a fellow pilgrim took pity on me and offered to hold my hands while I performed the ritual correctly. This time I succeeded and the next few dips were perfect as I immersed my whole body, mind, and soul into the holy rivers. My chills turned into a comforting warmth as sounds of "Har Har Mahadev" filled my ears. Around me, the enthusiasm was contagious as pilgrims with folded hands, half submerged, chanted in unison.

In the U.S., witnessing my frustration as I planned the logistics, my husband gently warned me that MahaKumbh is a Tirath Yatra, not a luxury trip, so it's normal to face hurdles. His statement was like a light bulb in my head. Travelling solo to Prayagraj, I paid no heed to the cautionary tales of my relatives in the U.S. and India anymore. The heavy dust, the strange sadhus, the massive crowds, and the constant noise somehow all kept me at peace. My resilience grew multifold as I battled through the daily gridlock to get to my destination along with those bright faces from all walks of life. I witnessed thousands walk and sleep with devotion on the cold hard grounds every day and felt humbled and grateful for all the almighty has given to me and my family. I will always feel proud and thankful to join even a small part of this ancient and immense spiritual tradition of Sanatan Dharma which has been around for thousands of years.



### Deepali Sharma's journey

Kumbh - a spiritual journey shared with thousands of others, family and strangers. With feelings of gratitude toward life and the universe, I feel blessed to have had this privilege to participate with so many devotees, together in humility for the holy dip at the Sangam. From the tent city organizers to the rickshaw and motorcycle drivers, the police force, the tika applicators and shoe keepers at temples, everyone had one purpose - to make the event a peaceful and humbling experience for all. This tolerant and giving face of humanity captured the essence of the Maha Kumbh Mela.



# ICRCC Board and Committee Members

## Executive Board Members

Shridevi Karikehalli	<a href="mailto:shridevi@icrcc.org">shridevi@icrcc.org</a>	(President)
Kishan Mehrotra	<a href="mailto:mehrotra@syrr.edu">mehrotra@syrr.edu</a>	(Vice President)
Jayant Datta	<a href="mailto:icrcc.fin@gmail.com">icrcc.fin@gmail.com</a>	(Treasurer)
Falguni Vora	<a href="mailto:falguni@icrcc.org">falguni@icrcc.org</a>	(Secretary)

## Board Members

Ajeet Gajra	<a href="mailto:ajeetgajra@gmail.com">ajeetgajra@gmail.com</a>
Indu Gupta	<a href="mailto:indgu1947@gmail.com">indgu1947@gmail.com</a>
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Pardeep Zirath	<a href="mailto:pkzirath@yahoo.com">pkzirath@yahoo.com</a>

## Committees

**Building:** Kishan Mehrotra (Chair), Sunil Gupta, Hemant Kale, Chilukuri Mohan, Sanjay Sreenivasa Murthy, Jayshri Prasad, Ashok Sangani

**Bylaws:** Shalabh Maroo (Chair)

**Cultural:** Falguni Vora (Chair), Jayant Datta, Indu Gupta, Chilukuri Mohan, Bandaru Ramarao, Pardeep Zirath

**Finance:** Jayant Datta (Chair), Ajeet Gajra, Hemant Kale, Ashok Sangani

**Grants:** Shalabh Maroo (Chair), Jayant Datta, Indu Gupta

**Membership:** Sanjay Sreenivasa Murthy

**Newsletter:** Ramesh Gaonkar (Chair), Jayant Datta, Chilukuri Mohan, Kishan Mehrotra

**Nominations:** Vishnu Sishtla (Co-Chair), Pramod Varshney (Co-Chair)

**Website:** Sunil Gupta (Chair), Shalabh Maroo

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

Connect with us:

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facebook: [www.facebook.com/ICRCC/](https://www.facebook.com/ICRCC/)

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