



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



Summer 2021

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Upcoming ICRCC Events Summary:

Event	Date	Place	Contact	Additional Notes
Gandhi Jayanti	02 Oct 2021	India Center	Falguni Vora	Additional info to follow
International Taste Festival	12 – 14 Nov 2021	NYS Fair Expo Center	Sanjeev Kumar & Falguni Vora	See flier inside
Diwali	TBD		Falguni Vora	Additional info to follow
Christmas	TBD	India Center	Beena Kappil	Additional info to follow

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

1. President's Message

It is hard to believe that the summer of 2021 is almost over while another Diwali is at the doorstep and pandemic is still not behind us! Every wave of rising Covid cases puts a break on our plans for in-person events. Nonetheless, ICRCC has been able to squeeze in few events adhering to the current local health and CDC guidelines.

Virtual cultural program for Holi was one of its kind. Masked Earth Day cleanup was very satisfying. Breakfast program for the Onondaga county vaccine center was quite rewarding. The pioneer Indian food festival was a huge success. And the India Day picnic brought out the enthusiasm and tri color spirit of the community. There are many other events lined up and board members are working hard planning them.

There are also some essential renovations planned for India Center and they are starting soon. There is also a wish list being prepared to make the center more functional.

Please contact us. Our listening ears are on for suggestions, questions, comments or concerns. Hope to see all of you at the center soon. Until then stay safe and healthy!!

Best Regards,
Falguni Vora
falguni@icrcc.org
(405) 706-2969

2. ICRCC Membership and Contact Info

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:

Dhruv Sikka (Chair): dhruvsikka@gmail.com

Shridevi Karikehalli: shridevi@icrcc.org

Beena Kappil: bjkappil@yahoo.com

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.

3. Greetings from the Editor

Hello Friends:

Happy summer days to all. Soon we will be transitioning to beautiful fall colors!

In addition to reports from various committees, after-thoughts on past programs, and information on upcoming programs, we have a few special articles in this newsletter.

We asked young readers to write to us about their summer activities, and we are happy to note their responses in this newsletter.

We also asked our readers about the pronunciation of their names. Many have interesting stories to share. We thank all responders for sharing their experiences with the community. As for myself – it is quite frustrating to spell my first name – consisting of eight letters and last name of eleven letters on the phone. But once I pronounce it, then I hear, “Oh! it’s not that difficult, and it is just like what is written!”

We welcome all newcomers to town. Each of you brings exceptional talent – we would love to find out more about you.

We would love to see more engagement from members of our community in the upcoming events. Write to us about what activities you want to see and how you can help organize it. Remember, ICRCC is YOUR organization. Be an active participant!

Also please become a member if you have not already done so. Membership runs from January to December (details on previous page).

Regards,

Shridevi

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. India Center: Building Committee Report

Submitted by: Kishan Mehrotra



On behalf of the ICRCC Building Committee, I am very happy to write that our building keeps getting better and better since we purchased it in 2019. The exterior of the building has been improved, thanks to the hard work of many volunteers during the Earth Day event of 2021. The interior of the building looks cleaner and more inviting, due to changes such as fixing the foyer and steps leading to basement.

Some maintenance work is urgently needed and has been planned for this summer/fall. The most obvious eyesores are the potholes in the parking lot. Another persistent concern about the building has been the inability to maintain comfortable temperature, due to the HVAC system and the attic insulation. The ICRCC Board has approved funding for these projects, and work should start soon.

But more has to be done to make the building attractive. The Building Committee has discussed the idea of combining the two rooms in the basement to accommodate larger gatherings, with flexibility to partition them if necessary. In addition, changes are being considered to make the kitchen and eating areas more functional. However, such projects have not yet been scheduled, due to the lack of funds. The Building Committee proposes to embark on a fund-raising effort in the amount of \$50,000, to be accomplished between now and March 2022. Use of the raised funds will depend on the amount of money raised, and by placing priorities on the following items:

WHY DO WE NEED FUNDS?

1. To make the basement/kitchen area functional and attractive.
2. To make the exterior functional and aesthetically appealing.
3. To keep adequate reserves for unexpected emergencies.

HOW CAN THE COMMUNITY HELP?

1. Make a (one-time) large contribution, or pledge to donate \$xxx per year.
2. Provide ideas for events that generate funds and help organize them.
3. Sponsor and participate in ICRCC activities (e.g., the weekly brunch program).

Finally, a personal request. The building is OURS, a shared asset of our community in which we should all take ownership with pride. Please visit our building often, suggest ideas, and participate in efforts to improve the same. The result will be a more vibrant organization, a stronger community, improved cultural consciousness among children and adults, and hence a better quality of our lives as Indian Americans in Central New York.

5. Update on recent Community Events

Holi festival

Submitted by: Bala Murthy

This year, due to ongoing pandemic, we celebrated Holi festival virtually through ZOOM. Approximately 15 programs were showcased. Various colorful paintings, Rangoli, Indian sculptures and designer quilts were displayed. Skit regarding Holi was a runaway hit. There were solo and group dances, which added to the flavor very well. Holi related poem with colorful background was also shown. Overall, the program was very well received with around 50-60 zoom windows participating and commenting on the show. It was a grand success.

We want to use this occasion to extend our thanks to Anjani dance academy and Jnana Mandir for their commitment and participation in Holi program.

Appreciating the Vaccinating Staff

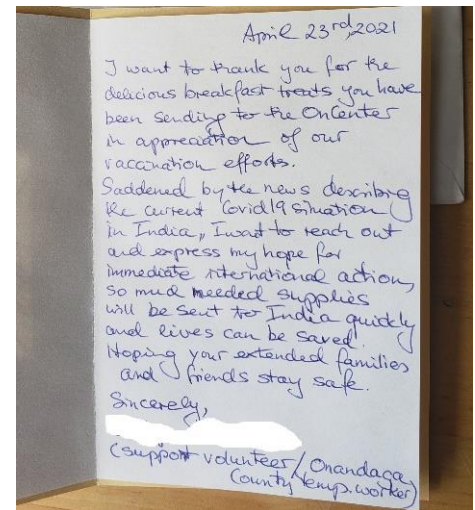
Submitted by: Sunil Gupta

ICRCC provided breakfast for Vaccinators, Volunteers and Administrative Staff of the County Vaccination Clinic at The OnCenter.

Every week, we delivered the following for about 50 people:

- Fresh cut fruit boxes on Mondays
- Bagels & Coffee on Wednesdays, and
- Donuts & Coffee on Fridays

These efforts were appreciated by the vaccinating staff, who sent "Thank You" notes to ICRCC.



The response from our community members in support of this program was overwhelming. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to this very worthy cause.



Earth Day Cleanup

Submitted by: Jayant Datta

Earth Day is an annual event to raise awareness about a cleaner habitat and pollution. First held on April 22, 1970, it now includes a wide range of events coordinated globally by EarthDay.org including 1 billion people in more than 193 countries¹.

Locally, Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA) has been taking the lead in this area. Since its inception more than 30 years ago, more than 2.6 million pounds of litter have been picked up².

ICRCC volunteer, and then board member, Dayaprasad Kulkarni, took the initiative to register our organization and the area surrounding India Center for the Earth Day event this year. NOTE: “Daya” did this from India – where he was fighting the pandemic on many fronts.

Several board members and spouses responded to this call for action by showing up with their enthusiasm at the India Center for different “working” shifts. Our premises, the main road and parts of the Nottingham High School parking lot benefited from a thorough cleanup – as evidenced by the clean look and feel around the property and the large number of bags that were placed by the side of the road.

We look forward to your future participation in this event – a new annual tradition that builds community relationships, spruces up our “home” while helping Mother Earth!



¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_Day

² <https://www.localsyr.com/news/local-news/volunteers-wanted-for-ocra-earth-day-litter-clean-up/>

India Food Festival

Submitted by: Shridevi Karikehalli

ICRCC embarked on an ambitious venture, which included a food festival and a cultural and art exhibit from the talented members of the community. This event was held in early summer on Saturday June 19th.

The community enthusiastically responded by pitching in with an array of delicious home cooked authentic Indian cuisine. A sizable gathering partook in the offerings and celebrations, strictly adhering to the local health guidelines.

Everyone left fully satiated with the delicious food, which was hygienically prepackaged. Many people utilized the option of eating at the large outdoor tent specifically put up for this occasion.

The community enjoyed the meet and greet (which occurred after a long time). All in all, this event was very successful and provided a much-needed break from the “virtual gathering”. We are looking forward to more such events.



Food and socializing under the large tent



Special Bhel puri made fresh on site!

Community Art Exhibition

Submitted by: Bala Murthy

As part of the food festival, an art exhibition was also conducted this year. Variety of poems, sculptures, paintings, quilts and other collections were displayed. Community participation and attendance was higher than expected. Enthusiasm was palpable in the air. It was a very enjoyable experience both for the organizers and participants. This was the first of a kind event in ICRCC history and was very well received.



Arts and Crafts displays

India Day Picnic Celebrations³

Submitted by: Surabhi Raina

This year, we celebrated the 75th year of Indian Independence at Clark Reservation, a beautiful location in Jamesville, NY. August 15, 2021 turned out to be a gorgeous and enjoyable late summer day after a long period of social isolation due to the pandemic. The picnic started around 3 pm as people brought dishes they wanted to share with friends and family.

A group of young and talented children beautifully sang both Indian and American national anthems and the rest of the attendees joined them in singing. After that some attendees sang heartfelt patriotic songs. Everyone enjoyed the snacks from various parts of India and elsewhere, including dahi vada, sabudana khichadi, batata vada, Indian sandwiches, brownies, cookies, fruit cups, watermelon, samosa, chips and salsa, etc.

The food court opened around 5 pm. ICRCC provided drinks and grilled corn. Community members had brought mouthwatering dishes from all parts of India, including chole, hot paratha made fresh on the spot, gobhi, salad, several varieties of rice, chicken curry, dal makhani, paneer, gulab jamun, kheer and many more. The children played frisbee and badminton; they also enjoyed the three-legged race as well as the potato and spoon race.

This was truly a great celebration made possible by enthusiastic participation by many of our community members and hard work put in by the board members to make it memorable! A sincere thanks from us to you all for your participation and encouragement.

We hope to celebrate more events together in the coming months SAFELY!



Tricolored Patriotic Idly



³ Enthusiastic feedback from India Day Picnic attendees will be posted on ICRCC's website

6. Readers' Contributions

Young Readers' Column: My Summer Vacation

Akshat Saxena (8 yrs., Mott Road Elementary School)

For my summer vacations, I visited my cousin's family and went on a trip to Niagara Falls where I saw 2 rainbows!

Both my cousin brother and sister like art a lot. We painted together and enjoyed sleepovers. We also went Camping for two days. On the first day, we set up the camp and I got to meet my cousin's friends. I played dodge ball with other kids. We also went to the beach and had a lot of fun. I splashed in the water and played in the sand.

There was an Obstacle Course that only my sister and I did because my cousin had broken her arm, and the little one was too short. My sister and I went on two obstacles namely Free Fall and the Zipline. In the Free Fall, you had to jump from a great height and there was a rope that protected you from getting hurt. Another obstacle was the Zipline where you had to walk off the great height and then go on the zipline. I did both the obstacles two times. In the camp, we roasted marshmallows for the dinner. It was an awesome camping experience for me!

I also visited my friend's family and stayed with them. They have a dog that licked me all over my body. The dog's name is Ginger. She is super cute but a little loud at times as she wouldn't stop barking. I watched Black Widow movie, played with the dog and made our own short movie. I visited two dog parks, Norwood and Bruce park where I saw lot of dogs. Bruce Park has a very tiny water park inside and we all gotten super wet.

I did other activities with my family such as Go Kart Racing, a rollercoaster ride which was scary, and a Zombie Attack 4D ride in which you get attacked by zombies. There was a mirror maze attraction, which was tricky. At one point we got stuck but then we completed it. There was a maze of lasers where you had to dodge lasers. We also did "The Fun House" where you get to do fun video games and more. There were wonky mirrors and crazy rooms.

My summer vacations have been so much fun so far but there are still few things I want to do for the rest of vacation days. I want to make new friends, find more interesting places, spend more time outdoors playing soccer, and in the night watch a new T.V show

Arhan Chaudhuri (8 yrs., Mott Road Elementary)

This summer I did more activities than last summer. I did basketball camp and my favorite thing in basketball is a match! I also did tennis camp. The funniest thing in tennis was when I hit a volley, and then my racket fell out of my hands!

We went for a vacation to Shenandoah National Park. It was funny when I fell into the water at the bottom of a waterfall. My taekwondo skills helped me get up from the fall

Nikhil Jasti (8 yrs., Mott Road Elementary)

For our vacation, we went on a road trip to Yellowstone National Park. We saw lot of animals like Elks, Wolves, Bison, and Grizzly bears. We travelled across 14 states, drove over 5,000 miles and visited 4 national parks.

What's in a Name?

Arusha Shivani Ramaswamy (Grade 10, FM High School)

What's in a name? Names could represent a lot of things – identity, history, ancestors, lineages, have special meanings, or anything in between. They can connect us to people and places we might have a hard time connecting ourselves to, and sometimes they can make separate us, feel different than the people around us, as if our names are somehow wrong, too long or said 'weirdly'. I'm sure many people can relate to the annoying moment of the substitute teacher, the new teacher, the start of the year teacher, calling your name, squinting, fitting around the syllables with a hilarious inaccuracy that somehow serves, beyond the exasperation we all come to feel, some level of awkward, some level of 'weird', at least at first.

And yet, this is false in so many ways. Names are beautiful, carriers of self and those before us, telling a story of ourselves, those who named us, and those who named them. And our names - regardless of how many times elementary school teachers have dragged their pronunciation through the mud - are wrapped in layers of meaning, some historical and some personal, some dating back to hundreds of years and some crafted and used recently.

Many South Indians, some of my grandparents included, did not use last names until recently, and many still don't. Instead, there were given names and the initials before them - one for the father's name, and one for the village that the family hailed from. Now, though, more and more people have begun using surnames, and the use of initials means that last names are often fathers' or grandfathers' names, and my own is not an exception: my last name, Ramaswamy, pronounced in many variations by various people, some of which are more accurate than others, was my grandfather's name, my father's last name, and now, mine. -swamy, is a suffix that indicates respect, a bit like 'sir', and Rama, is, well, Lord Rama. Thousands of years of a name, of a meaning and a story and glory, told with subtle differences and sometimes not-so-subtle ones sneaking their way in as the tale is told, recorded down thousands of years ago and still so prevalent, with an added respect and acknowledgement, a legacy of stories and of a person, of two, four, six.

My first name, Arusha, on the other hand, does not have the issue of mispronunciation - at least, not as much. It's a fairly simple, three syllable, six letter name, fun to say, in my opinion, but then, maybe I'm biased. Six letters and a thousand meanings, Arusha is both a city in Tanzania, which led to a number of fun pictures and pleasant encounters when we actually visited the city, and has multiple meanings in Sanskrit. Early morning sun, bright, sun's rays, the general theme of the sun in the early morning, with its slightly softer light and its annoying tendency to be right in your face unless you have the windows shut, streaming into your just-awake or still-asleep or hasn't-slept eyes like it's determined for you to start the day angry at a ball of exploding gas in space thousands of times the size of Earth that keeps us all alive.

And should your name mean anything, one of the infinite things it could be, should it be a retold tale you've made your own or a newly forged story you've jeweled yourself, our names are us, are our history and someone else's, are what we make of them, even with the annoyance of alienation at times, because they might be 'weird' here, they might be common somewhere else, but they are ours. And should you want your name to mean the soft light of the early morning sun as it rises above the blanket of stars and dark or should you want it to be the annoying, too-early-for-this sun you see shining out your window in the morning, they're all those things.

Survey on Names

Many names from the Indian subcontinent are long and difficult to pronounce outside the native land. We asked our readers to write to us about their experiences, which we have compiled below, in the order received.

Agniva Chaudhury (15 yrs., FM High School)

South Asian names are not particularly long or hard to pronounce. I certainly had many people mispronounce my name, and it's quite silly since I clearly pronounce my name when meeting new people.

I don't shorten or anglicize my name, because it is other people's responsibility to say it right, not my responsibility to change it. I ignore it if:

1. I am only meeting the person once, or
2. It is close enough given an American accent.

Arhan Chaudhury (8 yrs., Mott Road Elementary School)

Most people have no difficulty pronouncing my name. However, one of my teachers sometimes calls me "Rohan" instead of "Arhan". I let her know that – and she quickly corrects herself!

Achintya Raghu Ramaswamy (Grade 4, Enders Road Elementary School)

Our names are important to us. They are our identities that we go by and if a name is messed up - like mine is all the time - it is pretty disappointing. When someone messes up my name, I usually feel kind of mad, but mostly want to burst out laughing. Sometimes if our names are too hard for people to pronounce, they may just call you something else.

This goes for countries too. Kenya is named after a mountain, but its real name is Mount Kenyaga. The only reason we all call it Kenya is because when a British sailor went to Kenya, the locals said, "Welcome to Mount Kenyaga!" But the sailor thought "Kenyaga" was too hard to say, so they said, "From now on this is Mount Kenya." Now, just by that simple mistake, we all call Kenyaga by its wrong name.

The same goes for Mumbai. The British thought it was too hard to say so they called it Bombay, and the same thing also goes for chai tea, which means tea tea. So just by one mistake of pronouncing or shortening a name, it can have a huge impact or sound a bit silly when translated.

Soor Vora

My name is Soor, sanskrit for musical pitch. It's a name that I've grown to love, especially due to my fervent love for music. However, it's pronunciation isn't the most straightforward. It's pronounced s-ooh-r, but what I often get is "soar", "sir", and worst of all "sewer".

There was a time in my life when I was embarrassed of having such a mispronounced name, and at times I wished my name was Raj or something, which is pronounced as it is spelled. I

would tell people to pronounce my name "Soar" because in my head it felt futile to try harder when the results were going to be disappointing.

As my passion for music increased though, so did my confidence in my name. Eventually I started giving the right pronunciation, and while I still often get the wrong one, a lot of people try their best to pronounce it right, and even ask me to help them pronounce it. I've learned to not just live with, but love my name, regardless of how others pronounce it.

Shweta Karikehalli

To anyone of South Asian descent, my name generally isn't difficult to pronounce. However, since it's not spelled phonetically, I hear a variety of mispronunciations in America.

In more recent years I've grown more comfortable correcting people, but sometimes I shorten my name to "Shway" when placing food orders since it tends to be easier than spelling it out.

When I was in kindergarten, a teacher anglicized my name to "Shwayda" and that pronunciation stuck. Up until recently, I didn't correct people because I was so accustomed to it. But hearing it now makes me cringe!

7. Graduating Students Information

Congratulations to our recent graduates in the community with wonderful academic achievements. They are moving on to the next step in their promising careers.

Listed below (in the order received) are details shared by the families of some of the students.

Ishan Gajra:

Graduating College: Syracuse University May 2021

Majors: Finance, Real estate & Management

Started as an Associate at Bowery Valuation in Manhattan, NY from July 2021

Inika Gajra:

Graduating School: JD High School June 2021

Going to University of Rochester this fall

Inika was awarded the Dean's scholarship

Richa Zirath:

Graduating College: University at Buffalo with Bachelors in Business Administration, concentration in data analytics and financial analysis

Richa will be joining George Washington University, this August, pursuing health policy

Celine Paliakkara:

Graduating School: Fayetteville-Manlius High School

Attending Adelphi University/Upstate Medical University Accelerated Scholars BS/MD Program

Awards and Honors: National AP Scholar, NYS Scholarship for Academic Excellence, Society of Women Engineers (SWE) Scholarship, RIT Computing Medal Award, Manlius Library Scholarship, Upstate Advocates Youth Volunteer Scholarship, Frederick K. Kilian Memorial Scholarship, L. Thomas Wolff, M.D. Scholarship, National Spanish Exam Gold Medal, Outstanding High School Awards in Science, Math, Computer Science, and Spanish
Special interests and hobbies: Bharatanatyam and Violin

Milan S. Gupta:

Graduating College: University of Michigan with Bachelor of Science.

Milan will be joining Snapchat in Santa Monica, CA.

Kashyap Sai Bendapudi:

Graduating School: Fayetteville-Manlius High School

Joining RIT this Fall majoring in Computer Science

Awards and scholarship: RIT Presidential Scholarship, RIT Recognition Scholar, Performing Arts Scholarship

FM Memorial Award, FM Computer Science HSA Award, NYS Assembly Certificate of Merit
Game Design and Development

Harshal Nanavati:

Graduated from Syracuse University majoring in Information Management and Technology, with concentration in Data Analytics

He has now joined Marsh McLennan as data analyst.

Serena Patel:

Graduating school: Jamesville Dewitt High School

Joining Binghamton University, focusing on Biomedical Engineering.

She is in the scholars program at the Binghamton University

Worked at Kumon for 5 years. Played tennis in High school.

Likes to read, travel, hike, and hang out with friends. This summer Serena enjoyed hiking in Acadia National Park, and visiting Boston.

Abby Kalpana Kambhampaty:

Graduating school: Christian Brothers Academy

Awards and scholarship: Recipient of Bryan Cameron Scholarship. Recipient of Congressional Gold Medal for her work

She will be attending Dartmouth College, to study Global Health

Hobbies and interests: Passionate about Refugee Health and Education, and spent lot of time working with refugee population.

8. Recognition of Community Member



Shobha Bhatia, professor of civil and environmental engineering in the College of Engineering and Computer Science, has been named the recipient of the 2021 Judith Greenberg Seinfeld Scholar Award. The Seinfeld Scholar Program recognizes those who have made an outstanding contribution to the beauty of the world, who have added to human values, and to ending human abuse; who have passion for excellence, creativity and originality in academic or artistic fields, and who demonstrate the ability to motivate and bring out the best in others. The award provides \$10,000 to undertake an initiative or project of special interest to the recipient.

This award will allow Prof. Bhatia to further research how to reduce the environmental impact of large-scale projects through the use of natural and sustainable materials, specifically the use of natural fibers, particularly jute and coir. She has also shown that natural polymers, fiber and product can be effectively used for the dredged sediment dewatering and containment. Using a multidisciplinary collaborative approach, Bhatia has worked closely with manufacturers, national and international agencies, and research centers in the development of sustainable solutions for soil erosion and dewatering / containment of dredged slurries from water bodies.

Prof. Bhatia is an internationally recognized leader in geotechnical engineering and in fostering more equity, diversity and inclusion in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields. She was named a “Geolegend” by the Geo-Institute of the American Society of Civil Engineers in 2020 and a Laura J. and L. Douglas Meredith Professor of Teaching Excellence by Syracuse University in 2001. She received the Chancellor’s Citation for Faculty Excellence and Scholarly Distinction, the highest recognition given to faculty at the University, in 2009.

9. Special Articles

Indian Americans in Politics

Submitted by: Chilukuri Mohan

Today, we live in a democracy where there is much greater hope that an individual with genuine interest in public service can successfully participate in the political process, even if we hail from a minority community. In the early 1980s (when I arrived in USA), it was impossible to find even a single person of Indian origin politically active in US, even at the local or regional levels. We have come a long way since then: individuals whose parents were from India serve (or have served) in the US Senate, in the House of Representatives, as State Governors, and as the Vice President, in addition to numerous local and regional offices.

In the old days, the standard advice for many children was simple: keep your head down, study and work hard, don’t get involved in politics at any level (because politics was considered to be “dirty”). Parents often wished that children would follow in their (or some role model’s) footsteps: those who have worked hard for what they have are often interested in preserving the same, rather than risking the uncertainty associated with change. But if we

agree that certain things in society do need to change, how will such change come about? Here is what one sage says about it:

“A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.” - Mohandas K. Gandhi (*Harijan*, 11-19-1936, pp. 341-2)

First, of course, one must have a mission, or at least an idea of the direction in which one wants the world to change – something truly worth spending time and effort, understanding the opportunity cost, i.e., the possible personal gains that could be had by spending the same effort on simpler goals. Your mission may be different from what others consider important, for there are many challenges facing society: hunger (yes, that’s a serious problem even in the affluent U.S. society), environmental problems, the quality of education available to urban children, etc. Whether or not you think of running for office, the mission comes first; and it’s possible that you want to address more than one of these.

Our most visible examples are people like VP Kamala Harris, and we should examine how they reached their current position and how they change over time, even though each individual in public life may have developed differently.

Kamala Harris had parents who were active in the Civil Rights movement; her mother (Shyamala Gopalan) made the conscious choice of identifying with the African American community, recognizing that fighting racism requires uniting with others, rather than isolating from those around us as a special subgroup or “model minority”. Kamala marched against apartheid in South Africa as an undergraduate student. As a lawyer, she made the unusual choice of becoming a prosecutor, and was very successful in the same, eventually winning the election to be the Attorney General of California. She took specific important positions (e.g., on criminal justice reform and LGBTQ rights) and fought various battles. These led eventually to her successful election to the U.S. Senate, where she used her prior legal experience to continue to fight for what she believed. Her effort to run for the presidential nomination of a major party brought her into the spotlight, especially in a debate where she criticized the eventual nominee, President Joseph Biden, for his position on school integration (“busing”) a few decades ago, despite which Biden chose her to be his VP nominee.

The Kamala Harris example illustrates a few important points. Before running in an election, one must lay the groundwork for the same, developing one’s strengths, and working with others whose broad political opinions coincide with one’s own, perhaps within a political party or other organization. Those who disagree on some issues may unite on other substantive ones; they may also change their views over time. A willingness to work with others is important, despite differences. Every word spoken (or tweeted) could be scrutinized in the future. Of course, total dedication is often necessary.

Finally, to participate in politics, one need not run in an election; here are a few options (for the young as well as the old):

- Starting your own organization, along with like-minded folks.
- Working or volunteering for an existing organization dedicated to what you believe in; possibly part-time.
- Donating resources to such organizations or individuals.
- Spreading the word about the work of such folks and helping to increase their support base.
- Publicizing important ideas and positions on public policy matters.

- Contacting individuals who are currently in power (e.g., legislators) and conveying your opinions on important matters.
- Participating in public discussions, being open to others' ideas, and developing skills to convince others.

The world of tomorrow needs Indian Americans to participate fully in every aspect of society, not just computer science, engineering, or medicine. Politics is an important field which affects all of us, and non-participation has unfortunate implications: one who closes their eyes to an injustice is also guilty of the same, by failing to exercise their ability to interfere and perhaps prevent the injustice.

Tokyo Olympics

Submitted by: Kishan Mehrotra

Writing about India's performance in Olympics is like taking an emotional roller coaster ride. In the recent Tokyo Olympics, India had its best ever performance; highest so far in any Olympics with 1 gold, two silver and 4 bronze medals. This surpasses its previous record of 2 silver and 4 bronze medals, set in the 2012 London games. In the 2020 Tokyo Olympics India received a gold medal in track and field, its first in any sports since a shooting title in 2008.



Neeraj Chopra's throw of 87.58 m won him javelin gold at Tokyo 2020 (left). Abhinav Bindra (right) won the 10-meter air rifle competition in Beijing 2008

India's only previous medals in Olympic track and field were 120 years ago; 2 silver medals won by Norman Pritchard, an Englishman born in India, and later moved to England and subsequently to USA, in the 200-meter sprint and the 200-meter hurdles at Paris in 1900.

India has sent a team to all summer Olympics since 1920. In this long history of 100 years of Olympics India has earned a total of 35 medals (10 gold, 9 silver, and 16 bronze). Out of the 10 gold medals India won, 8 were in field hockey, a game that India dominated until 1964. Major credit for dominance in hockey goes to Major Dhyan Chand, widely regarded as one of the greatest in the history of the sport. Last week Prime Minister Modi renamed the highest sporting award in India to honor this hockey legend. After a long 16-year Indian medal drought, Leander Paes earned a bronze in tennis in Atlanta in 1996.

Compared to India's 35 total medals, USA and China received 113 and 88 medals in the most recent Tokyo Olympics alone. Well!! These two wealthy nations are powerhouses in sports.

But what about Jamaica with 9 and 11 medals in Tokyo and Rio Olympics alone. India's Olympics record has baffled many – why a country of 1.3 billion people performs so poorly?

However, future looks a little brighter. Financial and resources support by Odisha's government and its Chief Minister Patnaik has revived interest in hockey in India, mainly within the past three years. This resulted in very successful performances by both men's and women's hockey teams in Tokyo Olympics. India has recently started Khelo India University Games. First multi-sport national level event took place in Bhuvneshwar, Odisha in 2020. It was launched after three successful completions of the Khelo India Youth Games.

10. Upcoming Events



International Taste Festival
NYS Fairgrounds - Exposition Center
581 State Fair Boulevard
Syracuse, NY 13209

Friday, Nov. 12th: 5 - 9 pm
Saturday, Nov. 13th: 12 noon - 9 pm
Sunday, Nov. 14th: 12 noon - 6 pm

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

Saturday, November 13th 2021 @ 7:30pm

followed by fireworks at the Expo Center. 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

1. Yoga Program



Details: Classes will be offered in virtual mode via zoom.

Contact: Bala Murthy (vidyubala@yahoo.com)

2. Jnana Mandir



Details: 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. The vision and mission is 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
- 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 group chanting 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

11. ICRCC Board Members (2021)

Executive Board Members:

Falguni Vora	falguni@icrcc.org	(President)
Shridevi Karikeshalli	shridevi@icrcc.org	(Vice President)
Jayant Datta	icrcc.fin@gmail.com	(Treasurer)
Sanjeev Kumar	skumar@oswego.edu	(Acting Secretary)

Board Members:

Ari Chakraborty	archakra@syr.edu
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Beena Kappil	bjkappil@yahoo.com
Shalabh Maroo	scmaroo@syr.edu
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Bala Murthy	vidyubala@yahoo.com
Surabhi Raina	sraina@syr.edu
Dhruv Sikka	dhruvsikka@gmail.com
Rachna Zirath	rachnazirath@gmail.com

Finance Committee: Jayant Datta (Chair), Ari Chakraborty

Membership Committee: Dhruv Sikka (Chair) Shridevi Karikeshalli, Beena Kappil

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

Nominations Committee: Chilukuri Mohan (Chair), Kishan Mehrotra

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

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

Website: Sunil Gupta (Chair), Falguni Vora, Dhruv Sikka, Shalabh Maroo, Jayant Datta, Shridevi Karikeshalli

Marketing: Sanjeev Kumar (Chair), Dhruv Sikka, Falguni Vora, Shridevi Karikeshalli

Connect with us:

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facebook: www.facebook.com/ICRCC/

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