



# 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)

## Spring 2023

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### Upcoming ICRCC Events Summary:

Event	Date	Place	Contact	Additional Notes
Mahabharat (screening)	TBD	India Center	Kishan Mehrotra	
Spring Festival	3 or 4-Jun-2023	TBD	Falguni Vora / Ramarao Bandaru	
Indian classical concert (MIT Shruti)	TBD	India Center	Jayant Datta	Sponsors welcome
India Day Picnic	TBD	TBD	Surabhi Raina	
Gandhi Jayanti	TBD	India Center	TBD	

## President's message

Dear Friends:

I am extremely honored to be your new President. I want to thank my fellow board members, and my community for entrusting me with this task.

I joined the ICRC Board of Directors in 2016. Since then, I have enjoyed working toward the betterment of this organization along with my fellow Board Members. We are one big family!

The new Board of Directors took office after the well-attended General Body Meeting on February 5, 2023. It is a pleasure to work with my diverse group of teammates, who have the skills and experience to oversee the expanding list of priorities of our organization. Please see details of the positions held by the Directors in this newsletter.

We still have a vacancy for one Board of Directors position. Please come forward and join this dynamic and dedicated team.

I want to acknowledge and thank Falguni Vora for her excellent leadership as the President for the last two years. She has made an immense contribution to ICRC during this time and has been central to all we have achieved. I will be reaching out to her for advice and support. I also want to thank Beena Kappil, Sanjeev Kumar and Rachna Zirath for their exemplary service to ICRC. We will miss them.

My goal as the President of this great organization is to improve our presence in the community and to continue to promote ICRC's mission. I cannot do this without your support.

You can help ICRC in whatever capacity you can. You do not have to be a Board Member to help! We are a 100% volunteer-run organization. Just reach out to us and let us know your passion and availability.

In 2022 we were recipients of the NYSCA grant, which enabled us to bring various arts and cultural classes from accomplished local artists to you. We hope to apply for similar grants and bring high quality programs and concerts to you in the future.

2022 was a very busy and productive year for ICRC. We were able to hold many in-person activities. Please see details of some of the past activities in this Newsletter.

Please let us know how we are doing, and what would you like this organization to do for you.

Looking forward to a fantastic year ahead.

Best regards,

Shridevi Karikhalli

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

## Outgoing President's message

It's hard to believe that we are already in April of 2023. I wish all of you joy, peace, health and happiness for the rest of the year.

For me, the past 2 years as the President of ICRC were full of excitement, variety, busy schedules, novelty, and, of course, challenges. With gratitude and humility, I want to thank all of you for your support and cooperation – it made my tenure smooth and interesting.

And now, I have passed the torch to new hands – Shridevi Karikhalli. She is no stranger to most of the community members. She is competent, enthusiastic, friendly, and has proven her leadership skills many times. I wish her the best to be successful in taking the organization to a new high.

I will continue to work by her side as a Board Member and for all of you, I am still just a message or phone call away to listen to your suggestions or to answer your questions.

Best regards,

Falguni

## Greetings from the Newsletter Committee

The Board appointed the newsletter committee that includes three Board Members and three community members (see the list on the last page). The primary reasons to include the community members are to assist the Board in formulating the newsletter and to include input from the community.

We are looking forward to interacting with you.

Ramesh Gaonkar

Connect with us:

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

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

Written material can be mailed to:

ICRCC  
1990 Meadowbrook Drive  
Syracuse, NY 13224

## Building Committee Update

Ever since we purchased the building, we continue to make several improvements to OUR home – would like to share some information below:

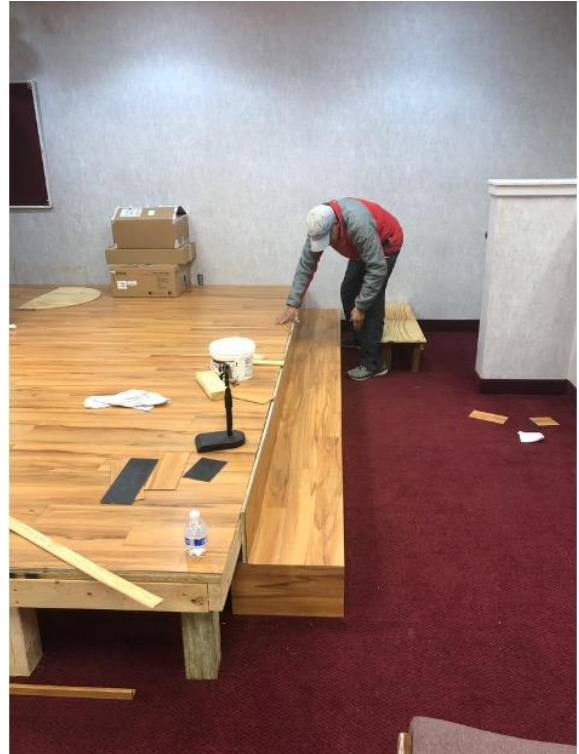
- o A new entrance to the kitchen was made, which has improved the traffic flow and utility of the kitchen and foyer. The cabinets were removed from the foyer, and the wall was painted, which has made this area look cleaner and more accommodating than before.
- o There were two meeting rooms downstairs. Both were small and created unwanted separation between attendees. The wall between the two rooms and doors leading to them have been removed. The combined room is considerably more crowd-friendly and has increased the sitting area.
- o Stage area has been completed with steps for easy access and a beautiful backdrop.
- o Windows in the main hall have additional curtains, matching in color with the backdrop, for improved quality of projection.

The building requires periodic maintenance, many upgrades, and some unexpected repairs. The expanded room downstairs needs some sheetrock work, boxing of pillars, painting, and relocation of heaters.

We have recently received a generous donation to cover the cost of the painting, but many things need to be fixed before we start painting. Please let us know if you can help in any way, so these rooms are more functional. The parking lot has survived a couple of years but requires further improvements, at least a coating of heavy-duty sealing.

Our most ambitious plan, to cover the porch just outside the current entrance, has not been addressed yet. As mentioned in the previous newsletters, this addition will improve the building's functionality, increase its use in winter and rainy days, and will accommodate more people. It is an expensive proposition. A large donation and/or a major fundraising effort is needed to execute this plan.

Kishan Mehrotra



## Membership Information

### ICRCC Membership: January – December 2023

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

#### Payment options:

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

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

**Chaitanya Halbe:** [chaithalbe@gmail.com](mailto:chaithalbe@gmail.com)

**Falguni Vora:** [falguni@icrcc.org](mailto:falguni@icrcc.org)

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 Community Events

### India Day Picnic

**Submitted by: Surabhi Raina**



On August 14, 2022, a gorgeous late summer day, we celebrated Indian Independence Day at Sawmill creek picnic pavilions at Onondaga Lake Park.

A calm, sunny and beautiful lakefront was perfect to enjoy the day full of fun, laughter, mingling with the community members and delicious food from many parts of India. The pavilion was decorated with colorful balloons in addition to Indian and American flags.

The picnic started around 3 pm, as people started to arrive at the pavilion. They brought food they wanted to share with friends and family on this occasion.

A group of talented children beautifully sang both Indian and American national anthems and the rest of the attendees joined in singing. Heartfelt patriotic songs were also sung by various community members as everyone enjoyed snacks from various parts of India including dahi vada, batata vada, samosa, sandwiches, cookies, watermelon, chips and salsa, etc.



The food court opened around 5 pm. IC RCC provided drinks and grilled corn. Mouthwatering dishes like chole, hot paratha made fresh on the spot, gobhi, chicken curry, different varieties of rice, gulab jamun, kheer, etc., brought by community members were enjoyed by all.



The children played at the playground at the pavilion's site and enjoyed games brought by either IC RCC or community members. Around 6:00 pm we celebrated the occasion by cutting the cake and singing songs.

Honoring India's 76th year of independence was made possible by enthusiastic participation by many of our community members and hard work put in by the board members to make it unforgettable!!



A heartfelt thank you from us to you all for your active participation and encouragement. We hope to celebrate more events together in the coming months.

# Gandhi Jayanti

**Submitted by: Kishan Mehrotra**

ICRCC celebrated Gandhi Jayanti on October 2, 2022 at India Center, starting at 2:00 pm. After a brief welcome by Falguni Vora, the program started with Sarve Dharma Prarthana and brief presentations by children from Jnana Mandir: Nikhil Jasti, Neha Jasti, and Sachith Chakravarthy.

Poetry presentations by Kaushik Krishnan and Kanishk Krishnan, “Real Diamond to Possess” and “Vision of the Visionary”, respectively, were awesome. Presentations by Kishan Mehrotra, who asked questions on Gandhi’s life, and Chilukuri Mohan (as Gandhi) who held a live press conference, engaged the audience so deeply that a few in the audience started asking serious questions on many issues. Both programs were thoroughly enjoyable.

Another highlight of the afternoon was the live recital of some of Gandhi's favorite bhajans (such as Allah Tero Naam and others) by Babla Bogam, Falguni Vora, Chilukuri Mohan, and Jayant Datta.

The cultural program ended with Jayshri Prasad’s demonstration of the spinning wheel, a brief talk by Kumar Ashutosh, and singing of “Raghupati Raghav” by the entire audience.

The program was a big hit. Snacks prepared by Rama Mehrotra, Sunil Gupta, and others were enjoyed by all.



# Diwali

Submitted by: Shridevi Karikeshalli



This year the grand Diwali celebration and dinner was held at Crowne Plaza on Saturday November 5, 2022. It was an unusually warm day in Syracuse, and it was great to see everyone dressed in their best colorful Indian attire, without the warm jackets. It was a very well attended event, and, as always, it was a pleasure to see many old and new faces.

The event hall was beautifully decorated by our volunteers with lots of diyas, ethnic art and fresh flowers. Children and adults presented a variety of dances. We thank the choreographers and the performers for the beautiful show. We had a catered dinner with a variety of food items, satisfying everyone's palate.



In addition, every family also took home a box of Diwali sweets, which was made possible by a generous donation from India Bazaar.

This year we handed out a certificate of membership to all ICRC permanent members, as a token of our deep appreciation.



All in all, this was a very successful event, and people young and old enjoyed it.



## ICRCC Christmas celebration

**Submitted by: Beena Kappil**

ICRCC celebrated Christmas on December 11, 2022 (4-6 pm) at our India center. Surabhi Raina did a wonderful job as the MC for the program. Pastor Jay Koshy was the main speaker. His message was about “peace, joy and happiness” and the history of Christmas.

The main attraction of Celebration was the children’s Christmas play. The children within the ICRCC community recreated the “Manger Scene” from the Christmas story of the Bible. The group of children also sang melodious carols.

Another great hit was an interactive “Christmas & Bollywood” instrumental music performance presented by Nandika Rajaram. This was followed by several cultural programs: Song by Anika Gopal, Fusion Dance presented by the Rashmi Group, Christmas Poem written by Kanishk Krishnan, Kuchipudi by Lathika Kapu, Bharatanatyam by Chinmayi Acharya, Bollywood Bhangra by Kapoor and group. At the end, Santa came all the way from the North pole to visit the children at the India Center.

ICRCC collected non-perishable food and donated it to the Food Bank of CNY. We also collected Toys for Tots on this day and donated them to the Salvation Army. Thank you everyone for all of your donations – it allowed us to assist the needy in our community.

Refreshments were served. Thank you everyone for bringing food to share.

We thank everyone for your support to make this program a success.



# Republic Day

**Submitted by: Shridevi Karikehalli**

It's always a proud moment to celebrate the Republic Day of India with my Syracuse community. This year ICRC held a grand celebration on Saturday January 28 at the India Center, to commemorate the 74<sup>th</sup> Republic Day of India.

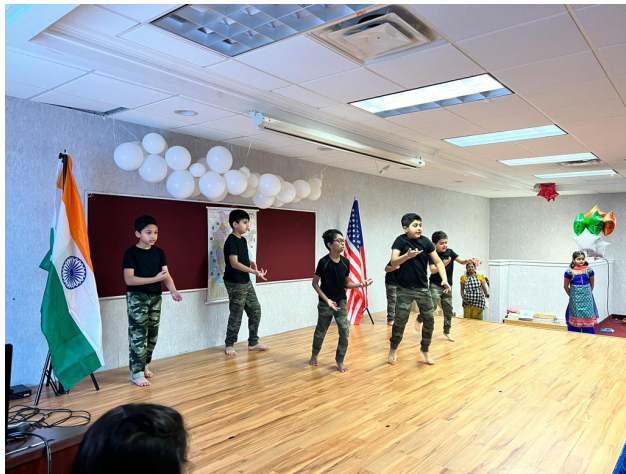
India celebrated the Republic Day with pomp and show on 26<sup>th</sup> January in New Delhi.

The program began a little after 11 am, with the singing of the Indian and the US national anthems. A group of young children from Jnana Mandir organization had perfected both the national anthems, and this was sung with the backdrop of flags from both nations.

Young children presented beautifully choreographed dances set to patriotic songs.

Everyone enjoyed participating in a fun-filled jeopardy-style quiz on India (organized by Falguni Vora) which was a big hit.

Later, all the guests enjoyed a hot and sumptuous authentic South Indian meal.



# Holi

**Submitted by: Falguni Vora**

Holi is known as the Festival of colors. This year's ICRC Holi celebration was very special as it was held after a 3 year gap. And it came true to its name and spirit. Around 115 people attended the event at 1 pm on March 12, 2023.

The stage was decorated with a colorful backdrop. Delicious special Holi food made by volunteers was enjoyed by adults and kids alike. Everyone enjoyed dancing to popular Bollywood songs. The bonfire and playing with powdered colors in the parking lot was the highlight of the event. It was truly an event to remember for a long time.



# International Taste Festival

**Submitted by: Ari Chakraborty and Falguni Vora**

The International Taste Festival (ITF) was held on April 1, 2023, at the New York State Fairgrounds. The event was attended by more than 5,500 people. IC RCC participated both as a food vendor and as a contributor to the cultural program.

We offered the following food items for sale: (1) Samosa Chaat, (2) Pakora Plate, (3) Bhel Puri, (4) Chole Chawal, (5) Mango Lassi, and (6) Kaju Katli. These items were very popular. The event was open to the public from 11 am to 9 pm and we sold out completely by 8 pm!

IC RCC's cultural segment was about an hour long and it comprised classical, folk and Bollywood fusion dances. It was enjoyed and appreciated by the wider CNY community. Overall, the segment was very colorful, creative and full of energy. All the talented participants looked beautiful in their ethnic costumes. It made India look truly diverse and vibrant.

The food and cultural programs from IC RCC received multiple compliments and favorable reviews on social media posts and was also covered by local news agencies.

This event would not have been possible without the support and generosity of the community members. Specifically, the IC RCC booth was the only fully volunteered-led group in the event. Volunteers helped in setting up and decorating the booth, preparing and transporting the food items, ensuring safe food-handling protocols, managing sales and serving food to the customers, and in disassembling the booth at the end of the event. An estimated contribution from over 25 volunteers involving a combined 200 hours of human effort made this event possible.

The organizers of the International Taste Festival were very appreciative of the diverse cultural and culinary experience that IC RCC brought to this event and have invited IC RCC again for the 2024 edition of ITF.





## Community News

### Jnana Mandir

Jnana Mandir serves the spiritual needs of the Syracuse community with in-person programming for children and adults twice a month. The global community is also served virtually with weekly series of talks on Vishnu Sahasranama, Bhagavatam, and Soundarya Lahari. Also, group chanting of Hanuman Chalisa happens virtually on Tuesdays.

For more details, please visit [www.jnanamandir.com/events](http://www.jnanamandir.com/events)

To enroll children in classes, visit [www.jnanamandir.com/class](http://www.jnanamandir.com/class)

Jnana Mandir celebrated New Year, Mahashivratri, and Sri Rama Navami in-person with the community.

### Hindu Chaplain at SU

**Submitted by: Kishan Mehrotra**



Hendricks Chapel at Syracuse University has announced a new chaplain, Mr Sanjay Mathur to serve the Hindu students and the broader University community. Mr Mathur currently also serves as a Hindu chaplain for the University of Rochester and Rochester Institute of Technology. He is a founding board member of the North American Hindu Chaplains Association besides being a sought-after speaker and teacher on spirituality and health, and a national leader with strong ties to Central New York. He currently serves as a member of the board of Trustees for the Hindu Temple of Rochester (NY) and is a past president of the temple.

This appointment has been the result of the untiring efforts and keen advocacy by our members, Pramod and (late) Anju Varshney in collaboration with the Hindu Students Association and other supportive Hindu and Indian faculty members of the university community.

ICRCC welcomes Mr Mathur and looks forward to working with him in serving the Indian community in Central New York.

# ICRCC Board and Committee Members

## Executive Board Members

Shridevi Karikehalli	<a href="mailto:shridevi@icrcc.org">shridevi@icrcc.org</a>	(President)
Chaitanya Halbe	<a href="mailto:chaitnalbe@gmail.com">chaitnalbe@gmail.com</a>	(Vice President)
Jayant Datta	<a href="mailto:icrcc.fin@gmail.com">icrcc.fin@gmail.com</a>	(Treasurer)
Kishan Mehrotra	<a href="mailto:mehrotra@syr.edu">mehrotra@syr.edu</a>	(Secretary)

## Board Members

Uday Banerjee	<a href="mailto:banerjee@syr.edu">banerjee@syr.edu</a>
Ari Chakraborty	<a href="mailto:archakra@syr.edu">archakra@syr.edu</a>
Sunil Gupta	<a href="mailto:sunil4911@gmail.com">sunil4911@gmail.com</a>
Hemant Kale	<a href="mailto:kalehemantd@gmail.com">kalehemantd@gmail.com</a>
Shalabh Maroo	<a href="mailto:scmaroo@syr.edu">scmaroo@syr.edu</a>
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Bandaru Ramarao	<a href="mailto:ramarao.bandaru@gmail.com">ramarao.bandaru@gmail.com</a>
Ashok Sangani	<a href="mailto:asangani@syr.edu">asangani@syr.edu</a>
Falguni Vora	<a href="mailto:falguni@icrcc.org">falguni@icrcc.org</a>

## Committees

**Building:** Kishan Mehrotra (Chair), Chilukuri Mohan, Ashok Sangani, Hemant Kale

**Bylaws:** Uday Banerjee, Shalabh Maroo, Bandaru Ramarao

**Cultural:** Uday Banerjee, Jayant Datta, Chilukuri Mohan, Sudha Raj, Bandaru Ramarao, Seema Sureshkumar, Falguni Vora

**Finance:** Jayant Datta (Chair), Sudha Kailar, Hemant Kale, Ashok Sangani

**Membership:** Chaitanya Halbe (Chair), Falguni Vora

**Newsletter:** Ramesh Gaonkar (Editor), Kumar Ashutosh, Jayant Datta, Kishan Mehrotra, Chilukuri Mohan, Bandaru Ramarao

**Nominations:** Chilukuri Mohan (Chair), Vishnu Sishtla

**Website:** Sunil Gupta (Chair), Uday Banerjee, Shalabh Maroo, Bandaru Ramarao

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

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