

# SANSKRITI



Indian Women's  
Association Newsletter

Visit us at [www.myiwa.org](http://www.myiwa.org)

Vol 21:2 Summer

## From the Board:

As this issue goes to print we find ourselves in the middle of a scorching summer made more so by the political heat around us. It's been an exciting year so far and promises to be more so. For the country and for IWA too.

We started the year with a fun filled Welcome party where everybody dressed up as yesteryears Bollywood actresses. Mumtaz, Zeenat Aman, Lata Mageshkar, Rekha and many more added to the glitter and masti of the evening! This time we had the highest turnout ever (among all our welcome parties).

Soon after, we celebrated Holi, Desi style. It was a lot of fun as members and their families played Holi with colors and sipped on Than-dai accompanied with Pakodas. And like every year we had cultural event in the evening with many of our members or their children showcasing the wonderful talent we have in this community, all of it accompanied by a scrumptious dinner. Our thanks goes out to all the volunteers and all the IWA members who helped us make this event a success.

And then on a chilly April morning we collaborated with ASHA for the Annual 5k run.

And all that was just the beginning! The best is yet to come. Await details of IWA picnic which will have its own Desi tadka!

*Congratulations to*

*Maria Wundram Pimental!*

*She is the 2016 recipient of*

*IWA's scholarship. .She will*

*be recognized at this year's*

*Celebration Of India .*

And of course, we have COI! The Board is already hard at work trying to plan the perfect event to celebrate and showcase our culture to the Greater Lafayette community.

We wish you all a great summer break and see you all at our Annual IWA Picnic on August 27th, 2016.

Please feel free to contact us at [board@myiwa.org](mailto:board@myiwa.org) with your ideas and suggestions.



IWA Holi and Welcome Party



## In This Issue

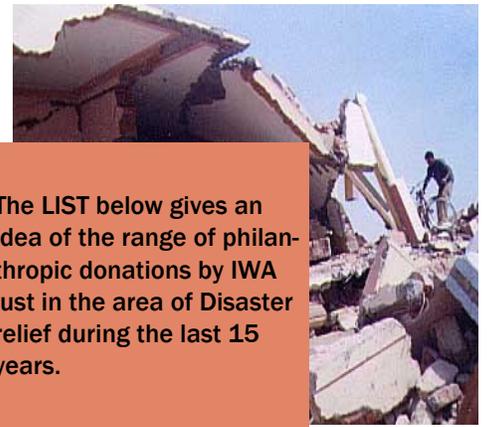
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## IWA Donations 2001 to 2015

- Towards Disaster Relief \$38,500 approximately
- Towards Women and Children's cause \$ 38,250 approximately
- Total Donations 2001 -2015 \$78,750

(Source IWA Treasurer Renu Bajaj)



The LIST below gives an idea of the range of philanthropic donations by IWA just in the area of Disaster relief during the last 15 years.

Hudhud (above) and Gujrat Earthquake (above right )

## Philanthropic Activities of IWA

### By Sangita Handa

Most of us think of IWA as a group of joyous, bubbly, Desi women intent on providing good time to the rest of the local community. However, very few are aware that along with spreading laughter and cheer, we share a unique enthusiasm to provide support wherever, and whenever we are able to identify a need. Whenever a disaster strikes in any part of the world, we rally together and raise funds to send to the affected people through reliable organizations such as Red Cross, or through governmental/ non-governmental organizations.

In addition to providing monetary help to different organizations in combating natural disasters, IWA partners with organizations like YWCA, ICRW that have structured programs to help women and children to break free from their compromised situations and lead productive lives. Depending upon situations, IWA may provide direct support to battered single women in the community in different ways targeted to propel them towards a path of self-sufficiency. While women are thus engaged in rebuilding their lives, IWA members rally together in fulfilling their immediate needs such as food and shelter. Support to marginalized women generally includes a wide variety of tasks such as arranging food/shelter/ clothing as required, and connecting them with community resources available for their specific issues. Often this requires introducing them to experts in key positions who are better prepared to advise such women to deal with their specific calamitous situations. Meanwhile, our members might provide them with sundry help such as basic groceries, driving them to key resources, and even by introducing them to other members of the community that may serve as useful contacts. For small expenditures, IWA members often use money out of their own pockets or use IWA discretionary funds for covering basic requirements such as groceries for needy women.

In addition to providing direct or indirect assistance to needy populations, we have been providing volunteer services to a number of organizations such as Lafayette Food Bank, Lafayette Urban Ministry and YWCA.

For future guidance in continuing our service it is important to maintain a database of organizations that we have supported in the past. Unfortunately, such data was not recorded for the first 4-5 years of IWA's inception and so most of our reporting is from 2001.

## IWA Donations for Disaster Relief 2001-2015

- American red cross for New York (9/11) relief
- Gujarat Earth quake
- IDRF (<http://www.idrf.org/>) For Tsunami Victims
- American Indian Foundation for Tsunami
- American Red Cross for Hurricane Katrina
- UNICEF South Asia (India-Pakistan) Earthquake
- American Red Cross- Haiti Relief
- American Red Cross - Pakistan Flood Relief Fund
- American Red Cross Donation for Japan Disaster
- American Red Cross- Hurricane Sandy Relief
- American Red cross- Oklahoma relief fund
- American Red cross- Philippines relief fund
- Child Nurture & Relief- Kashmir relief fund
- Prime Minister relief fund for India-Kashmir relief fund
- Global giving foundation & Relief-Nepal earthquake relief fund
- Global giving foundation & Relief-Andhra relief fund

## IWA Graduate Research Scholarship Recipient 2016-17

By **Rashmi Chaturvedi**

We are happy to announce that IWA's graduate Research Scholarship recipient for 2016-17 is **Maria Wundram** a Ph.D candidate in Anthropology specializing in Gender and Sexuality. She plans to graduate in 2018.

*Her research examines "how existing policy impacts the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) outcomes of sex worker populations in Guatemala City, their lives, and their communities. By analyzing the way sex workers negotiate existing resources, and advocate politically to improve their lives, this project will examine the intersections between the priorities set by transnational and national policies, funding allocations, everyday experiences, and health. Through a comparative analysis of the experiences of both transgender and cisgender women, I will examine how culturally constructed ideologies of gender and sexuality norms impact health outcomes. Policy priorities can reflect these and other ideologies, and ultimately aggravate social suffering, not only for sex workers, but also for low-income women in general. Finally, working closely with sex workers I will examine how experiences of violence, discrimination, and inequality influence sex worker's health literacy –the availability of skills to obtain, interpret, and use health resources."*

This year IWA received 14 applications, majority of which were PHD candidates from the following areas:: American Studies–3; College of Education–4; Sociology–2; Anthropology–2; Political Science–2; History–1

IWA scholarship fund was created through the generosity of our Indian community in Greater Lafayette. The Indian Women's Association's broad interests are in promoting gender issues (including intersections with race, ethnicity, class, sexuality and other differences) throughout the world. This award recognizes long time interest in and support of graduate students; it provides up to \$1000.00 to help with the costs of research on issues of concern that are common to women globally.

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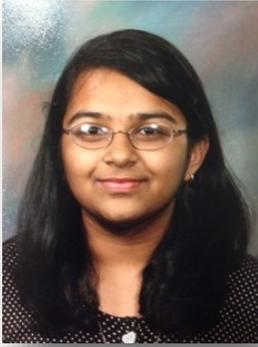
## IWA Congratulates our 2016 Graduates

Our future is only as bright as our future generation's accomplishments. IWA wishes them great success in their life ahead!

### Nikhil Carneiro

**Graduating from** Harrison High School

**Future plan:** Study Engineering at Purdue University



### Anuja Jumde

**Graduating from** Conway High School,  
Conway, Arkansas

**Future plan:** Starting in Fall 2016 at University  
of Central Arkansas.

### Ila Chaubey

**Graduating from** West Lafayette High School

**Future Plan:** Attending University of California, Berkeley, majoring in Neuroscience and Mathematics



### Harini Suresh

**Graduating from** Massachusetts Institute of  
Technology  
**Degree:** BS

**Future Plan:** Masters of Engineering at MIT

### Manik Vyom Singhal

**Graduated from:** Purdue with a degree in Electrical Engineering  
**Degree:** BS

**Future Plan:** Pursue Masters in Electrical Engineering at  
Purdue University





## Sameer Mishra

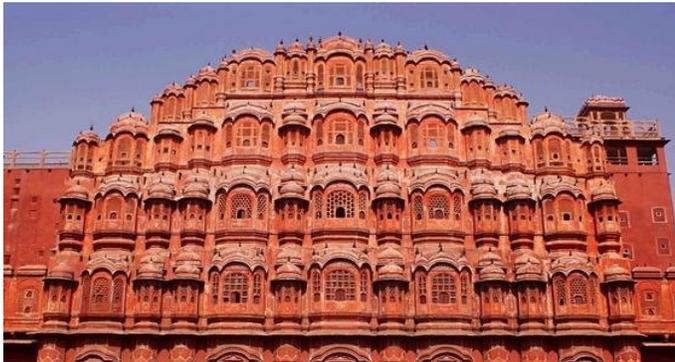
**Graduating From:** Columbia University  
**Degree:** BA in Economics-Statistics

**Future Plan:** Investment Banking Analyst at Morgan Stanley

## Sheetala Chaturvedi

**Graduating From:** Carnegie Mellon University, Heinz College  
**Degree:** Masters in Management Information Systems Management

**Future Plan:** Working as Data Scientist/Technical Analyst at Wargaming America, CA



Jaipur - Hawa Mahal

## My First Visit to North India

By Arun Raman

Tata, my grandfather, lives in South India, so I have not had many chances to see the north before. My first visit to North India, as you might expect, was spectacular. The main reason was that I experienced new and amazing places as well as foods that I will never forget. Here is how our trip unfolded.....

On the very first evening I enjoyed dinner with my family (Dad, Mom, Tata, and my uncle) at Khan Chacha. This is an amazing kabob restaurant in New Delhi that seems to stand out when strolling Khan Market on beautiful warm nights, even in December.

On my second day in North India, my family and I went to the school where Pati, my amazing grandmother taught chemistry, and where my dad and uncle studied. The school is called: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. This school was awesome. I liked how everyone was nice to

me as we were walking through the building during their class time. I think that politeness is a trait that India as a country seems to own. The principal showed me a trophy named after Pati and awarded to the top student in science.

On the third day, we all drove to Agra. We rested a little after we arrived at the hotel. Later in the afternoon, we drove to a structure that you are probably familiar with called the Taj Mahal. It was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century entirely of white marble precious stones by the emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his Mumtaz Mahal. It is a very big monument and invites many thousands of people per day. I did not like it very much because it had too many people.

.On the fourth day of this visit, on our way to Jaipur, we stopped at Fatehpur Sikri, an abandoned capital of the Mughal Empire. It is home to the shrine of the famous Sufi saint called Saleem Chishti. Fatehpur Sikri felt like a sad place to me, since it was too lonely. Even so, I liked it much more than the Taj Mahal.

The next day, already in Jaipur, we were very lucky to get the chance to ride on elephants as we climbed uphill to the entrance of Amber Fort. I thought that I was about to fall off! Thankfully, I was totally fine in the end, and I came off the elephant feeling proud of myself.

On the last morning in Jaipur, I went to see some sundial clocks. I M is that some clocks can be quite amazing at the Jantar Mantar observatory. These complex structures will keep you in awe for the rest of the day.

Back in Delhi, on the last day of the trip, we went to see Mahatma Gandhi's memorial in Raj Ghat. Once there, I learned a lot about him and his beliefs. It was New Year's Eve, and I spent my last few hours in India playing cricket and video games at my friend Moksh's house.

I hope these paragraphs give you an introduction to my impressions of North India, and I hope you can get a chance to see all this great stuff. India might have poverty, but in my opinion, the great sightseeing makes up for it.



Arun Raman



Prof. Anant and Vasanti Ramdas

## The Immigrants' Story

By Vasanti Ramdas

My husband, Anant and I came to the United States in 1956. Anant had finished his PhD in Physics with Professor C. V. Raman in Bangalore. While browsing the journals in the library of the Raman Research Institute, he came across an article that sparked his curiosity. The article was writ-

ten by Professor H. Y. Fan of the Physics Department here at Purdue University. Anant applied for a post-doctoral position at Purdue and was accepted. We had just got married and left for the US within a month.

Our journey began in Bombay in October 1956. We came in a plane with propellers, bound for London and which made several halts at various airports before reaching London: Cairo, Egypt; Beirut, Lebanon; Frankfurt, Germany; and Paris, France. We were in London for a week with Anant's sister and her husband. The second stage of our journey was by a small ship, which left Southampton, England, for New York. It made brief halts at the ports of Cherbourg, France, and La Caruna, Spain, before crossing the Atlantic Sea. The voyage took 13 days!

On landing in New York, we got on a train, The New York Central, for Lafayette, Indiana. The station building in Lafayette is the one that is currently in the Riehle Plaza. In 1956 it was located a few blocks south. When the train arrived at the station, it was a shock! There was no hustle and bustle of the Indian railway station, no vendors, no noise! We were the only passengers to get down. One of the passengers on the train had advised us to go to the Purdue Memorial Union (PMU) where we could get a room to stay. A taxi brought us promptly to the campus.

We had no clue that there would be anyone from India at Purdue. Within a few days of our arrival and our stay at the Union, we had met several of them. There were 3 other families, and many bachelors, altogether about 35 Indians. There were no single girls at that time! Most of them were working on their PhDs, or finishing up their degrees. One or two were doing post-doctoral work. There were no Indian professors on the faculty at the university.

Since we came at the end of October, apartments for rent were in short supply. We stayed at PMU till we could find one. The secretary of the head of the Physics helped us locate one close to campus. The apartment, a small one-bedroom cottage, is still standing at the intersection of Northwestern and Wiggins streets! One of the Indian families who had a car helped us with shopping, groceries and household items. The next year we bought a used car, and now we could get around easily. There were no stores carrying Indian groceries. We would order from New York. There were no Indian restaurants. We would just get together for dinner with other Indians. Some of the students were very good cooks, especially one called Gupta, who was very creative. We called this period the Golden Age of the Guptas!

Since we had a car, we would go for long rides during the weekend exploring the various parts of Indiana. We usually had a couple of friends along. Once, on a trip to Bass Lake, we stopped at a small town to have some ice-cream. The proprietor of the cafe took a look at us (I was wearing a sari, and we had Indian features), and told us that they were out of ice-cream! We then asked for

some water, to which he replied that we would have to take it outside to drink! It took us a little time to realize that this was racism! In contrast, the campus environment was very friendly. One remarkable American lady befriended the Indian students. She was like a “mother” to them. She was so interested and enthusiastic about India that she visited the country and related her experiences over WBAA radio.

The main festival that the Indian community celebrated was Diwali. We would have a dinner in the basement of a church around campus. The ladies would cook and the men would set up the tables and do the final washing up!

There was one event on campus that was memorable. This was Christmas around the World held in the PMU. Every country represented by students on campus would have a display of handicrafts from their homeland. There would be music, dance, slideshows, etc. from their country. The Union would provide cookies and punch. This was open to the whole community. Lots of people would come to view the show. This event was

cancelled later on due to its becoming politicized.

Over the course of years, more and more Indians began to arrive, including several girls. Lafayette is a comfortable town in which to live. We are very happy to have found a place, a university town, compatible to our interests.



# Sanskriti

## Indian Women's Association Newsletter

710 Noble Court  
West Lafayette IN 47906

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