

Minutes of IWA meeting on 1/25/15

Location: Rwitti Home; Time: 2:30 pm

Present: Rwitti, Lakshmi, Debjaya, Rashmi, Renu, Sangita, Kumari, Anisha, Puja, Smita

**A. Following two forms were signed by all members present**

1. Non-disclosure Agreement Form.
2. Conflict of Interest Form

**B. Report on ICRW phone call with Sarah and Ravi**

Rwitti spoke with Sarah Kambou and Ravi Verma of ICRW and obtained assurances from them that they would send us reports on how funds donated by IWA are being used for specific programs supported by IWA. Sarah has impressed IWA members considerably with her network abilities and her interest and passion in helping people. Rwitti asked Sarah following questions:

- a. IWA would like some involvement in service programs such as GEMS being supported by IWA through ICRW. Rwitti mentioned that Ravi Verma had given some options to IWA members about different programs of ICRW where IWA can be involved more directly. ICRW views IWA as a long time partners in their service endeavors and are open to suggestions from IWA members about what we would like to do to support this partnership. They are interested in having a joint partnership in fundraising, in working directly with people being benefitted by them, with the option to decide what specifically we would like to do. Sarah suggested that IWA members can visit their project in Jharkhand.
- b. In 2013, IWA donated \$2500 to ICRW for development and execution of GEMS program. IWA would like written reports, and some anecdotal stories on how these funds have been used for designated programs in ICRW. The anecdotal stories would be valuable tools to promote IWA by publishing them in Sanskriti, Journal and Courier etc.

ICRW has asked IWA members to give input or suggestions on how they can work together on dealing with tangible elements of a given service program. A simple task to do is to donate to libraries for children run by ICRW.

According to Rwitti, advocacy should be an important element of programs such as ICRW in removing long existing harmful practices in India. For example, advocacy can be used to prevent rape, habitual urine passing/defecating in public. Another suggestion made by Rwitti was to organize a joint conference on a given topic in India, or even in Lafayette. ICRW is open to all these suggestions.

Sarah's suggestion was to have a tandem conference such as with American India Foundation usually held in East coast of USA. IWA board identified some ways to participate in a tandem conference because it would offer a platform for IWA to voice its concerns about harmful practices in India and emerge with solutions on how to tackle them. It would require more conversation with ICRW to initiate a related activity.

The \$2500 earmarked for 2015 donation to ICRW has not been dispensed yet.

**C. IWA Scholarship Award** – In 2014, Rashmi and Laxmi, assisted by Prof. Mangala Subramaniam, spearheaded this award for Purdue University students who are conducting research on gender related issues. The applications for this award are evaluated by a panel consisting of two Purdue University professors and one member from IWA board. Last year, Rashmi was the IWA representative for this panel. The panel members have developed a rating scale to evaluate applicants. This award is expected to continue in the coming years.

Rashmi and Lakshmi will deposit \$1000 in IWA account for the next award, and will contact Prof. Mangala Subramaniam in this context.

This award was awarded to for the first time in Fall 2014 to Zhi Yu of Purdue University. Board members decided that she, and forthcoming awardees, should be required to present their research to IWA members. She will be requested to present her research either at the upcoming Welcome Party and if that is not possible, at the Holi function in April.

**D. Sanskriti** – IWA's signature magazine was characterized by some members as boring and unattractive. Brainstorming on improving Sanskrit resulted in following suggestions:

- I. Articles and anecdotes by people that are served by our partners such as ICRW, YWCA and ASHA should be published in SANSKRITI.
- II. Articles and stories can be made more interesting by changing the format e.g., by adding more pictures, bullets points, highlighted sentences within them.
- III. Put Annual Report on last page since it has not been particularly exciting for some people.
- IV. Interviews with IWA, which used to appear in the magazine a couple of years ago, should be brought back.
- V. Change the layout.
- VI. Put "pizazz" in the magazine, even if doing so requires hiring a professional.

### **E. Welcome Party Planning**

Date for Welcome Party was fixed for February 15, 2015. Board members will prepare snacks and IWA may provide fruits for the party. Donation for samosas will be sought by Renu from Sharma's Kitchen. Neeru Patel will be sought for providing Dahi Bhalla and/or Dhokla. Sujatha will be requested to conduct games for the party.

### **F. Holi Planning**

Owing to different time frames for spring breaks of West Lafayette School Corporation and Tippecanoe School Corporation Holi event was tentatively fixed for first week of April 2015.

Some members wanted performances by adults only but it was argued that most families may not show up if their children were not performing. Therefore, it was decided to let children and adults, participate in performances.

All the performances are required to relate to Holi Theme. Objections to an almost lewd act presented by an IWA member at HOLI 2014 were reiterated. To repeat such a negative experience, it was decided that all acts/dances have to be approved by the board before they can be performed at holi time. For approval, a representative of the

performing group has to explain clearly what they are doing and have it previewed by the board.

Chandni Shah, a Purdue student who has been helping IWA at cultural performances has offered to help again for holi event. Board would actually like her to perform too since it is her last semester here.

Sangita will request local teenage girls who performed Bhangra last year to perform again.

Debjaya will contact Punam for some basic training in posting materials on IWA website.

## **G. Housekeeping and Administrative issues**

Organizing COI for 2016 – There is a distinct possibility of partnering with Purdue Convocations.

Two options are available through Purdue Convocations In organizing COI for next time:

- a. They can provide all the resources for promotions, publicity, and related expenses for organizing it while IWA would be responsible for providing cultural programs and other entertainment.
- b. IWA would share all the expenses for organizing the event which would translate into equal sharing all the revenue resulting from it.

Rwitti would like to put on a regional play involving IWA members and their spouses at COI (check Seagull publications for translations of Bengali plays in English).

## **F. Creating layers in the structure through committees with the aim of making the organization stronger.**

It was noted by Rwitti that interest of IWA members in IWA related activities has increased lately but participation has not increased significantly. Therefore, in order to involve more people in IWA related activities, the co-presidents suggested that we create layers in IWA structure. These layers would comprise of different committees targeted at accomplishing specific objectives. At least one board member is expected to participate in each committee and help coordinate its activities.

To this end, some possible committees were announced and evaluated by board members. As required, one or more board member volunteered to be in one or more committees.

Proposed Committees and their roles and functions:

Committee	Goal/Role	Members
1 Finance	To help Treasurer in reporting and managing finances of IWA	Renu Bajaj, Rupa Murali (NEEDS TO BE INFORMED), Kumari, Anisha

2 Award	To identify and honor deserving members (with gift certificates of \$50 and \$25)	Renu, Archana (needs to be informed), Sangita, Phillora (needs to be informed)
3 Sanskriti	Develop means to make Sanskrit more attractive and to generate more interest in its readership. Try for a format and design similar to North Salisbury Magazine. Print 4 issues annually to correspond to specific IWA events : February, May, September, December. The fall issue should be like North Salisbury. Sanskriti should be a fund raising tool through advertising revenues.	Rashmi, Aparna, Meena, Ranjani, Puja, Sangita (for ads)
4 Social Media and Networking	To disseminate information about IWA activities, promote IWA events and use internet as a fund-raising tool. Maintain and update IWA website. Obtain stories on howdonations (from IWA) ICRW and YWCA and other agencies helped people overcome adversity. Such stories can also be published on Sanskrit.	Smita, Debjaya, Rajshri (needs to be informed), Punam, Ranjani
5 Cultural	To create, and to encourage groups to create, cultural items that show case cultural heritage from India.	Kumari, Debjaya, ( they will invite more members from IWA members)
6 Cookbook	To create the second volume of IWA cookbook	Involve Alka, Charu, Rakshie,

which would feature non-vegetarian recipes in addition to vegetarian items. Use it as a fund raising tool. Several non-Indian people have mentioned that they would like us to re-create recipes they encountered in restaurants.

Saima, others

7 Outreach

To reach out to IWA members, and to Lafayette Community through specifically designed activities.

Sangita, Anisha. Other IWA members to be invited.

Next meeting to be in two weeks to plan for Welcome Party and Holi.

Minutes submitted by Sangita Handa