

# Year In Reflection

**Namitha Nayak**

**Several years ago, a dear co-worker was diagnosed with ALS, and I felt completely dejected and wanted to find a way to support her and her family. It began as clothes for caring, where gently used donated clothes were sold to raise money to support medical expenses.**

**In subsequent years, although she was no longer with us, the seed had grown into a sapling that could be nourished as the root cause continues to be valid. Over the years, it encouraged me to further develop the "triple win" idea where one could help while still serving some need for ourselves too.**

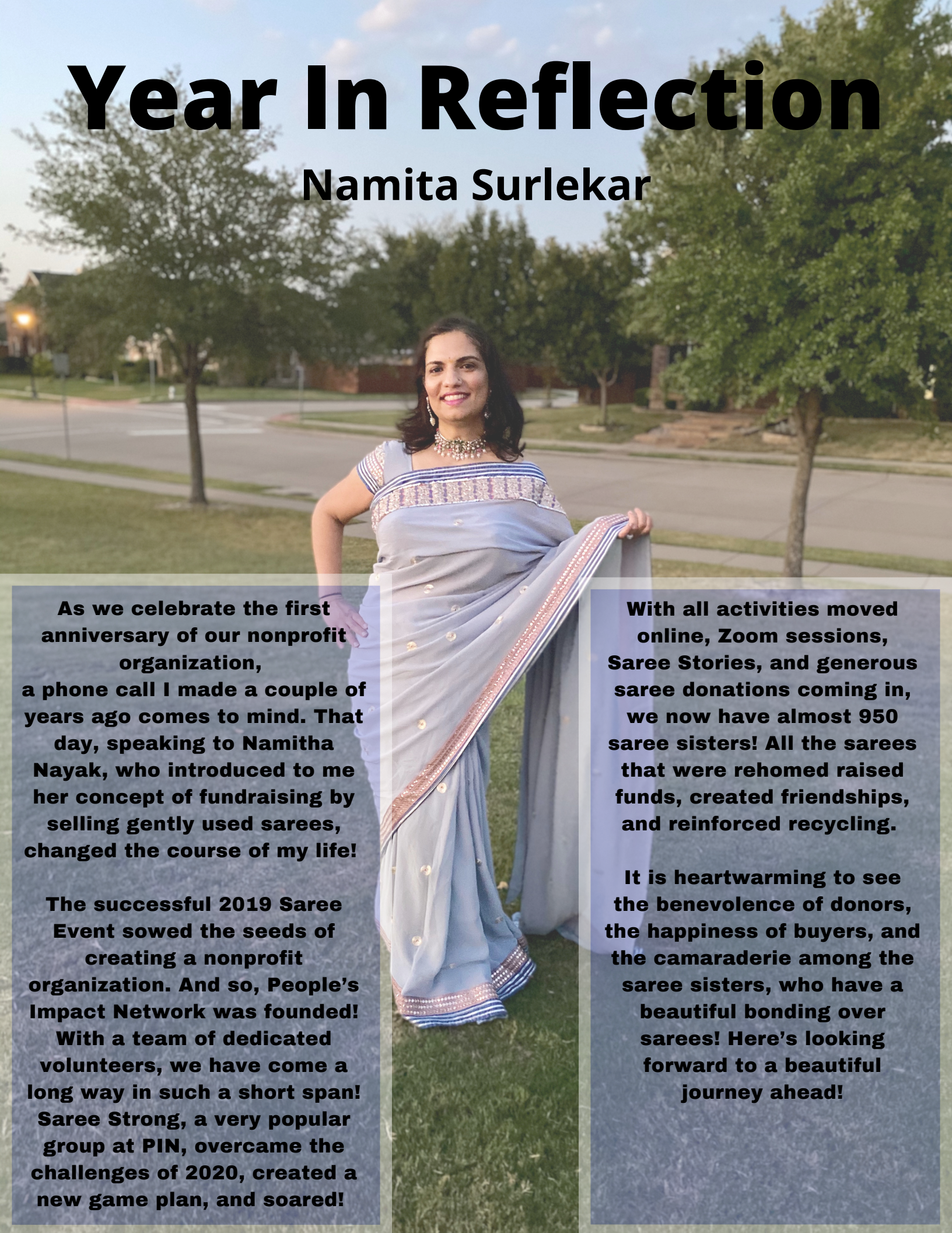
**Fast forward to 2019 when we relocated to Dallas from Chicagoland; I was looking for ways to continue the mission. I reached out to various folks via social media, and magic happened. I met so many like-minded individuals, and we have made so much progress within the first year itself.**

**Read on to hear from each of the directors about their areas of focus and key achievements in the past year.**



# Year In Reflection

Namita Surlekar



**As we celebrate the first anniversary of our nonprofit organization, a phone call I made a couple of years ago comes to mind. That day, speaking to Namitha Nayak, who introduced to me her concept of fundraising by selling gently used sarees, changed the course of my life!**

**The successful 2019 Saree Event sowed the seeds of creating a nonprofit organization. And so, People's Impact Network was founded! With a team of dedicated volunteers, we have come a long way in such a short span! Saree Strong, a very popular group at PIN, overcame the challenges of 2020, created a new game plan, and soared!**

**With all activities moved online, Zoom sessions, Saree Stories, and generous saree donations coming in, we now have almost 950 saree sisters! All the sarees that were rehomed raised funds, created friendships, and reinforced recycling.**

**It is heartwarming to see the benevolence of donors, the happiness of buyers, and the camaraderie among the saree sisters, who have a beautiful bonding over sarees! Here's looking forward to a beautiful journey ahead!**



# Year In Reflection

**Kalai Krishnamurthy**

**My personal journey with PIN started a little before it was born, with a small casual lunch get-together with ladies who were strangers with nothing more than a common love for sarees.**

**Namita Surlekar welcomed me with her very warm smile and caring talk while Namitha Nayak spoke about her thoughts and her vision on how she wanted to help the community and narrated it with the "Triple Win" concept. I was drawn to it immediately.**

**Last year, People's Impact Network was born with great excitement: looking to bring people together, identify and develop their interest, while building friendships, respecting each other's views,**

**creating awareness and raising funds through our programs that help the local charities in need, with the focus on "give where we live.**

**While the COVID-19 pandemic brought many challenges, with people and businesses needing help more than ever, technology came to our rescue, and through Zoom, we could not only connect with people in Dallas locally but also connect with people all over the country and all over the world, true to the saying, "When all doors close, there will be a small window that will open."**

**Looking forward to a great year and to be useful to PIN and the world in many ways!**



# Year In Reflection


Deepesh  
Balwani

**When I first joined PIN in July of 2020, I was only supposed to be a video editor for the summer before school started. However, I saw myself doing more. I became the moderator of the Back2School Series, which was my first VOW event, where I interviewed students on their thoughts about going back to school. I then thought of the idea of starting a youth wing at PIN, where high schoolers can make an impact as well. I also made sure that they didn't have to leave their homes in order to volunteer for PIN. We ended up creating the organization's official newsletter, PINsider. In November, I was named as the director of the Youth Impact Network, which is more than I could have ever imagined when I first joined. Throughout these past nine months, I learned truly what it takes to be a great leader. It's not just telling others what to do, but it's about communicating with your team and working together to accomplish your goals. In a year that was obviously not ideal, we persevered and created amazing issues of the newsletter. I have no one else but my newsletter team, the youth wing, and the leaders of PIN to thank for their constant belief in my abilities.**



# Year In Reflection

Shehnaz Nagpurwala



**Back in 2019, a post on a local Facebook group caught my eye. The idea was unique but something very simple: reuse/resale sarees and in turn, help local charities supporting women in need. I answered the post and as they say, the rest is history. I am honored and humbled to be part of this organization that brings people from various backgrounds, geographic locations, and passions together. Over the last year, I saw our organization expand from Saree Strong to other areas like PIN-Ed, VOW, and MSATT.**

**For the coming year, our focus is to continue to provide support for our community and our members by providing educational series for healthy living, learning a new language, or other skills. The Saree Strong community is growing and we are hoping to open branches in other locations outside of Texas. Thank you all for being part of this journey and making it a successful one for us and you.**



# Year In Reflection

Vipul Surlekar

**I work with the Saree Strong team to identify the best carrier to ship packages — FedEx or USPS — and the most cost-effective way of shipping them. We receive donations of sarees from all over the USA. These were curated and sold at very low prices to encourage recycling and reuse. Thank you for your generous donations and support.**

**In the past year, we have shipped to more than 64 locations all over the 48 contiguous United States and also mailed some packages to Alaska and Hawaii. In addition, we mailed some packages to military addresses. Packing and shipping is largely a manual process. Going forward, we are planning to automate it, so donors can be alerted of a shipment and track their packages.**



# Year In Reflection

**Bilkish Bajaj**

A reel of memories flash back when I think of how I got connected with the members of the PIN. Time does fly, and you realize it when it's time to celebrate the one-year anniversary. In January 2020, I saw an advertisement on the Dallas Desis group on Facebook from Namitha Nayak, and it started from there. I still remember her wearing a black saree, holding the mic, and just talking about how we can take our Saree Strong group to the next level. I had no idea at that point where I was heading; all I knew was that it's all about women's empowerment. The idea was to help the women who needed support. I attended the monthly meet-up in January 2020, and that was my first get-together with the amazing members of our organization. That one meeting touched my heart, and I decided to volunteer as much as I could to help build up our organization. I am so humbled and honored to be a part of People's Impact Network.



Our various groups like MSATT, PIN-Ed, Saree Strong, and PINvestors have helped so many families to get engaged while sitting at home. When our Saree Strong event was canceled due to COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, I thought we will have a long way to go, but that was not the case. PIN started to grow at a faster pace because the technology gave us a source of getting connected with everyone virtually. By the end of the year, our Facebook page had 1.1k followers. This year, we are hoping to open branches in different locations so it's convenient for the community and for us.

Just want to mention here that when women lift each other, incredible things happen. And the same has happened with all of us at PIN. Let's keep the momentum going. I want to thank each one of you from the bottom of my heart for your support and for spreading the word about PIN. I know we just started 2021 but I have a feeling we are going to be great again because together we can!



# Year In Reflection

**Swati Halady**

**PIN is celebrating its first anniversary, and I am beyond thrilled to celebrate this moment with the entire leadership team and all our supporters.**

**The initial months for PIN took shape at the time of pandemic, and all our plans faced a challenge we did not anticipate. We made a conscious decision to continue with daily free events. For many, it was the only human interaction in the lockdown/stay-at-home situation. We learned new recipes together, shared experiences and skills. The most memorable event for me was the "healing through music" by Harini and Anand.**

**The My Seat At The Table (MSATT) program was also altered to support several small-business owners, who had struggled to grow their business and sell their stock during the pandemic. We supported around 34 small business owners in 2020 find their confidence.**



**As things settled into a new normal, we realized many were trying to jump back into the corporate world, or turn their career around, so WILD took shape. After a Voice of World (VOW) event on finance and investing, PINvestors community was born.**

**As I look back at the year, I am filled with gratitude for having met Namitha Nayak. Her triple win concept that is applicable to all our programs Saree Strong, MSATT, VOW, WILD, and PINvestors is just amazing! Her ideas struck a cord with me and I am so happy to have joined the team at its inception. We connected due to a shared passion to do good in the community, and today, we share this journey with several incredibly talented and like-minded people who have supported us, encouraged us and participated in our programs. I look forward to celebrating many such moments with the incredible team at PIN.**