



ALABAMA TAMIL SANGAM (ATS)

பர்மிங்காம் பக்கங்கள்



Q2 2025 NEWSLETTER

ATS President Address



Dear ATS Family,

The 2nd quarter of 2025 has been an inspiring one for our community. A special highlight was welcoming the Tamil Nadu Police team as they participated in the World Games. Our ATS members went above and beyond in showing true Tamil hospitality – from organizing transportation to making them feel at home in Alabama. My heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers who made this possible.

Looking ahead, we have an exciting lineup of events:

- Cricfest 2025 – A celebration of cricket and community spirit. Volunteers and sponsors are welcome to join us in making it a grand success.
- Aaram / ATA Annual Day Event – A chance to showcase talents and connect with the broader Tamil community.
- ATS Cultural Event – An evening of arts, music, and tradition that unites us all.

Your involvement and support make ATS more than an organization – it's a family. Let's continue to build on our shared pride, unity, and heritage.

With gratitude,
Charles Daniel
President, Alabama Tamil Sangam

ONGOING INITIATIVES

We are excited to launch the ATS Cookbook Project—an initiative to collect and preserve simple, meaningful recipes from our members. The goal is to create a printed cookbook that can be passed down to our children as a cultural keepsake, capturing the flavors and stories that make each family unique. This is open to all to participate.



Please send your articles for the next newsletter by September 15th, 2025. Email your articles to atscommunication@alabamatamlsangam.org. The articles can cover topics such as hobbies, arts, stories, achievements, cooking, gardening tips & pictures, health & wellness.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 29th - 31st 2025

Cricfest 2025

Our signature cricket tournament over Labor Day weekend. - get your teams ready.

October 5th - AARAM

November - ATS Annual Day

Alabama Tamil Academy

Article By: Lavanya Kumaran

"Mother tongue is the first gift we give our children – Tamil is that precious treasure."

American Tamil Academy (ATA) – Nurturing Language, Culture & Confidence

Founded in 2017 in Birmingham, Alabama, the American Tamil Academy (ATA) has been passionately committed to preserving and promoting the Tamil language and culture among children growing up in the U.S. Over the years, our journey has been made possible by the steadfast support of parents, dedicated students, and our vibrant team of volunteers.


At ATA, we strongly believe that when children learn their mother tongue, they are not just learning a language—they are reconnecting with their roots, identity, and cultural pride. A deep understanding of their heritage helps children grow into strong, confident, and value-driven individuals.


Our Vision: To nurture a generation that speaks Tamil with pride, understands its roots, and carries forward the richness of our culture with love.

Moving beyond traditional classroom learning, ATA is now embracing a more engaging and child-centered approach to teaching Tamil. Our goal is to spark interest and curiosity among children so they learn Tamil with love and enthusiasm.

Here's what we're bringing to the classroom :

 **Story-based vocabulary learning** – Kids absorb new Tamil words through meaningful stories

 **Exploring Tamil literature and history** – Introducing legends, folktales, and classical works (Sanga illakiyam)

 **Fun riddles and logical thinking** – Developing problem-solving skills through Tamil riddles (Vidukathaigal)

 **Thirukkural in real life** – Learning ancient wisdom with practical applications

 **Interactive games and cultural activities** – Keeping the learning fun, immersive, and memorable

Our team of passionate volunteer teachers are constantly working on creative ways to make Tamil learning enjoyable, helping children not only speak the language but also live and experience it.

 **No Matter Where You Are** – Let Tamil Be a Part of Your Child's Identity

Learn
More

In today's global world, language is a bridge to culture, confidence, and community. ATA's mission is to ensure that every Tamil child in Alabama and beyond has the opportunity to learn their mother tongue in a way that is meaningful, fun, and empowering.

Alabama Tamil Academy 2024- 2025



Volunteer Opportunities

ATA's success depends on the active involvement of parents and ATS members. We warmly invite you to volunteer in any of the following areas:

Substitute teaching, Cultural programs, Event coordination, Classroom and school management.

Alabama Tamil Academy Teachers 2025-2026

ATA TEACHERS 2025-2026



LAVANYA KUMARAN
MAZHALAI



JEGEN KANDASAMY
NILAI 1



DR. B. ANANDHII
NILAI 2



SOWMIYA UTHURUSAMY
NILAI 3



VENKAT ADIKESAVAN
NILAI 4A



BALAMURUGAN
MARIAPPAN
NILAI 4B

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LAVANYA MOHAN RAJ



MEENA RAM

ATA SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS 2025-2026



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MAZHALAI



SATHYANARAYANAN
LINGAPRAKASAM
NILAI 1



BASKAR RAJ
SAVARIMUTHU
NILAI 2



MUTHU
THIRUPANDY
NILAI 3



SAKTHIVELAN
THANIGAIVELAN
NILAI 4A



KUMARAN ANNAMALAI
ELUMALAI
NILAI 4B

For inquiries, please contact:
ataschool@alabamatamilsangam.org

Member Spotlight

**Interviewers: Kavitha Karthikeyan,
Mubeena Abdullah, Sarah Ramaiah**



Lavanya Kumaran & Family

Tell us about your journey to USA and your family

We are from Chennai, India. My name is Lavanya. I received my Master's degree in Medical Electronics from Anna University. . I started my professional career in academia, where I was able to combine my technical background and passion for teaching for more than 12 years as an assistant professor at Sri Venkateswara College of Engineering.

My spouse, Kumaran, is a software engineer with over 21 years of experience and currently works as an Engineering Manager at Adtran. Throughout my journey, he has consistently offered support and encouragement. We are proud parents of two exceptionally talented daughters. Our eldest, Adhithi Shree, is pursuing theater at the Alabama School of Fine Arts (ASFA) and a passionate dancer and artist.

She has earned numerous accolades, including awards from the prestigious Trumbauer competition for acting. Our younger daughter, Gobhika Shree, is academically gifted and the recipient of several honors from Simmons School, such as the Exemplary and Outstanding Student Awards. She has also published five works and was recently accepted into ASFA's creative writing program.

In 2016, our family embarked on a new chapter by relocating to Portland, Oregon. After eight years there, we moved to Alabama.

How did you develop an interest in teaching Tamil, art and folk arts?

After relocating to Portland, Oregon, in 2016, my husband Kumaran and I launched a sincere project to provide free Tamil classes to kids. Our mission was to preserve our rich culture and inspire children to love and learn Tamil. What started out as a modest deed of kindness quickly spread internationally. Through online and in-person sessions, I have now instructed more than 500 kids in Tamil across the United States and Canada. I currently teach Tamil to over 150 children in six active batches through our organization, Zhagaram Foundation. I teach languages, but I also teach art to children, both in-person and online. I've experimented with mediums like acrylic and have a strong affinity for sketching, particularly with color pencil and charcoal. Recently, I've been focusing on mastering Kerala mural art.

My contributions to Tamil education has been recognized through several awards, such as the Pride of Charity Award from the Nova Awards and the Prime Hero Award (2020) for Tamil teaching service . During my time in Oregon, I also worked as a substitute teacher for the Beaverton School District.



Member Spotlight Continued

Under the auspices of Zhagaram Foundation, we also established the Portland Kalai Kuzhu while we were there, uniting over 40 people to celebrate and perform traditional Tamil folk arts such as Parai, Silambam, and Oyilattam. We have rekindled our enthusiasm by starting a new group under Zhagaram Kalai Kuzhu after moving to Alabama, and we are still spreading the spirit of our culture. Through Zhagaram Foundation, we are giving monetary support for transgenders in TamilNadu.

What was the trigger or spark to pursue these art forms?

In my opinion, my dad is a gifted artist. I have enjoyed drawing since I was a young child, but I stopped after the tenth grade to focus on my studies. However, I resumed drawing after arriving in the United States. Kumaran is a deeply engaged member of the community. While we were in Chennai, he organized health and blood donation camps. He makes meaningful contributions to society and always strives to help others. He volunteers extensively.

My passion lies in teaching. When we first arrived in the United States, we believed most students here did not speak Tamil. Since we both love Tamil, we decided to teach Tamil to children, initially starting classes at home. Later, we thought about incorporating folk dance, so we choreographed parai and began teaching it to children. At that time, our trainer introduced us to parai and suggested forming a band. Eventually, we chose to expand our focus to all forms of folk arts instead of just parai. To represent this broader scope, we named our group Kalai Kuzhu, meaning “art troupe.” We then started gathering various talents in Tamil folk arts. Our shared passion for these arts made this possible. Since our children also showed great interest in the arts, we dedicated ourselves to supporting them in pursuing artistic careers.

How do you encourage your children to stay rooted in Tamil culture?

From the start, we were confident in our decision to speak our native language at home. The teachers at school supported this approach, reassuring us that the children would naturally pick up English at school. Our kids now say that because we’ve created the impression that we don’t speak English, they are “forced” to talk to us in Tamil. We also ask our Tamil-speaking friends to use Tamil instead of English when they visit our home. Every summer, we travel to India for vacation, taking the kids to our native village so they can observe and experience that way of life firsthand. We make sure they spend quality time and have fun with their grandparents during these visits.

Having lived in Oregon, what advice/learning would you like to share with the ATS community?

Although I’m not part of the executive panel, I’ve been actively involved in organizing cultural activities at ATS. From my experience, the Tamil community here is relatively small, and we have far fewer sponsors compared to the Portland Tamil Mandram. With more sponsorship support, we could achieve much more.



Member Spotlight Continued

As the principal to the Alabama Tamil Academy, What is your vision and future plans for the ATS/ATA community?

When I expressed my interest in volunteering, Srimi in ATA kindly gave me the flexibility to teach in my own style. I mentioned that I was also attending other classes, and he assured me it wouldn't be an issue. I truly enjoy spending time with children. I initially started with three energetic kids, so I choose a fun and engaging approach to make the learning enjoyable for them. Being new to the area, I was grateful for the support I received from the other teachers, which made me feel welcomed. I was particularly excited about the Tamil School Annual Day. Although we had limited time to prepare, the event was a great success thanks to the incredible support from the parents. They even helped arrange the props, and their involvement was truly impressive and encouraging. My teaching approach is not overly academic. I believe learning should be engaging, not forced. I want children to study with genuine interest and involvement. Tamil is not just a language; it offers so much more to explore and enjoy.

I'm planning to encourage children to develop a love for reading, especially since many kids today are moving away from books. A key part of my teaching will be storytelling, as it's a powerful way to impart life values and lessons in an enjoyable manner.

We follow the "Kadhai Vazhi Kalvi" (story-based learning) approach, which children truly enjoy. I'm planning to set up a library at the Tamil school to encourage students to read storybooks and develop a love for reading. My core belief is: "இஷ்டப்பட்டு படிக்கணும், கஷ்டப்பட்டு படிக்க கூடாது" learning should be driven by interest, not pressure. Support from parents is essential; they play a key role in helping children understand the value of learning a language. Encouraging kids through everyday use of Tamil words and exposure to Tamil media can make learning more natural and enjoyable. I'm also working with my team to organize story-based workshops that will further enhance their learning experience.

When I was in Portland, we used to organize a Kalai Thiruvizha every year. As part of the event, we participated in various folk art performances with different teams. I also conducted a workshop on Sangailakiyam for children. The kids took the initiative to form their own teams, and I organized a quiz competition with a cash prize to encourage participation. I'm now planning to implement similar activities here in Alabama as well.

What is your advice and what you admire the most from the younger generation?

I truly admire the confidence of the younger generation. They are unafraid to pursue what they love, and I've learned this fearless attitude from them. As an artist, I believe there are no strict rules, just like in art, where we can choose any color and create freely. Today's kids are confident and independent thinkers. However, I feel that focus is becoming a challenge, especially in recent years with the increasing influence of social media in their lives. It's important for children to cultivate the habit of reading books. I've noticed that as kids grow into their teenage years, they tend to withdraw from open conversations. At our home, we encourage our children to interact with any guests who visit, helping them build confidence and communication skills.

Please share any message to the community?

Staying connected to our roots is essential. It's our responsibility to pass our culture on to the next generation. We are always here to support ATS in any mission.

Honoring Tamil Nadu Police Team

Alabama Tamil Sangam had a great opportunity to show hospitality and support to the TamilNadu Police team who were participated in the World Games this year at Birmingham. ATS arranged a Potluck lunch on Sunday June 29th to honor the TamilNadu police team and showed our appreciation and shared the culture thought food and fellowship.

Vote of Thanks

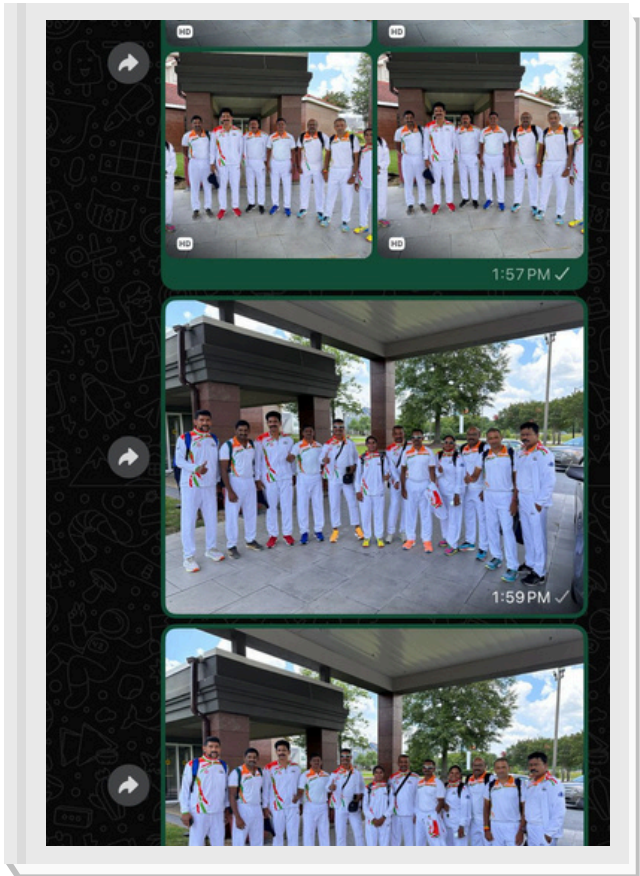
A heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you for your incredible support and hospitality shown to the Tamil Nadu Police Team during their visit to Birmingham for the world games.

From organizing shuttle services and home-cooked meals, to arranging shopping trips, temple and church visits, and making sure they were picked up from the hotel and dropped off at the venue on time—you went above and beyond. Your time, effort, and selfless service made all the difference.

More importantly, you made sure they felt like FAMILY. That’s something no words can truly capture. We’ve always known our community to be warm and generous, but once again, we’ve proven that we are fantastic hosts. You showed the best of who we are.

Now that the event is over and the team has departed, we all feel a sense of emptiness. But the bonds we built and the memories we created will stay with us for a long time.

Thank you!! Thank you!! Thank you!!



Honoring Tamil Nadu Police Team

Vote of Thanks

எங்களை அன்புடன் வரவேற்று 10 நாட்களாக அறுசுவை உணவு அளித்த எனது சொந்த பந்தங்களும் வெளிநாட்டில் உள்ளார்கள் போன்ற உணர்வை உண்டாக்கி எங்களை இல்லங்களுக்கு வரவழைத்து அறுசுவை உணவு வழங்கி மகிழ்வித்து விளையாட்டு மைதானத்திற்கு தமிழ் சொந்தங்கள் அனைவரும் ஒன்று சேர்ந்து எங்களை சோர்வாகதபடி அவரவர்கள் அவர்களுடைய வாகனத்தில் அழைத்து சென்று எங்களை பலதங்க பதக்கங்களை வாங்க அனைத்து சகோதரிகள் மற்றும் சகோதரர்கள் எங்களை ஊக்குவித்து எங்களுடன் முகம் சுளிக்காமல் முகம் மளர்ச்சியோடு அரவணணத்த என் அருமை உடன்பிறப்புகளே

தினமும் எங்களை விளையாட்டு மைதானத்தில் இருந்து தங்கும் இடத்திற்கு சோர்வடையாமல் பத்திரமாக கொண்டு வந்து சேர்த்த என் தமிழ் சொந்தங்களே !

நீங்கள் அனைவரும் ஒன்றாக ஒற்றுமையாக இருந்து தமிழ் மீது பற்றுக் கொண்டு தமிழ் மண்ணை மறக்காமல் தமிழை வளர்த்து வரும் எனது உயிரிலும் மேலான எனது தமிழ் சொந்தங்களே

குழந்தைகளுக்கு தமிழையும் அதனுடன் பறை அடித்தல் ஒழுக்கத்தையும் பணியையும் இன்முகத்துடன் வரவேற்கும் பாங்கையும் அழகாக சொல்லி கொடுத்து தமிழ் நாட்டையும் தமிழ் பண்பாட்டை அழகாக கடைபிடித்தவரும் என் இனிய தமிழ் சொந்தங்களுக்குநன்றி, நன்றி, நன்றி

ஆயிரம் நன்றிகள் சொன்னாலும் போதாது நீங்கள் அனைவரும் செய்த உதவிகள், உபசரிப்புகள். என்னதவம் செய்தோமோ உங்களைப் போன்ற உறவுகள் கிடைக்க

நீங்கள் அனைவரும் இறைவனின் ஆசிர்வாதத்தால் நீங்களும் உங்கள் குழந்தைகளும் குடும்பமும் பல்லாண்டு நோய் நொடியின்றி, நலத்துடன் பலத்துடன், செல்வத்துடன் வாழ இறைவனை வாழ்த்தி வணங்குகிறேன்.

எங்களது உறவினர்கள் கூட இப்படி கவனிக்க மாட்டார்கள் உங்களை பெற்ற தாய் தந்தையர் எவ்வளவு அழகாக உங்கள் சிறப்பாக வளர்த்துள்ளார்கள் என்று நினைக்கும் போது பெறுமையாக உள்ளது

எனது அன்பு பர்மிங்காம் தமிழ் சொந்தங்களுக்கு காவல் துறை சார்பாக ராயல் சலியூட்.





ATS Youth Committee Accomplishments

Article by: Kartika Ramani

ATS Youth Committee's Impactful 2024-2025 Accomplishments

The 2024-2025 ATS Youth Committee has had an incredible year, showcasing dedication, leadership, and an unwavering commitment to both cultural preservation and community service. Led by an inspiring group of youth members, the committee dedicated over 280 volunteer hours to a variety of events and outreach programs, making a significant impact across our community.

Meet the Team

The Youth Committee was comprised of talented and motivated individuals who worked tirelessly to bring their vision to life. Together, these young leaders and volunteers helped organize and support major ATS events, initiated new projects, and contributed to significant community outreach initiatives.

YOUTH COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ADITHI SHREE KUMARAN
MADHAVAN MADABUSHI
ADITHYA MOHANRAJ
RISHI RAM
DIVYA RAMANI
RITHIKA HARICHANDRAN
SAHARSH PRASANA
ASHVATH YESHWATH

ADVISORY MEMBERS

YESH LOGABIRAMAN
SANGEETHA MOHANRAJ
KARTIKA RAMANI
SUBHASHINI GNANASEKARAN

ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS

CADENCE DANIELS
JAYDEN DANIELS
SHIV JAIKUMAR
KRISH NATHAN
SURYA LAXMIKANTH

ATS Youth Committee Accomplishments

2024 CricFest

One of the committee's highlights was their involvement in the 2024 CricFest. Youth members were integral in setting up the event, supporting cricket teams on the field, and ensuring a smooth experience for all involved. The team interviewed players and filmed games to help provide live-streaming coverage. Their contributions helped make the festival a memorable experience for all attendees.



ATS Youth Committee Accomplishments

Alabama Tamil Academy Annual Day Celebration & Aaram (Kids Talent Event)

The committee played a key role in the successful execution of this 3-hour event, which featured over 40 talent participants. From event planning to technical coordination, the team helped with everything from sound checks to organizing the stage setup, managing a dry run for participants, and ensuring the event ran smoothly. Their hard work contributed to a vibrant celebration of Tamil culture, all while communicating and managing the event in Tamil.

Grace Klein Community Outreach at Acres

The team also dedicated time to serving their local community through the Grace Klein Community Outreach at Acres event in Chelsea. Volunteers cleaned living spaces and refreshed outdoor areas, helping improve the environment for those residing there. This event exemplified the youth committee's commitment to making a direct impact on the lives of others in their community.

Annual ATS Cultural Event

At the annual ATS Cultural Event, the youth volunteer teamwork once again provided invaluable support behind the scenes. They helped with food service, setup, and cleanup to help ensure this cultural celebration to honor Tamil heritage ran seamlessly.

Youth Virtual Talent Show

The ATS Youth Committee organized a virtual talent show in honor of our Tamil New Year. The event included performances from talented youth participants, a Tamil New Year themed art competition, a trivia game to test Tamil New Year knowledge and informative presentations on Public Speaking and Nutrition & Health. The event attracted 40-50 viewers, and the youth committee promoted it through posters, videos, and active recruitment. It was a wonderful celebration of creativity and culture, all conducted virtually.

Grace Klein Food Box Drive-Thru

In another act of community service, the team participated in the Grace Klein Food Box Drive-Thru. As part of the Feed BHM initiative, the youth helped pack hundreds of pounds of food for distribution. This initiative aims to rescue food from local businesses, reduce food waste, and fight hunger in the Birmingham area.

Looking Ahead

The 2024-2025 ATS Youth Committee has proven to be a powerhouse of enthusiasm, hard work, and community spirit. With their hands in both cultural preservation and outreach efforts, these young leaders have set an incredible example for others to follow. We look forward to seeing how their continued dedication will shape future ATS events and community initiatives.

Thank you to all the youth committee members, volunteers, and advisory members for their time, effort, and passion!

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We are looking to enhance our existing website. We plan to develop a database and an app alongside, if you have the expertise and willing to support, develop and or manage please reach us at atsexecutive@alabamatamilsangam.org. All are welcome.

ATS SPONSORS AND BUSINESS ADVERTISEMENT

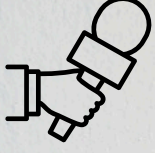
We welcome sponsors both individual and Business. If you desire to support and funding overall ATS' ongoing programs, please reach out to us. Businesses are welcome to participate by placing your advertisements on our quarterly newsletter. Please reach out to us for more details or email at atsexecutive@alabamatamilsangam.org

ATS SUB COMMITTEE

If you want to support us by joining a committee, we'll be excited to have you. ATS' success is determined by the overwhelming support by its members. We urge you to join a team either to commit short term or long term and be part of the fun. We'll fill you in with additional information. Please email atsexecutive@alabamatamilsangam.org

ALABAMA TAMIL ACADEMY (ATA) SUPPORT

One of our flagship program that has a noble intention of educating children our beloved Tamil language. This is a program that is governed solely by ATS member volunteers who teach weekly throughout the school year. If you desire to support in anyway, including sponsorship, teaching or other help please reach out to us at atsexecutive@alabamatamilsangam.org



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Disclaimer: Alabama Tamil Sangam is a Non Profit, Non Political, Non Religious Organization. Interested in promoting Tamil Language, Culture, Art & Music and cultivating community relationships amongst its members.

CONTACT & FEEDBACK



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*Thank
you*

ATS appreciates your interest and thanking you, for submitting your articles for this newsletter. We encourage you to send articles for the next Q4 newsletter to atscommunication@alabamatamilsangam.org

Your feedback is more valuable to us to improve further!

Submit your feedback

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