



India Association of Nashville

Annual Report 2024

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India Association of Nashville - Team 2024

- President: Adarsh Raveendran
- Vice President - Vikas Jain
- General Secretary - Bhavi Turakhia Bendre
- Treasurer - Rakesh Aggarwal
- Joint Secretary - Urvashi Lal
- Joint Treasurer - Jaydeep Purkayastha
- Special Projects Chair - Meenu Saini
- Sports Committee Chair - Arun Paul
- Youth Committee Advisor - Anuradha Purushottam Mann
- Youth Committee Representative (2023-24) - Dewang Sahay
- Youth Committee Representative (2024-25) - Anika Pandey
- Functional Committee - Geetha Basutkar, Sheebha Sooraj, Babloo Chacko

India Day 2024

The year 2024 marked a historic milestone as various Indian regional associations came together under the unified banner of the **One India Association** and successfully hosted the first-ever **India Day Celebration** in Nashville.

The idea for India Day was envisioned by IAN President **Adarsh Raveendran**, inspired by a desire to bring the Indian community together to celebrate our rich culture and heritage. This vision was embraced enthusiastically during a landmark meeting on **January 6th**, where representatives from various associations gathered for the first time to collaborate. Adarsh shared the idea on behalf of the India Association of Nashville (IAN), and with overwhelming support, the foundation was laid for what has now become a cherished tradition.

The IAN Core Team undertook this herculean task, forming multiple committees and navigating essential government approvals, a responsibility spearheaded by **Vikas Jain**. Beginning in May, Adarsh and Vikas, along with Core Committee members and well-wishers like **Sam Anto** and **Bala Srinivasan**, visited over **200 individuals** to raise funds and personally invite supporters. For VIP invitations, **Bhadhresh Patel**, another well-wisher, played a key role in establishing connections with the Mayor's and Governor's offices.

Key Contributors for the event

- **Cultural Programs:** Coordinated by **Urvashi Lal**, managing entries, vetting, sequencing, and ensuring seamless execution.

- **Venue and Logistics:** Led by **Jaydeep Purkayastha**, overseeing stage setup, audio-visual arrangements, decorations, and vendor coordination.
- **Finance and Vendor Management:** Handled by **Rakesh Aggarwal**, ensuring meticulous accounting of income, expenses, and vendor relations.
- **Awards and PR:** Managed by **Meenu Saini**, who organized awards for participants and sponsors, coordinated volunteers, and secured PR opportunities, including features on two TV shows highlighting India Day.
- **Planning & Support** by **Bhavi Turakia**, providing core planning support, Instrumental in helping with decision making, Designing vibrant and creative brochures.

Event Highlights

India Day 2024 drew an unprecedented turnout of over **5,000 attendees**. More than **1,000 participants** joined the vibrant parade, which featured **10 cultural floats** showcasing the diversity of India.

Distinguished Guests:

The event was graced by several notable figures, including:

- **Freddie O'Connell**, Mayor of Nashville (Chief Guest)
- **Mallika Sherawat**, Celebrity Guest
- **Shri Ramesh Babu Lakshmanan**, Consul General of India, Atlanta
- **Nepoleon Duraisamy**, Former Central Minister of India
- **Maneet Chauhan**, Indian-American Celebrity Chef
- **Joey Hensley**, State Senator (28th District)
- **Heidi Campbell**, State Senator (20th District)
- **John DeBerry**, Senior Advisor to the Governor
- Leaders from various regional associations

In addition to celebrating India Day, the team hosted three remarkable events that further enriched the community's cultural tapestry. **One day prior to India Day (Aug 9th)**, a highly anticipated **celebrity meetup with acclaimed actress Mallika Sherawat** drew close to **100 enthusiastic attendees**. This exclusive gathering provided fans and community members with a unique opportunity to interact with Mallika, fostering a deeper connection to Indian cinema and culture. Following India Day, on **August 19th**, the team organized a vibrant **Success Celebration and Awards Ceremony** at **615 Chutney**, which was attended by **100 guests** from various associations. This event honored outstanding achievements within the community, celebrated collaborative efforts, and strengthened the bonds among diverse groups. Adding to these celebrations, on **October 27th**, the IAN hosted a heartfelt **Volunteer Appreciation Event** at **Mill Creek Brewery**, recognizing the tireless efforts and contributions of its dedicated volunteers.

In addition to celebrating India Day and hosting various events, the **IAN Vice President, Vikas Jain**, along with his wife, **Rinki Jain**, played a pivotal role in fostering connections within the community by hosting two significant gatherings at their home. Demonstrating their hospitality and culinary talent, they prepared **delicious meals** together for both occasions.

The first was a **Meeting with the previous presidents of IAN**, where they sought the **advice and blessings** of senior members to guide IAN's initiatives and strengthen its cultural foundation. This thoughtful interaction reflected the association's respect for the wisdom and experience of its senior members.

The second gathering was organized to **show appreciation for IAN's major donors and well wishers**, acknowledging their generous contributions that make the association's events and programs possible. These heartfelt gatherings, enriched by Rinki Jain's support and involvement, not only reinforced a sense of gratitude and collaboration but also highlighted the Jain family's dedication to building meaningful relationships within the community.

Conclusion

India Day 2024 was a resounding success, symbolizing the unity and strength of Nashville's Indian community. This historic event would not have been possible without the collective efforts of the Core Team, volunteers, regional associations, and the enthusiastic participation of the community. It has set a new benchmark for cultural celebrations in Nashville, and we look forward to building on this momentum in the years to come.

HOLI 2024

The *Holi Rangotsav Mahotsav* organized by the India Association of Nashville (IAN) was a grand celebration held on **March 30th** at the picturesque **Centennial Park** in Nashville. The vibrant event brought together over **500 attendees**, including members of the Indian community and other Nashvillians eager to partake in the festivities.

The celebration was filled with joy and cultural richness, featuring lively **music**, delicious **food**, and the hallmark of Holi – playing with **color powders**, symbolizing unity, happiness, and the triumph of good over evil.

As part of our commitment to environmental sustainability, IAN introduced an eco-friendly initiative during our Holi celebration. We replaced plastic bags with paper bags and used organic colors. This initiative demonstrates IAN's dedication to promoting environmentally responsible practices and reducing our ecological footprint.

Adding to the event's significance, **Nashville Mayor Freddie O'Connell** graced the occasion with his presence, underscoring the city's commitment to diversity and its vibrant multicultural spirit. The Mayor's attendance highlighted Nashville's inclusive ethos and strengthened ties between the Indian-American community and local governance.

The success of the event is a testament to IAN's efforts to preserve and share Indian culture and traditions while fostering cross-cultural connections in Middle Tennessee.

Diwali Celebrations at Capitol Hill

The IAN Core Team attended the Diwali celebrations at Capitol Hill, which took place on November 14, 2024. The event was hosted by BAPS Public Affairs in collaboration with several other organizations, including India Association of Nashville.

The Diwali celebration at Capitol Hill brought together about 100 members of the Indian-American community, including members of Congress, the Consular General of India (Atlanta), and other dignitaries. The event featured traditional cultural performances, speeches from lawmakers, and the lighting of the Diwali lamps.

The IAN Core Team's attendance at this event demonstrates their commitment to fostering connections between the Indian-American community and government officials, as well as their dedication to celebrating Indian culture and traditions.

Sports Tournaments Conducted by IAN

IAN's sports committee (Chair Arun Paul) successfully organized and conducted three sports tournaments during the year, promoting community engagement, teamwork, and healthy competition. The tournaments catered to diverse age groups and interests, fostering a spirit of inclusivity and sportsmanship.

1. Chess Tournament (March 1-2)

- Objective was to provide a platform for chess enthusiasts to showcase their skills and compete with peers.
- Approximately 50 participants across various age categories attended it

2. Women's Throwball Tournament (October 20)

- Objective was to empower women through sports, promoting teamwork, strategy, and physical fitness.
- Participants: 5 teams, 50 players

3. Cricket Tournament (Men's and Women's) (September 22)

- Objective was to organize a fun and competitive cricket tournament, encouraging community participation, sportsmanship, and camaraderie.
- Participants: 11 Cricket teams over 100 participants participated

These tournaments not only showcased IAN's commitment to community development but also demonstrated the organization's ability to bring people together, promote social cohesion, and celebrate the spirit of sportsmanship.

IAN Upgrades Online Presence with New Website

This year, IAN launched a revamped website, enhancing our online presence and community engagement. The new website attracted an impressive 32,528 visitors, offering a range of features and benefits, including:

1. **Secure Online Payments:** Convenient and secure payment processing for events, donations, and membership fees.
2. **Community Calendar:** A centralized calendar showcasing events not just IAN events, but a place where all regional associations can publish their events.
3. **India Day Page:** A dedicated page highlighting our India Day celebrations, including event details, photos, and updates.

The new website has significantly improved our online presence, enhanced user experience, and streamlined community engagement.

IAN's Volunteer Efforts Shine Bright

Feb 2024, IAN marked a significant milestone by becoming a certified organization authorized to issue the President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA). This prestigious recognition acknowledges IAN's commitment to promoting volunteerism and community service.

As a certified PVSA issuer, IAN can now recognize and reward the outstanding volunteer efforts of its members, empowering them to make a meaningful impact in the community. This certification reinforces IAN's dedication to fostering a culture of service, civic engagement, and social responsibility. First award was issued on October 27th to Ritika Bharathan who had volunteered more than 50 hours of service.

IAN's commitment to giving back to the community was evident through various volunteer initiatives undertaken throughout the year. Our members, including IAN Youth, actively participated in the following events:

1. Nashville Soccer Match Volunteer Day (March 8th)

- IAN members volunteered at the Nashville Soccer Match, contributing to the success of the event.

2. Senior Technology Seva (March 9th)

- IAN Youth took the initiative to help seniors with technology, empowering them to stay connected and engaged.

3. Senior Visit: Dr. Akunuri V Ramayya House Visit

- IAN members visited Akunuri V Ramayya, demonstrating our commitment to caring for our seniors and fostering intergenerational connections.

4. Tech Camp at Brentwood Library (June 1st)

- IAN organized a Tech Camp at the Brentwood Library, providing a platform for community members to enhance their technical skills.

5. India Day 2024

- Our India Day event was a huge success, thanks to the tireless efforts of our adult and youth volunteers. They contributed to:
 - Event planning and coordination
 - Cultural performances and exhibitions
 - Traffic management

These volunteer efforts showcase IAN's dedication to serving the community, promoting social responsibility, and fostering a spirit of compassion and empathy.

IAN's Educational Seminar Series

IAN hosted two informative seminars, providing valuable insights and expertise to our community members.

1. Health Talk: "Nobody's Sleeping" (March 12)

- Dr. Bijoy John presented a thought-provoking discussion on the importance of sleep, based on his book "Nobody's Sleeping". The seminar highlighted the significance of deep and nourishing sleep, which we spend a third of our lives pursuing.

2. Navigating the College Admission Journey (November 23)

- Jamie Brown Kennedy led an insightful College Admission Seminar, sharing expert tips and strategies for making college applications stand out. The seminar, held at the RobotiX Institute, provided valuable guidance for students and parents navigating the college admission process.

IAN Youth Team: Empowering the Next Generation

IAN's commitment to nurturing the next generation of leaders was evident in our youth initiatives. We began the year with Dewang Sahay, our youth representative, playing a vital role in the executive team. Dewang was instrumental in:

- Contributing to IAN's decision-making process
- Volunteering for various events and activities
- Setting up a structured youth team for 2024-25 and transitioning the role to Anika Pandey.

As Dewang handed over the reins, Anika Pandey took on the role of leading the youth group. Under Anike's guidance, the team is thriving, introducing new initiatives, and continuing to make a positive impact. First of their initiative is **Pizza Fundraiser** on December 10th to support a local nursing home, demonstrating their commitment to community service and youth leadership. The event aims to bring the community together over a shared love for pizza, with proceeds going directly toward getting Christmas Gifts for senior residents. This initiative not only seeks to raise funds but also to inspire a spirit of giving among our youth, aligning with IAN's mission to strengthen community connections and empower the next generation to lead with compassion and purpose.

We are proud of our youth team's accomplishments and look forward to their future endeavors.

IAN's Financial Prudence Yields Fruitful Returns

IAN's responsible financial management led to a significant boost in our savings. Key initiatives included:

- Placing our savings in an interest-bearing account, generating an additional \$2,000+
- Implementing cost-cutting measures, such as discontinuing unnecessary expenses, including the Mailchimp subscription

These prudent decisions demonstrate IAN's commitment to fiscal responsibility, sustainability, and maximizing resources for community initiatives.

Nominations and Elections for 2025

On November 16, 2024, the India Association of Nashville (IAN) announced the call for nominations for the 2025 Executive Committee. Following the nomination process, the below individuals were unanimously elected to these roles, as no counter-nominations were received:

- **President:** Vikas Jain
- **Vice President:** Bhavi Turakhia
- **General Secretary:** Urvashi Lal

- **Joint Secretary:** Meenu Saini
- **Treasurer:** Rakesh Aggarwal
- **Joint Treasurer:** Jaydeep Purkayastha

This smooth and transparent transition of leadership highlights the unity and trust within the IAN community. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the newly elected Executive Committee and look forward to their vision and dedication in leading IAN to new heights in 2025.

Conclusion

The year 2024 has been a transformative and milestone-filled journey for the India Association of Nashville (IAN). From hosting the historic first-ever India Day celebration to conducting vibrant cultural events like Holi, fostering connections through sports tournaments, empowering youth leadership, and enhancing our online presence, IAN has continued to champion community engagement and inclusivity. Our efforts in volunteerism, financial prudence, and educational initiatives have further reinforced our mission to serve and uplift the community.

As we look back with pride on our accomplishments, we are filled with gratitude for the collective efforts of our Core Team, volunteers, regional associations, and community members who have made this success possible. Together, we are building a legacy of unity, cultural pride, and social impact. Moving forward, IAN remains committed to fostering stronger connections, celebrating diversity, and empowering the next generation to carry the torch of our vibrant heritage and values.