

# 2022 FALL NEWSLETTER

## President's Message

Dear Community Member,

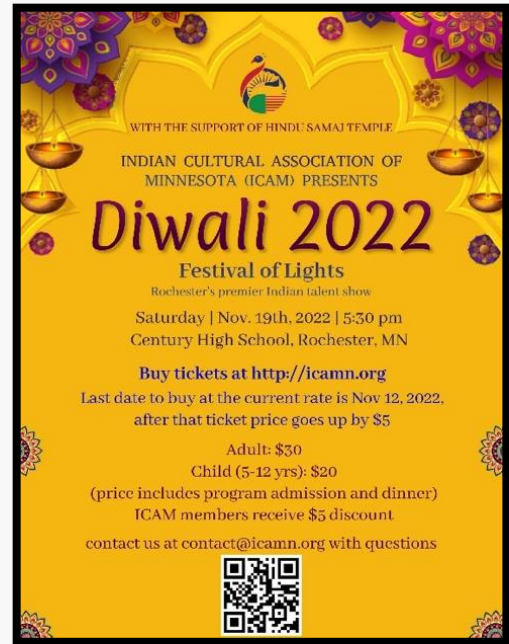
Namaste! I hope you enjoyed celebrating all the festivals recently. Growing up in India, we eagerly awaited this time of the year. Navratri, Durga Pooja, Vijay Dashami, and Diwali, all coming around at the same time, were extremely exciting. We are celebrating Diwali this time with an in-person event. We will showcase the best local talent on **Diwali cultural night** on Saturday, November 19th, at Century High School. Please purchase **your tickets today** for the cultural program. Details are included in this newsletter. Authentic Indian food will be provided at the event. We wish you a happy Diwali & prosperous new year.

ICAM continues to grow. As the pandemic abates, we have begun organizing in-person events. **Utsav 2022, Festival of Color** event was a **tremendous success**, with



more than 300 people of different faiths coming together to celebrate. The color run was especially popular. Rochester Mayor Kim Norton was there to provide support. **Garba event** was another successful event. To organize more events like this, we need to strengthen our volunteer base and form new subcommittees. We are also collaborating with other local organizations to promote our events. ICAM is recognized as an important Indian cultural and community-based organization, and hence we have received grants from the United Way and the Minnesota council of nonprofits on civic engagement projects, see details on this in this newsletter.

On the organization front, I am pleased to inform you that Sarika Pandey, who has been highly active in the cultural subcommittee, has joined the ICAM board and will be leading the education area. One





UTSAV 2022

of their major accomplishments was to re-start the Hindi School, which had been a dream of ICAM from its inception. I congratulate Sarika and her team of volunteers for the great work they are doing in this area. I am also happy to inform you that Vidya Iyer has joined the board. in leading cultural events. Vidya has led the Diwali cultural program in the past, we are excited to have her back as the lead for cultural events. She and her team of volunteers are doing an awesome job in organizing the upcoming event. As ICAM's work continues to increase, we have hired Vaishali Joshi as the project coordinator. Vaishali has been doing a lot of volunteer work for the community and is also the Manager of the Hindu Samaj Temple. I welcome Sarika, Vidya & Vaishali to the team.

We continue to need enthusiastic individuals to join and help us. If you are interested, please reach out to me or anyone on the ICAM team. We welcome your ideas and suggestions on how we may better serve the community.

Thanks to the ICAM board, volunteers, and the community for their continued support. Please visit our website at [icamn.org](http://icamn.org) and subscribe to our mailing list for more information and become a member today.

Best wishes,  
Ajay Singh  
President, Board of Directors

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## Civic Engagement

ICAM is privileged and honored to partner with United Way and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits this year to promote non-partisan civic engagement in our community. This is the first time ICAM has participated in such grant opportunities. The grants awarded were \$5,000 each, and both had similar goals – to promote, educate, and encourage the Indian community AND the larger Rochester community.

To kick off activities, a booth displaying current and timely information was staffed by ICAM volunteers at the Festival of Colors with the Rochester Community on July 30th, 2022, in

collaboration with the Rochester Downtown Alliance. ICAM used this occasion to highlight civic engagement with the upcoming special and mid-term elections in mind.

In September 2022, ICAM volunteers graciously recorded promotional videos in several Indian languages with the message of encouraging community members to exercise their right to vote and make their voices heard in the upcoming mid-term elections. These videos have been



shared on the [ICAM website](#), posted on [Facebook](#) and other [social media](#) to promote online voter engagement, and were also sent to several groups in the community.

On November 3rd, 2022, ahead of the voting day on November 8th, [a virtual webinar](#) was organized. Melanie Hazelip, director of voter outreach from the Minnesota Secretary of State's office, joined us to provide resources and tools for community members and to answer questions about voting. Two youth volunteers, Natasha Sohni and Sandhya Kumar, also spoke about their experiences. You can watch the recording of the session [here](#).

ICAM wishes to thank all individuals who participated in this campaign. We urge all eligible community members to make their voices heard – **please vote!** This is your duty and your privilege. Democracy is in our hands!

- Vaishali Joshi & Shyamala Bhat

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## Hindi School Re-opens

ICAM is excited to inform the successful start of Rochester Hindi School in Fall 2022!

ICAM is collaborating with community volunteers and parents to offer Hindi Language classes starting in Fall 2022. Through the Hindi school, we hope to provide an opportunity for students in Rochester and adjoining communities to gain basic communication skills to connect with their extended families, get closer to India, and promote the Hindi language at the grassroots level. We will be developing the curriculum with a special focus on Hindi comprehension and speaking. Our goal is for our children to gain confidence in verbal communication in Hindi. We are joining hands with partners in the vicinity -- SILC, School of India for Languages and Culture (<https://sites.google.com/silcmn.com/silcminnesota>) to optimize processes and provide the basic knowledge of the Hindi language to our next generation.

We had an open house on 16th September at the Hindu Samaj Temple, where we shared details about the Hindi school program, curriculum, and operations. This was a great opportunity for everyone to meet the teachers and staff.

We are still accepting registrations for the 2022-2023 school year for children ages 5-17 years. For online registration and more info, visit - [icamn.org/education](https://icamn.org/education). For any registration-related questions, please email us at [education@icamn.org](mailto:education@icamn.org)

- Sarika Pandey (Education Director, ICAM)

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## **Calling All Parents: How to Support Our Kids in School**

While the leaves may not have yet started to fall, the school certainly is in full swing. As our kids begin their classes, it is important that, as parents, we keep an eye on how things are going at school. Children and adolescents often face significant stress both from their academics and school-related social lives that can have many repercussions. As parents, we must work with schools to notice these signs and be advocates for our children's mental health and well-being.

While we may think that all children do well at school, even young kids can struggle with school-related work. If you hear any concerns from teachers about difficulties performing in school, lower grades than usual, difficulties in the classroom setting due to disruptive behavior, or not following rules, it is important to realize that your kids may be struggling and may need help. Learning difficulties at school may be related to attention/concentration problems, learning disorders like dyslexia or math/writing disorder, or due to an overall inability to perform well in school based on IQ. These are common issues that can be evaluated by medical professionals who can provide the appropriate diagnoses, treatments, and support to help students succeed. Just like asthma or diabetes, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and learning disorders are also widespread and need appropriate treatments. If you suspect your kid is struggling with one of these conditions, the first step is to see your primary care physician, who can refer you to a specialist for further evaluation. The evaluation typically includes a medical appointment, forms to be completed by parents and teachers, and, in some cases, thorough psychological testing for learning purposes. Based on the evaluation, the physician may recommend treatment, which can include prescription medications in case of ADHD. Individualized education plans (IEPs) may also be recommended for students struggling with learning disorders or cognitive issues. These plans, which are implemented by the school, provide students with a more effective learning environment through one-on-one and other specific methods of teaching. It can be transformative for children and adolescents when they understand why they may be struggling and are provided with tools to address their needs better and enhance their learning.

Having learning difficulties in school not only affects students' academics but also has negative effects on their self-esteem. As parents, we should support them in getting the help they need in school and implement strategies at home to further help them succeed in a way that

promotes positive mental health. Punishing children who may not be doing well in school can be detrimental and lead to behavioral problems both in and outside the school. Adolescents struggling with learning difficulties at school may also turn to abuse drugs and alcohol as coping mechanisms. Therefore, it is important to recognize these behaviors, provide support in and outside the school, and show our kids healthy alternatives to coping with stress.

Besides learning, our kids face a lot of social pressures at school. As such, it is important to keep an eye on how they are doing in school socially. Talk to your kids about their friendships and activities they are involved in. Try and attend those activities and help them do well. At home, try to spend quality time with your youngsters and engage in fun activities with them, both indoors and outdoors. Such engagement can help reduce their stress and remind them that they are not alone. It can also provide an opportunity for your children to approach you when they are facing academic or social struggles.

Alongside social struggles, it is also important to be aware of symptoms of depression and anxiety, which are common mood disorders seen in kids and adolescents. Recognizing these symptoms is as important as noticing your child getting sick from medical illnesses like the cold or flu. And just as a fever or a sore throat, these symptoms require attention and treatment. Although you may be doing your best at home to address these symptoms, you may be unaware of bullying, discrimination, and other negative influences at school. If you have any concerns about your kids' mood, including sadness, anxiety, or irritability, please do not hesitate to get professional help. These can be signs of a serious medical problem that can be life-threatening, and it is critical to help your children get the support they need as early as possible. Keep an open dialogue with your children without judgment, and you will see the benefits.

In conclusion, as parents, we can do a lot for children by being present in their lives in a positive way. Especially with school resuming, we must be mindful of the academic, social, and emotional stressors that our kids face. We can help them succeed by providing safe spaces for open conversation and assisting them in receiving outside help when they need it.

- Jyoti Bhagia

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## Resources for the 2022 Midterm Elections

ICAM is proud to partner with the United Ways and Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) to promote civic engagement.

### Why Vote?

Voting is one important way through which we can participate in our democracy. Besides voting for officials, we also vote on issues that will affect our community, state, and nation. Each vote counts, and by working together to increase voter turnout, we contribute to benefitting the community through job growth, better healthcare, better education, better infrastructure,

better economy, and safer neighborhoods – to ultimately better the quality of life of all community members. Democracy is in our hands! Voting is your right!

### **How to Vote?**

<https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/other-ways-to-vote/>

1. Absentee by mail
2. Early in-person
3. On election Day

### **Where to Vote?**

Find your polling place at:

<https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/election-day-voting/>

Check your registration at <https://mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/VoterStatus.aspx>

### **When to Vote?**

<https://www.sos.state.mn.us/election-administration-campaigns/elections-calendar/>

1. Vote by mail or early in person until Nov 7th
2. Vote in person on election day, Tuesday, Nov 8th

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## **Contribute to Samarpan Newsletter**

Have a story for our newsletter? We welcome your submissions, including but not limited to – first-person accounts, experiences, stories, essays

- Expert findings, reports on relevant topics
- Opinions, newsworthy insights
- Contributions are welcome from all, especially students and seniors.

[View this newsletter as webpage](#)