

# Samarpan



**ICAM'S NEWSLETTER  
FALL 2023**

## Editor's Note

Samarpan's editorial team is pleased to share the third quarter newsletter of 2023 with our readers.

We are looking forward to publishing new contributions from our readers. Thank you!!

## Newsletter Team

Subhankar Bhattacharya | Abhinga Dutta | Unni Gopinathan | Jyothi Gubili | Ram Kadirvel | Nisha Kurup | Alka Mehra | Anu Nair | Priya Sampathkumar | Ajay Singh

## Table of Contents

### President's Message

#### Since the Last Newsletter

- Flash mob and Festivities
- Rochester Hindi School Open House
- India Day 2023
- Celebrating Eid-Al-Adha in Rochester
- India Fest 2023
- Onam in Rochester

#### Youth Scape

- Break the Barriers to Build A Better Community
- Nandini Iyer Wins 2023 MN Cup

#### Upcoming Events

- Garba Night
- Diwali Cultural Event

#### Recipes

- Kaipola - A Delight from Malabar

## President's Message

Dear Community Members,

Namaste. Greetings on the upcoming Indian festivals. I love the fall time of the year when we start planning to celebrate major festivals of India. Ganesh Chaturthi, Navratri, Durga Pooja, Vijay Dashami, and Diwali, all coming around the same time is exciting. We will be organizing a Diwali cultural program on Saturday, November 11th in Mayo Civic Center, Southern Minnesota's premier destination for local, regional, national, and international events. This gives us an opportunity to show our best talents in Rochester to the broader community and have them enjoy authentic Indian food. Please purchase your tickets today for the cultural program. Details are included in this newsletter. We wish you a Happy Diwali in advance.

ICAM is continuing to march towards our vision to serve the community in the Indian culture and

education. We had a successful ICAM Utsav 2023 - Festival of Color and 5K run on July 29th, 2023, with more than five hundred people in attendance from all faiths, it was a tremendous success and was covered by all the local newsgroups. Hindi school started this fall with record registration. ICAM organized a picnic to show appreciation for volunteers and membership support. We are organizing Garba on October 21st, 2023, at Century High School in the evening, details are on our ICAM website.

In our efforts to increase our partnering with other organizations, we have accepted an invitation to be a steering committee member of CMRC (Community Mobilization Resource Coalition). CMRC consists of members from the dissolved Diversity Council and additional members from BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) to serve the community. ICAM partnered with CMRC on a Mayo Clinic grant proposal to co-design the process and development of the Community Health Collaboration Portal in enhancing our understanding of and contribution to the Olmsted County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) discussion and response around the identified top needs, Mental Health, Substance Use and Access to Care all of which have well-identified gaps related to communities of color.

To end I want to thank the board, volunteers, and community members for your continued support. Please visit our website, [icamn.org](http://icamn.org), and subscribe to our mailing list for more information and to become an ICAM member.

Best wishes,  
Ajay Singh, President, ICAM Board

## Since Last Newsletter

### Flashmob and Festivities

Simmy L



In the heart of downtown Rochester, we celebrated the festival of “UTSAV-Celebration of Colors” at the Peace Plaza. I am a Research Fellow in the Department of Hematology who enjoys dancing and participating in the cultural activities in the community. Indian Cultural Association of Minnesota (ICAM) organized one such event called UTSAV where we gathered to celebrate the color festivities along with music and dance. As I have been actively choreographing and performing dances from kindergarten to medical school, I decided to participate in the lively Flash Mob group dance, for the very first time. From practicing at the community temple to perfecting the steps in the park, I enjoyed each rehearsal with laughter and learning while building new friendships. Men, women and teenagers who participated thoroughly enjoyed performing while bringing the sense of unity that demonstrated a spirit of togetherness.

Celebrating the festival of colors, in this annual event helped me connect with the people of the town in the ways I had never imagined. Finding joy in the places I had least expected, while doing the thing that I loved the most was the best combination. We participated in the other events at the UTSAV, such as the 5K run and fun games like Spin the wheel, ICAM Photo booth, etc. The food-stalls encircled the downtown area which brought diverse cuisines together at one place. I thoroughly enjoyed the aura of the place that echoed the music played at UTSAV

and wished we had more of such events in the future.



### Experience the Excitement: Highlights from ICAM's UTSAV Annual Event in July 2023!



### Rochester Hindi School Open House

After a very successful first year of Rochester Hindi School (RHS), ICAM hosted the Open House for the second year at Foster Arend Park on August 26<sup>th</sup> 2023. The RHS has been started in collaboration with SILC, the School of India for Languages and Culture based in the Twin Cities. The RHS provides a great platform for kids living in the US to gain basic communication skills to connect with extended families back home and get closer to India by participating in various Indian events we host throughout the year. The older kids who took the Hindi USA exams in the summer were felicitated at the open house.

Saumya Dubey, a senior at Mayo High School



completed the final year of the Hindi USA curriculum; congratulations to her!! The team of previous Hindi schools in Rochester supported her to begin this journey, and current Hindi school staff supported her to complete this milestone. ICAM and the RHS family are proud of this accomplishment! Saumya is now planning to give back to her community by volunteering her time to teach Hindi at RHS



We are still accepting registrations for the 2023-2024 school year for children ages 5-17 years. For additional information, please visit our website: <https://icamn.org/education>.

Along with the open house ICAM hosted its annual volunteer picnic. ICAM appreciates its volunteers who take a lot of time to organize all its events during the year. Our very successful events would not have been possible without their hard work and dedication. Everyone enjoyed the delicious food catered by Royal Indian cuisine and the warm summer day playing games in the park.



## ICAM Picnic





## India Day 2023 Debanjali Dasgupta



Every year, on the auspicious occasion of Indian Independence Day, “Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav” is celebrated in different places in the United States on the week of 15th August. This year, the Cultural Association of Bengalees in Rochester (CABERI), Minnesota, organized India Day, filled with a number of events on 19<sup>th</sup> August, the following Saturday of Indian Independence Day, at Good Shepherd Church. Keeping the theme of Indian Independence Day, “Nation first, Always first,” the entire decoration and cultural events were arranged. Around 200 people gathered at this event to celebrate India Day from different parts of Rochester.

The day started with a “Sit and Draw competition” for kids themed on “Independence Day in your mind” and/or “Incredible India.” All the kids did a great job and amazed the judges with their innovative thoughts. The cultural event started with the US national anthem, followed by India's national anthem, 'Jana Gana Mana.' Moving on, a series of performances showcased the diverse and rich traditions of India. The audience witnessed the cultural heritage of different states, represented by mesmerizing dance performances, patriotic songs, and instruments that reminded everyone of the struggles and triumphs of our nation's journey toward independence.

The cultural event ended with a grand fashion show where the participants represented different states or cities of India. About thirty families participated in the fashion show, walked on the ramp, and stunned us with their beautiful attire from different states. Besides, Indian events are always incomplete without the world-famous Indian food. There were food stalls with homemade Indian food ranging from local street food (fuchka/ golgappa, chatpata chaat) to our ultimate comfort Biryani. All those “Ghar ka khana” added some extra charm to the event. The day was

concluded with a promise in everyone's mind to meet again next year to celebrate our very precious Independence Day.

## Celebrating Eid-Al-Adha in Rochester Rashid Fehmi



On the morning of June 28th, you may have seen a huge crowd of people heading into the sports arena of RCTC, if you were wondering what all the hustle and bustle was about, it was the Eid day. Muslims of Rochester celebrated the second most significant holiday commemorating Prophet Abraham's sacrifice of his son Ismael to God. This multi-day holiday that falls with the Hajj starts with families celebrating the holiday by getting together in the morning and driving to the congregation for prayer. After the prayers, greetings are exchanged with family members, friends, and even strangers. Friends and family members visit each other or meet at the central location. As it was a working day, many people who could not take the day off attended the congregation prayer at RCTC, exchanged greetings, and returned to work to celebrate in the evening or the next few days.



In order to bring the community together Rochester Muslim Community Circle or RMCC organized an event at Essex Park on June 30th. RMCC was established in 2010. Its main goal is to establish a welcoming community center for all to enjoy. It has been active in organizing and participating in many interfaith events in Rochester. Even though the weather forecast was for some thunderstorms still the event went on, and kids had extra fun bouncing on the inflatables and enjoyed their favorite Pizza and sweets. Almost 250 people of all ages attended the great event. Many families either had a family member performing Hajj or knew a friend or some acquaintance who was performing Hajj in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Everyone prayed for the safe return of all the pilgrims. This year, almost 2.5 million Muslims from all over the world performed Hajj. Under the new Hajj policy of the Indian Government, priority was given to



the elderly, disabled, and women. Almost 175,000 people from all over India performed Hajj in 2023, this is the highest number of pilgrims, surpassing the previous record of 140,000 in 2019.



## India Fest 2023

Dr. Namrata Tomer



The Indian Association of Minnesota (IAM) celebrated its annual signature event, "India Fest" on August 12, 2023, at the State Capitol grounds in Saint Paul. The program commenced with hoisting the American and Indian flags and singing the national anthem. This was followed by a parade of the regional and non-profit organizations representing their respective organizations and displaying their strength and traditions. It was a beautiful day to experience India in a day visiting the bazaars, enjoying the cultural performances, and dining on mouthwatering Indian specialties.

## Onam in Rochester

Anjali Arun



Onam, the grand harvest festival of Kerala, is a 10-day-long celebration that falls during the month of August or September (Chingamasam, the first month of the Malayalam calendar). Though Onam has its origins in Hindu legends, it is celebrated with great passion by all communities in Kerala, making it a true celebration of harmony and prosperity. Onam in Kerala is a time of fun



and festivities galore. Families come together and celebrate by decorating homes with flower rangolis (Athapookalam), buying new clothes (Onakodi), making of an elaborate meal on the 10<sup>th</sup> and final day (Onasadhya), attending community events- grand parades, tiger dances (Pulikali), boat races (Vallamkali), elegant dance performances by ladies in traditional attire (Thiruvathirakali) and so much more!!



When Onam comes along it stirs up a festive mood in Malayalis all over the world, and the Malayalis in Rochester were not immune to its effects. The Malayali Association of Rochester (MALAR) celebrated Onam on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September this year. An all-encompassing celebration that started with laying of the Athapookalam by the kids, the lighting of the lamp by the community elders, prayer song, and then the main event, the grand feast. "The Onasadhya", a multi-course vegetarian meal was made up of an amazing lineup of 22 items (normally 26 or more!), all made by the community members, and served on banana leaves. This lip-smacking meal was followed by a cultural showcase of the talents in the community - Thiruvathirakali by the ladies decked in their beautiful cream and gold attire, dances by the children in traditional pattu pavada, beautiful nostalgic and peppy Malayalam songs sung by talented singers. It was a day of meeting up with old and getting to know new families connected by their traditions and language, of children, growing up away from their roots getting a glimpse into their culture. A day of fun, laughter, good food and good memories!



# Youth Scape

## Break the Barriers to Build A Better Community

Krishna Kadirvel

As society evolves, the stigma of mental health and seeking treatment remains an issue in the Indian community. Although humanity has made progress globally in recent years in addressing mental health, the Indian community continues to cling to misconceptions and reluctance to seek help. Though South Asian families are leaders when it comes to prioritizing studies, research and career, the stigma against mental health is still a very real problem. It is time to challenge this stigma and pave the way for a supportive culture that encourages people to prioritize their mental well-being.



There are several factors that contribute to the stigma surrounding mental health issues in the Indian community. Cultural norms that promote stoicism and the concept of "keeping it in the family" can discourage open discussion of emotional struggles. Family and community often ignore the first signs of depression and mental illness. Hence most people grope in silence and do not receive the needed advocacy and support. In addition, there are misconceptions about therapy, such as seeing it as a sign of weakness or unnecessary expense. In the Indian community, seeking therapy can be a daunting task. Fear of judgment from family members, friends and society creates barriers to getting professional help. Additionally, people may worry that their struggles will negatively affect their family's image, so they tend to hide their feelings rather than seek outside support.

Breaking the barriers of mental health stigma in the Indian community requires a collective effort from everyone. Five Actions that we can do individually and collectively for a better solution are:

1. **Raise awareness:** Educate the community about mental health, its prevalence, and the effectiveness of treatment. There are data and stats to support this which can be used for the education.
2. **Encouraging open conversations:** Promote a culture of openness and empathy in mental health by encouraging honest conversations within families and communities. Leaders can lead by example by sharing their experiences and emphasizing that seeking help is a courageous step, not a weakness.
3. **Normalizing therapy:** Normalize therapy as a valuable resource for emotional well-being. Provide education and awareness on various therapies and how that can help mental health and wellbeing. By education remove the stigma that therapy only applies to severe cases.
4. **Provide accessible and culturally sensitive services:** Mental health services should become more accessible and culturally sensitive. Working with mental health professionals who understand the nuances of Indian culture and its impact on mental health can bridge the gap.
5. **Check-in:** Often people with mental health problems may seem fine on the outside, but they may be struggling within. Checking in on family members and friends in the community can make a significant difference. Every 40 minutes someone in the world take their own life. It takes less than 40 seconds to check in on someone. Apps like Safesphere created by Nandini Iyer is a perfect tool for self-check and to seek help at the right time.

Overcoming the stigma of mental health and therapy in the Indian community is a community-wide commitment that requires sensitivity, understanding, and an open mind. By encouraging open conversations, promoting awareness, and promoting accessible mental health services, we can pave the way for a more sensitive society that prioritizes the overall well-being of its members.

## Nandini Iyer Wins 2023 MN Cup

MN Cup is a community-led, public-private partnership supporting Minnesota's entrepreneurs since 2005 and is co-



sponsored by the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management. Each year, they host an annual competition that reaches emerging entrepreneurs from across the state and connects them with education, mentorship and support to launch and accelerate the development of their new ventures.



This year, Nandini Iyer, a Mayo high school senior, entered her mental wellness app, [SafeSpheremind.org](https://SafeSpheremind.org), into the competition and was announced as the winner of the youth division. With more than 17% higher participation than previous records, the 2023 MN Cup competition was one for the record books with approximately 887 startups participating across 9 divisions. Nandini's app SafeSphere was chosen as a winner from amongst 89 entries in the youth division that were originally entered in May 2023.



She also received a special award from the Southern MN initiative Foundation for the best startup in SouthEastern MN during the awards ceremony on September 18th. Please join us in congratulating Nandini for all her efforts in creating and launching the app and making our community a better place for all.



Her app is available on the internet as well as on the App Store and Google Play Store as a free download.

For more information, you can visit <https://carlsonschool.umn.edu/mn-cup/about>

Full coverage of the event will be available in the Twin Cities Business Journal in the December edition. A limited coverage of the event is attached below. <https://tcbmag.com/mn-cup-announces-nine-division-winners/>

## Upcoming events

### Garba Night – An ICAM Annual Event





Century High School  
2525 Viola Rd NE, Rochester, MN

Food will be served

Admission Fee:  
- \$5 per person for ICAM members  
- \$10 per person for non-members  
- Free entry for childer 5 and under

Buy tickets at [www.icamn.org](http://www.icamn.org)

### Diwali Cultural Event – An ICAM Annual Event



# Diwali 2023

WITH THE SUPPORT OF HINDU SAMAJ TEMPLE

INDIAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA (ICAM)  
PRESENTS

## Festival of Lights and Cultural Show

**[Mayo Civic Center]**

Rochester, MN

Saturday | Nov. 11th, 2023 | 4:30 - 9:30 pm

General admission: \$35 | Child (5-12 yrs): \$30  
ICAM members receive \$5 discount

**Buy tickets at <http://icamn.org>**

Last date to buy at the current rate is Nov 4, 2023, after  
that ticket price goes up by \$5

[contact@icamn.org](mailto:contact@icamn.org)

[contact@icamn.org](mailto:contact@icamn.org)



## Recipes

**Kaipola - A Delight from Malabar**  
Nisha Kurup, in conversation with Nezmi Najeeb





A black and white picture from my childhood nudged me to reach out to a Malayali friend in town, Nezmi Najeeb. This picture had my mother's friend Ramla Aunty holding my favorite childhood sweet dish. Ramla Aunty used to serve this when we were invited for the Iftar dinner. Nezmi identified this dish as Kaipola or Kayapola also known as steamed plantain cake, an authentic dish from north Kerala.

Kerala, the Southwestern coastal strip of India, was generally known as Malabar coast until the arrival of British in India. This region has historically been a major spice exporter and is still referred to as the "Spice Garden of India". In present days, Malabar region comprises of Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur, Kasargode and Wyanad in North Kerala. This region is known for its unique cuisines which is a blend of flavors from Arabia, Europe and Africa integrating with the rich and distinctive native flavors and spices. It is interesting to note that India's first cake was baked in Thalassery, a town in north Kerala in 1883. Mampally Babu of Thalassery established the first bakery in India – the Royal Biscuit Factory.

Kaipola is a sweet combination of eggs and bananas. Nezmi said, "*Cheechi* (Malayalam for sister), this can be made at any time of the year as ripe plantains are available throughout the year in Kerala." This flourless cake is served on every occasion - wedding reception, religious festivals or just at chai time. In Kerala, the Muslim community usually prepares this dish during the iftars, or the meals eaten after sunset during Ramdan. Nezmi and Amjith make it during the Ramadan and as dessert when they invite their friends to dinner at their home in Rochester. Their kids also enjoy this as an after-school snack.

As we were chatting, Nezmi picked two ripe bananas from her kitchen fruit bowl and set about to prepare the dish. As the aroma of the banana combined with vanilla and sugar wafted through the kitchen, her little ones came running in. The kids helped themselves to wedges of the sweetness and I enjoyed a piece with hot masala tea!

Nezmi followed this simple traditional recipe to prepare Kaipola:

**Ingredients:**

- Banana – 2 ripe bananas (2 ½ cups cubed)
- Egg - 4
- Sugar – 1/3<sup>rd</sup> cup
- Cashew - 1/3<sup>rd</sup> cup
- Raisins - 1/3<sup>rd</sup> cup
- Milk – 2 tbsp
- Ghee-3 to 4 tsp
- Vanilla essence - 1 tsp
- Salt – a pinch

**Method:**

1. Heat a pan on the stove top. Add 1 tsp ghee. Fry the cashews and raisins and keep them aside.

2. In the same pan, add 2 tsp ghee and shallow fry the banana cubes till golden brown.
3. In a blender, add the eggs, sugar, salt, and vanilla essence and blend for a minute.
4. Mix the blended mixture with the fried banana, cashews, and raisins.
5. Heat a pan, add 1 tsp ghee, and pour in the entire mixture. Cover and cook/steam for 10 minutes on low flame. Flip over and cook for an additional 5 minutes.
6. Transfer it to a flat dish. Cut into wedges and serve hot!

Enjoy this recipe at home and send us some pictures.

[Have you considered becoming an ICAM member?](#)

Check out <http://icamn.org/membership> to learn about the amazing benefits you can enjoy!



Indian Cultural Association of Minnesota | 911 11th Avenue NW, Rochester, MN 55901

[Unsubscribe communication@icamn.org](mailto:communication@icamn.org)

[Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by communication@icamn.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!