

ICAM'S NEWSLETTER

Summer 2026

Editor's Note

Samarpan's editorial team is pleased to share the Summer newsletter of 2026 with our readers. We are looking forward to publishing new contributions from our readers. Please submit your articles [here](#). Thank you!!

Newsletter Team

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President's Message

Dear Friends

Namaste,

Happy Summer! I hope you had a wonderful 4th of July and that your families are enjoying Minnesota's beautiful outdoors this season. My heartfelt congratulations to all the students who recently graduated from high schools in Rochester and the surrounding communities. As you prepare for college and new beginnings, I wish you great success in this next chapter of your lives.

We recently concluded **Utsav 2025 – Festival of Colors and 5K Run** at Peace Plaza, marking our fifth consecutive year of this vibrant celebration. The day began with a spirited 5K run/walk from Soldiers Field to Peace Plaza, followed by an evening filled with music,

dance, colors, and delicious food. A special highlight this year was the children's dance performances and the energetic flash mob showcasing India's diverse cultures and languages.

This event would not have been possible without the generous support of the Rochester Downtown Alliance, whose grant helped us bring Utsav to life. We also extend our sincere gratitude to all our partners and vendors for their collaboration and outstanding service. And to our volunteers, your dedication is the backbone of ICAM. To celebrate your contributions, we will be hosting a Volunteer Appreciation Picnic on **Sunday, August 23**.

ICAM has now begun planning for our next major event, **Garba Night on October 18**. Based on community feedback requesting a larger venue, we are excited to return to the Mayo Civic Center, which will provide ample space for everyone to dance, celebrate, and enjoy the festivities. We anticipate participation from neighboring cities as well. Once again, we will be partnering with the Gujarati Samaj of Minnesota to bring a live band from India, led by the renowned singing duo **Samir & Dipalee**, for an unforgettable evening. We are also pleased to share that authentic Indian food will be catered from outside vendors, responding to a popular request from our community.

Thank you for your continued support. ICAM thrives because of you. Please visit icamn.org to subscribe to our mailing list, and we encourage you to become an ICAM member. Your membership helps sustain our programs and offers many meaningful benefits in return.

With warm regards,

Ajay Singh

President, ICAM Board



Since Last Newsletter

UTSAV 2026 – A 5-Year Journey and Still Going Strong

By Verna Simon, Vice President, ICAM

In the summer of 2021, ICAM hosted a virtual party featuring entertainment from India, including singers and a comedian. It was fun, but it wasn't quite what we intended. This was the second year of the pandemic, and everyone was still a bit nervous about meeting in

person. We held the virtual show but continued to brainstorm ways of hosting a real-life event that would bring the community together.

By the spring of 2022, everyone was ready to meet up and have fun. The City of Rochester and the Rochester Downtown Alliance (RDA) were also ready to bring people together, so they began encouraging folks to come back downtown. Thursdays Downtown returned, and RDA offered grants for businesses and nonprofits to host events. ICAM applied and received a small grant to host a 5K run and color splash. We named it **Utsav**, which means *celebration*. This was to be a terrific celebration, sharing the excitement and colors of the Holi Festival of Colors with the entire city.

That first in-person Utsav event came together in less than two months, and it felt like we were all back in school again: learning how to fill out forms for permits, attending classes on how to host an event, and canvassing local vendors for donations. We talked to many city and county departments, and we hung posters in a variety of popular businesses. I can't speak for the other board members, but I think I held my breath until the end of the night of the event! By 9 p.m. on July 30, 2022, our first Utsav Festival of Colors was complete, and I could finally breathe a sigh of relief.

Every year since 2022, we've hosted a Utsav event, and every year it gets a little easier. Don't get me wrong, it's still a lot of work, but we are more seasoned now. We know who to talk to and how to file permits. We start earlier in the year by setting the date, booking vendors, seeking donations, and gathering volunteers. This year, on July 25, we held our **fifth annual Utsav Festival of Colors**, and it was possibly the smoothest one yet! We still have a list of things we can improve upon, but the event was as fun and colorful as ever.

There were terrific volunteers who helped us set up Peace Plaza and the race route at Soldiers Field. Approximately 75 participants braved the heat and ran or walked in hopes of beating their previous race times. At Peace Plaza, they were met by excited ICAM members throwing color and handing them much-needed water.

As always, there was a fun photo booth and a great DJ playing Bollywood music. We all danced in a flash mob, and the kids sprayed each other in the color splash zone. When folks got hungry, they enjoyed tasty Bumble Bites from the People's Food Co-op, delicious Indian dishes from Hello Hyderabad, and yummy ice cream treats from La Michoacana. It was genuinely a lot of fun.

I am so thankful that people enjoy this event as much as we do. We are always excited to host Utsav and share elements of Indian culture with the entire community. It is a lot of work, but there are always many rewards. These days, I am breathing much easier.



























A Memorable Hindi School Graduation

Author: Pavitra Kumar

For first-time parents, milestones are deeply emotional, but attending our **twins'** Hindi school graduation carried a unique significance. The vibrant room, filled with the aroma of delicious Indian treats, buzzed with a shared sense of pride. Watching our little ones stand confidently to receive their **certificates**, we, along with all the other parents, felt a profound wave of relief and joy.

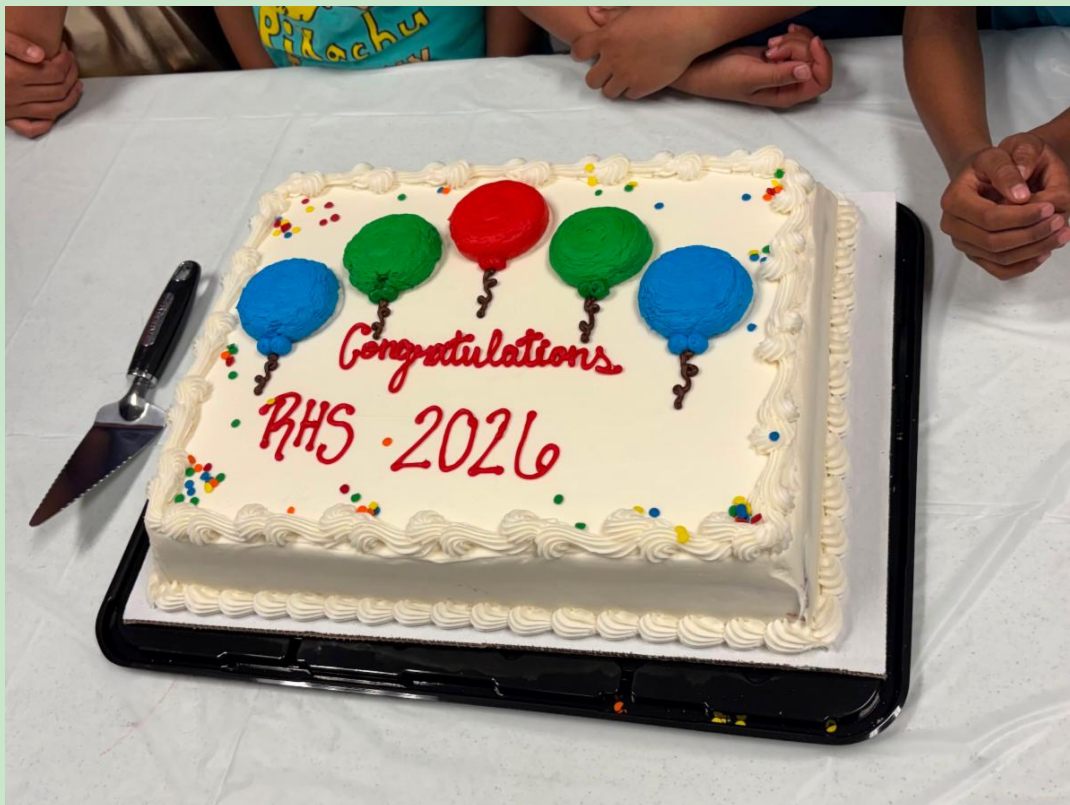
For months, Friday evenings were a balancing act: **eating dinner early** to get to class at the end of a long, tiring week, practicing what they had **learned**, and perfecting pronunciations. We've been fortunate to have dedicated teachers who taught our children with kindness and focus, while nurturing in them a joy for learning the language. Not only did the kids attend regular classes, but they also put together performances for Diwali! As our children stepped up to sing a group song for the festival or deliver a short speech in fluent Hindi for a class exam, those exhausting Friday evenings instantly **transformed** into invaluable investments.

This graduation represented more than just an academic achievement. For first-time parents navigating a multicultural world, it was a powerful bridge to our cultural heritage. It

symbolically ensured that our family's roots, stories, and native language would endure through a new generation.

As the teacher handed over the certificates, cheers erupted from the crowd. This moment wasn't just about mastering a language; it was about anchoring an identity. Watching our children beam with pride, we knew this beautiful journey of cultural connection had only just begun.





Nababarsha in Rochester

Author: Rupa Bhattacharjee

Nababarsha, also known as **Poila or Pohela Boishakh**, is the first day of the Bengali calendar, which marks the start of the new year. It is celebrated globally by Bengali communities on April 14 in Bangladesh and usually April 14 or 15 in Indian states like West Bengal and Tripura. The festival is characterized by harvest season, vibrant cultural festivities, traditional food, and community gatherings.

Families clean their homes and adorn their entrances and floors with traditional, geometric rice-paste designs called *Alpona*. Women usually wear red-bordered sarees and men wear traditional panjabis. Traditional shopkeepers and business owners open a brand-new ledger book and often serve sweets to customers to clear past debts and welcome prosperous new accounts. Fairs are set up under banyan trees and in local fields. Vendors sell beautiful handicrafts, and communities gather to enjoy folk music, puppet shows, and traditional sweets.

In Rochester, USA we Bengalis also celebrate Nababarsha with sharing the traditions, heritage of Bengali culture, every year together through our CABERI Bengali Organization. As we are far from India, so it is not always possible for us to celebrate same day. This year, we have celebrated Nababarsha on 9th May, 2026 at Community Presbyterian Church, Rochester. Bengalees from near by cities also try to join this celebration.

As Bengalis are famous for their authentic food like chingri malaicurry, fish curry, mutton kosha, aloo posto and many more mouth watering dishes and in desert, traditional sweet rosogolla, payesh, Sandesh, misti doi etc. Mostly all members always happily try to volunteer to make and serve these type of authentic food every year. With that, we also try to organize, cultural programme where kids show their talents with singing, dancing, playing instruments etc. and adults also take part with dancing, singing, Shruti natok, recitation, quiz etc. The day goes with positive vibes and full of energy, cheerfulness.

Every year as a team, we try to analyze post event and feedback, for elevating the coming event to the next level.









Dr. S.K. Dash visit to the Hindu Samaj Temple

Heartfelt Thanks

FROM

HINDU SAMAJ TEMPLE, ROCHESTER 🙏

 Our Community Evening on May 8th, 2026 was a huge success filled with devotion, joy, and community spirit.

 Thank you to all attendees, volunteers, and supporters who made the event so special.

We are deeply grateful to

Dr. S. K. Dash and his team

for their visit and extraordinary generosity.
Dr. Dash graciously donated

\$200,000

toward our new temple project —
one of the largest donations in our temple's history! 🙏

 This incredible milestone brings us much closer to our dream of a new Hindu Samaj Temple for future generations.

 We are also excited to share that 14 new monthly donors signed up.

 We encourage more community members to join our monthly donation program and support this important journey.

 **JOIN OUR MONTHLY DONATION PROGRAM**
Your consistent support helps sustain our temple operations and brings us closer to building our new home.

 **SUSTAIN OPERATIONS**

 **BUILD OUR NEW TEMPLE**

 **CREATE A LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

 Special thanks to the **SATSANG GROUP AND VOLUNTEERS** for organizing the tea, appetizers, and food for everyone.

*Together, we are building more than a temple —
we are building a legacy of faith,
unity, and service.*



SCAN TO DONATE



Scan QR code or use the temple's Zelle ID
donate@histemplemn.org

ॐ **HINDU SAMAJ TEMPLE, ROCHESTER**

Thank you for your continued love, support, and generosity. 🙏











Youth Scape

My Trip to India

Author: Kavya Dubey

Last spring I went to a very ordinary, almost normal trip to India but every time I go, this trip is unique and special in its own way. One reason it's special is that I get to eat ice cream with my family as many times a day as I want. The fun part is the different flavors such as Casatta and butter scotch that I don't find in US. Another fun memory of this trip was the view from my 21st floor apartment window in the suburbs of Mumbai. The multiple buildings and open sky were pretty in the day, and it was beautiful and calm at night.

After three long years, I met my older cousins who are in college. I love spending time with my cousins, not to mention that I am youngest and most pampered- but like it has nothing to

do with all the gifts, chocolate and treats they give me. This reminds me, my cousin bought me a toy camera which shows little character, now you would ask why is that special, well because she bought it from Ayodhya where my roots are from. The day I went to Ayodhya, I was just one of the hundreds of people who were walking barefoot (though some were smart enough to wear socks, of course like me) because we don't wear shoes in the temple in my culture. So, to see Bhagwanji (Lord) we left shoes in the locker at the entrance which was far away from the Mandir (Temple) door. This was also special, or not so special because the lines were long in the blazing sun and high security guards didn't let me bring my fan in, neither any toys nor phones.

Although, the two best things of Ayodhya trip were, "Saryu" the stuffed snake bought by the banks of Saryu River and a pretty, handheld fan. Since we are talking about my toy collection I should share that my Nana (grandpa) bought me a "RIKSHAW."

I spent majority of my time in Mumbai, and the auto rikshaws are one fascinating vehicle. Mumbai is also famous for the street foods and local business/ shops. This was my first time ever to taste the sev puri, yum! Let me tell you I also tasted sugar cane juice and the healthy coconut water but sadly I didn't like either of them. I am not sure why my mom likes it so much, but it worked out for me (no pressure to finish it). On the other hand, I can survive on the Mangoes which I cherished eating with my grandparents, and this is one of the most favorite parts of my India trip EVERYTIME! I also enjoyed playing with a two-year-old neighbor who introduced himself as "Rishabh Raghav Rai," sometimes it's fun to be older.

I can write so much more about the trip and my memories, but the point is the trip to India is never ordinary, it is always SPECIAL!







Congratulations to High School Grads!!!

Name

Karthik Anand

Graduate from

Century High School

Going to

**Johns Hopkins for
Biomedical Engineering**



Name

Mitansh Bansal

Graduate from

Mayo High school

Going to

University of Minnesota for health sciences



Name

Mahadev Krishnan

Graduate from

Century High School

Going to

UW-Madison



Name

Gautam Anand



Graduate from
John Marshall High School

Going to
Stanford University,
California

Name
Pranavagurubaran
Senthilkumar

Graduate from
Century High School

Going to
Georgia Tech/Aerospace
Engineering



Name
Shambhavi Thakur



Graduate from
Byron High School

Going to
**Madison Mechanical
Engineering**

Name
Srinidhi Babu

Graduate from
Mayo High School

Going to
**Washington University in
St. Louis Premed**



Name
Krishna Kadirvel

Graduate from
Byron High School

Going to
University of Madison



Upcoming Events

ICAM - Indian Cultural Association
of Minnesota, Rochester, MN



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PICNIC

Celebrating the dedication and heart of
our ICAM volunteers.



DATE:
Sunday,
August 23, 2026



TIME:
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM



VENUE:
Foster Arend Park,
4051 E River Rd NE,
Rochester



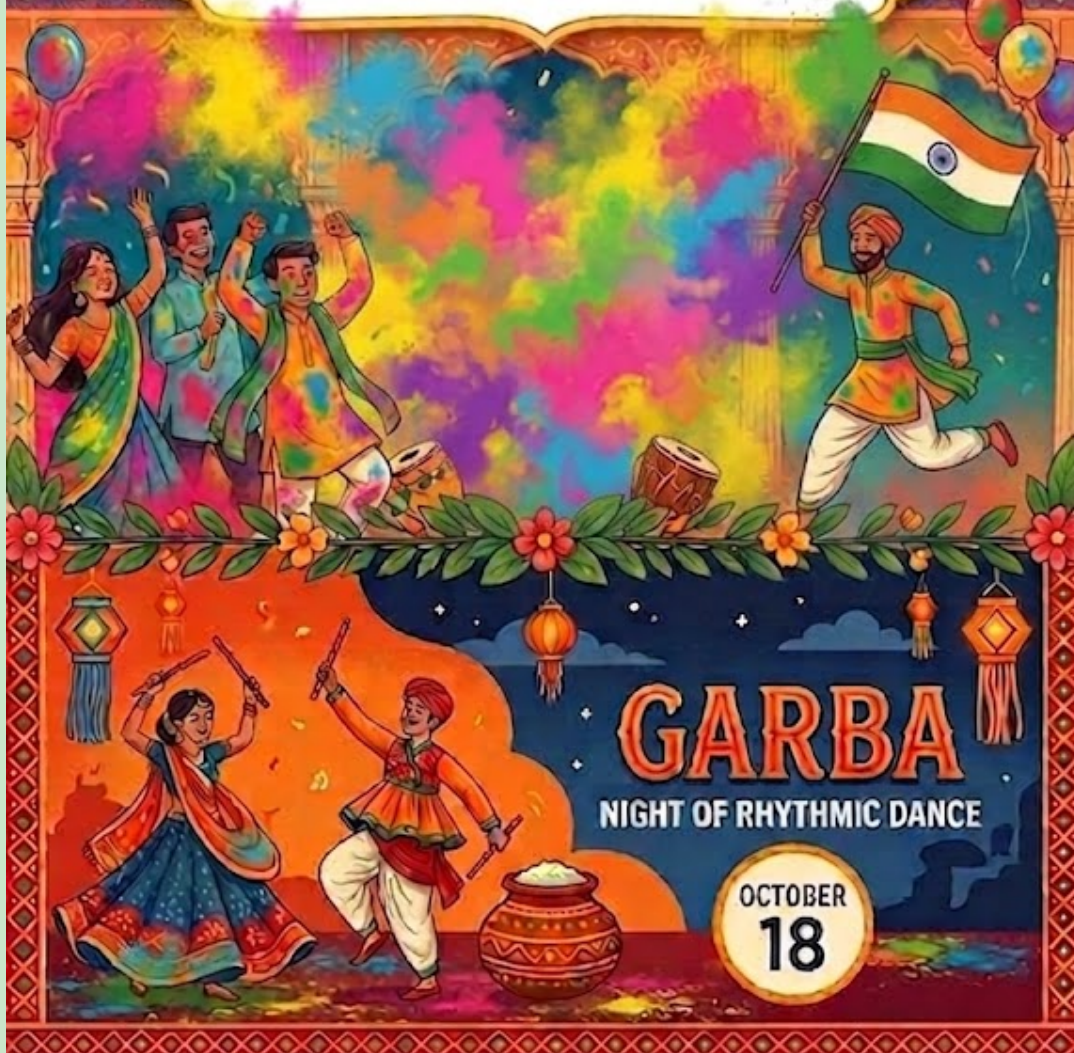
Thank you, ICAM volunteers!



<https://icamn.org/membership>

SAVE THE DATES

For our 2026 Festive Season!



VIBRANT CULTURE • COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS • UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES

More Details to Follow | Mark Your Calendars!

Have you considered becoming an ICAM member?
Check out <http://icamn.org/membership> to learn about the amazing benefits you can enjoy!



ICAM | 1925 48th St NE | Rochester, MN 55906 US

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