

THE LOTUS

A Monthly Publication of the Federation of India Community Associations (FICA)



May - July 2020

Since 1967

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Jain Society of Greater Cleveland extends COVID-19 assistance to Greater Cleveland Food Bank

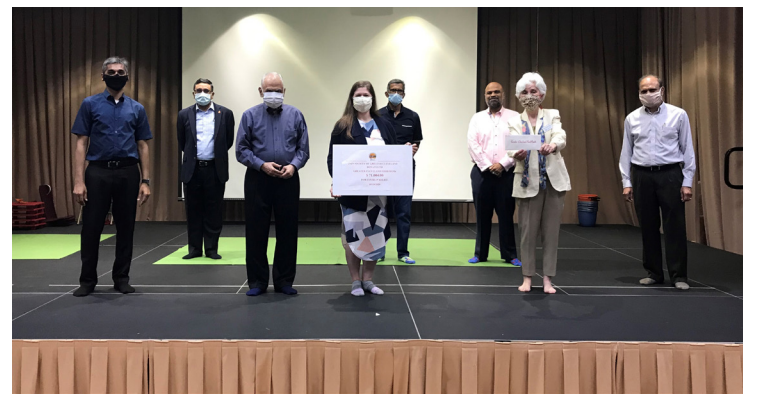
The Jain Society of Greater Cleveland recently donated over \$71,000 to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, for Covid-19 relief assistance to local community-at-large, during a brief event at the Jain Center.

Food Bank's CEO and President, Ms. Kristin Warzocha, sent a personal video message thanking the Jain Society for extending this much-needed support during these difficult times.

Food Bank's Vice President of External Affairs, Ms. Mary Lavigne-Butler and Director of Development, Ms. Lindsey Iero attended the event. They stated that the need for food in the community has increased substantially due to COVID-19 related unemployment and school closures etc. They remarked that effectiveness of every dollar received in monetary donation becomes several-fold by virtue of government programs, donations from suppliers, bulk purchasing capabilities etc. and essentially allows Food Bank to serve 4 meals per dollar of donation. They assured the Jain Society that this donation will be fully used to only procure food items compliant with Jain beliefs. They were

both very appreciative of this donation and stated that this assistance from the Jain Society will provide substantial relief to the local community.

Jain Society's Board of Trustees thanked the Society's members for their compassionate and generous support of this cause. They expressed hope for speedy relief from the current COVID-19 pandemic and wished the Food Bank success in its endeavors.



A New Sustainable Water Desalinization System



Dr. Satish Mahana

A new solar powered turnkey system that uses sustainable resources to generate desalinated water and renewable energy, invented by Satish Mahna, M.D., has recently

been granted a U.S. Patent. Dr. Mahna of Beachwood, who hopes to revolutionize the desalination industry, is Board Certified in Occupation and Environmental Medicine and practices in several locations in Ohio. The system has also received approval from WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization) under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT).

In 2014, Dr. Mahna started working on addressing environmental pollution, which according to the World Health Organization (WHO) is the cause of over 7 million deaths worldwide a year. His research in the field led to this unique innovation.

The current desalination

technology uses reverse osmosis and is very energy intensive. Generally using fossil fuel for electricity, it leaves a significant carbon footprint and contributes to environmental pollution and climate change. In contrast, this new desalination/purification system exploits renewable, inexhaustible and non-polluting energy sources e.g. solar irradiation and ocean water, to convert sea water and waste water into purified drinking water. In addition, it generates renewable energy (electricity) during the process of desalination of ocean water. Converting a portion of the ocean water into wet steam also minimizes biological contaminants in the water.

The system looks promising at a time when many countries across the globe face extreme drinking water shortages. With most of the earth's surface covered by salt water and other minerals, the challenge has been the accessibility of desalinated water.

This environmentally friendly technology is the first of its kind, and depending on the local solar irradiance, will achieve up to 250 GWH of electricity generation per square kilometer per year, and up to 165,000 cubic meter desalinated water generation per square kilometer

per day (one square kilometer is approximately 247.2 acres.) The system's modular concept can be adjusted to suit the needs for various amounts of electricity and desalinated water generation. Each of the systems operates automatically and independently and may also be encompassed within other systems or methods.

This proposed new leading edge concept offers many advantages since it uses sustainable resources that are present in abundance and it leaves no carbon footprint. It will provide clean water for human consumption, minimizing water borne diseases. An abundance of water for agriculture purposes will be available, rendering food security for countries. It will result in an ample amount of water for industrial activity thus generating jobs. By curtailing pollution, it will lower the prevalence of diseases caused by ambient and household environmental pollution.

Besides, the new technology may lower potential conflicts amongst countries striving for water. It is environmentally safe and possibly able to address climate change and global warming.

Continued on page 3



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Presidents Message



FICA, a nonprofit organization run by dedicated volunteers, sincerely thanks all of its volunteers on behalf of the entire community. Their time and efforts have made FICA a great success.

During these unprecedented times, FICA will not host any events or meetings for the remainder of 2020. This is to ensure safety of all of our members at large, volunteers, and the community. In addition, the serving term for the current EC and BOT will be extended for an additional year.

FICA is always engaged and ready to serve the community, especially in times of need. Thus, during the lockdown, a COVID committee had been established to assist the community with some basic needs, such as delivering groceries, picking up medications, etc. The overabundant response of volunteers ready to help the needy, speaks volumes of the community at large! FICA thanks each and every supporter of the organization, and requests your continued support moving forward.

Ritu Mahna

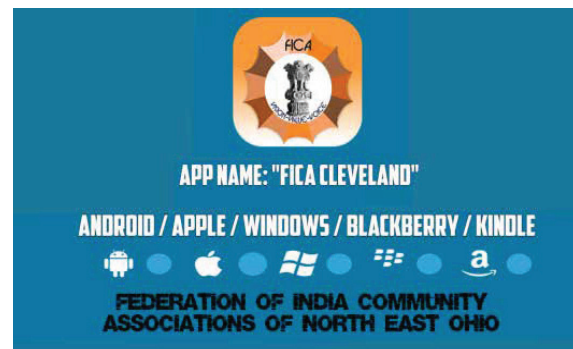
“Be a Voice...Not an Echo”



SOCIAL DISTANCING

Wishing Others Well

Whether or not you practice meditation or mindfulness regularly, try spending a few moments today wishing peace, wellness, and happiness for someone else—a friend, a colleague, or even a passing stranger. Notice how thinking positive thoughts for others can increase your own positivity as well.



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FEDERATION OF INDIA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH EAST OHIO



Dear Community,

Together, we are facing a very challenging, fluid and unprecedented situation. The Corona Virus / COVID-19 is affecting our families, businesses, community and way of life. In light of this unique environment, we at FICA in collaboration with our Sister Organizations (SEWA, NEOMM, JSGC, IAGC, EKAL, AIPNO, ICAGA, OSA, GGSSC, NEOTA, BCS, AFMI, MARWARI, SHIVA VISHNU TEMPLE, IAGY) want you to know that we are here for you. Our dedicated community of volunteers have stepped up to help all those in need.

If any Senior citizens or Immunocompromised individuals need to get Groceries or Prescribed Medicines or urgently needed supplies and are unable to go out. Please call us at **216 710-5111**

Our volunteers will make the shopping trips for you & Deliver at your door step. Again, our HELPLINE Number is: **216 710-5111**

As we go through these mentally challenging times, if you feel the need to just talk and share your thoughts, please call us at **216 710-5111**. Our volunteers are here to lift your spirits and offer free counseling services. Once again, our Helpline Number is **216 710-5111**.

Our volunteers are also offering free tutoring services for the youth of the community. Please call if you feel the need for any of this as well. We are available to help you. Please call us at **216-710-5111**.

We are in this together. Please stay safe and healthy.

Team Indian volunteers of NE Ohio COVID -19

Federation of India Community Associations of NEO

Email Us: socialmedia.ficacleland@gmail.com

Call On: 216-791-FICA (3422)

FICA is a registered non-profit organization under the IRS 501(c)(3) guidelines and has a Tax ID of 34-1215066



Editors Note

SANGITA BAFNA



Our world today....

1. The pandemic continues to grow worldwide
2. Black Lives Matter (BLM) has become a global movement

Thus far, the year 2020 has been anything but uneventful. Coronavirus cases are surging worldwide, with over 10 million confirmed cases and over 500,000 deaths, with US leading the race. In addition, in its fight against COVID-19, the USA is facing social disparity with the wearing of masks. No one knows when this pandemic will be over, but in the meantime, we all must strive to be responsible citizens and take necessary precautions, such as social distancing and wearing masks (covering mouth and nose) in public to control the spread of this virus. Along with social disparity, the US is fighting racial disparity, thus, giving birth to the BLM movement.

Black Lives Matter is an activist movement that began as

a hashtag powered movement after the death of Trayvon Martin. However, on May 29, 2020, with the brutal death of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement, it became a global movement. BLM sheds light on the depth of police brutality, injustice and unaccountability towards the black community. It's calling attention to not just a few bad officers and law enforcement system that does very little to protect black Americans, but also to a systemic culture that protects the wrongdoers and is strongly resistant to change. This protest is affecting the country at every level, hopefully promising future changes and reforms in policing nationwide.

Equality of all races comes in place where there is empathy for the other party. As a community, we went through our own fight for freedom and justice from British rule not too long ago and can empathize with the burning desire for justice and equality of the BLM movement. As an Indian community, we must support all races, cultures and religions, and stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters of the black community.

FICA Sister Organizations

- Association of Asian Indian Women of NEO
www.aaiwo.org | Lynette Sequeira
- American Federation of Muslims of Indian Origin
www.afmi.org | Dr. Razia Ahmed
- Association of Indian Physicians of Northern Ohio (AIPNO)
www.aipno.org | Dr. Mona Gupta
- American Society of Engineers of Indian

Origin (ASEI)
www.asei-usa.org | 440-734-1830

Bengali Cultural Society
www.bcscl.org | Soumitra Ghosh

Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation
Sreedhar Nair

Gujarati Samaj of Grtr. Cleveland
www.clevelandgujaratisamaj.org | Nilesh Patel

Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Society
www.clevelandgurudwara.org

Guru Nanak Foundation
www.gurunanakfoundationrichfield.com

India-Ohio Chamber of Commerce
www.indiaohiochamber.com | Radhika Reddy

Indian Christian Association, Michael Sreshta

Jain Society of Greater Cleveland
www.jsgc.org | Jitu Shah

Kasturi Kannada Society
www.kasturikannadasangha.org | Meena and Humchad, President

Kerala Association of Ohio
www.kaoh.org | JayaKumar

NEO Marathi Mandal (NEOMM)
www.neomm.org | Shekhar Ganore

Marwari Association | Sushila Mohanka

Orissa Society of America | Birendra Jena, (330) 544-1725 | birendrajena@hotmail.com

Punjabi Cultural Society
www.guidestar.org | Burjinder S Dhanoa

NEO Telugu Assn (NEOTA)
Telugu_Mitra@yahoo.com | Prasad Muvva

NEO Tamil Sangam (NEOTS)
www.neo-ts.org | Jayabalan Sankarasubramanian

South Asian Bar Association of Cleveland
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A New Sustainable Water Desalinization System

Continued from page 1



Dr. Satish Mahana

Potentially safe for marine life, it will help in diminishing acidification of ocean water. Coral bleaching is just one of the negative effects of this acidification. The new technology will likely control rise of ocean temperatures because of climate change. It may decrease the frequency and intensity of hurricanes attributed to global warming, lowering the impact of hurricanes on marine life and human beings.

The system operates as follows: First, suspended debris is removed from the ocean water (subsequently referred to as clean water). This water is fed into the Heat Transfer Elements (steel pipes contained within vacuum glass tubes) located at the focal length of the concave mirrors (Parabolic Troughs). The solar

radiation being focused on the Heat Transfer Elements heats the clean ocean water flowing through them. As the temperature of this water rises, a predetermined fraction is converted into steam. The remainder of the clean hot ocean water is cooled by the incoming clean ocean water by passing through the heat exchanger. It is thus preheated before feeding into the Heat Exchange Elements (Parabolic Troughs), thereby conserving energy. The outgoing clean ocean water is further diluted by the ocean water to lower the solute (salt) content of the ocean water before discharging into the ocean. This will lower the exposure of marine life to concentrated ocean (salt) water and eliminate the need for disposal of concentrated brine on land. The steam so generated can be superheated using concentrated solar energy converting into "dry steam." This is fed through the turbines/generators to generate electricity.

When the steam comes out of the turbines/generators, it is cooled using clean ocean water and converted into desalinated water. Again, use of the clean ocean water to cool the steam

preheats the clean ocean water before it is fed into the Heat Transfer Elements (Parabolic Troughs) thereby conserving thermal energy. The desalinated water generated can be customized (pH and electrolytes, etc.) and supplied to the public (potable water) or used for agriculture and industrial purposes. As the operating temperature is above 150 degree Celsius, biological agents (viruses, bacteria and fungi etc.) will be neutralized. This may save resources used to process surface/ground water for human consumption.

The vision statement of SamudraSurya, the corporation under which this proposed system will be launched, is to promote economic growth, food and water security, and mitigate the health impacts of environmental and water pollution by responsible use of sustainable resources. According to Dr. Mahana, this system could provide the answer to many of the world's problems of shortage of clean, safe drinking water, while also providing a source of renewable energy and addressing climate change.

Pray for Harmony, Peace and Respect for all people

FICA (Federation of India Community Associations of Northeast Ohio) is deeply saddened by the recent death of George Floyd in Minneapolis and shares the pain, that this and other deaths have caused our African American brothers and sisters. FICA unequivocally condemns the police misconduct that led to Mr. George Floyd's death.

American Declaration of Independence begins with the words, " We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights, and among these are Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness". But we know that it has been quite a struggle to make these words real for everyone. Our country went through the searing experience of a Civil war to begin to make true these words, but the journey is far from over.

Coming on the heels of many incidents of Black Americans' deaths at the hands of the Police, the graphic video of slow-motion death of George Floyd has stunned the nation. The horror and immediacy of it has galvanized the conscience of all well-meaning people and it is visible in protests all over the country, indeed, all over the world.

Mahatma Gandhi taught the world the power of peaceful protest, and the efficacy of non-violent resistance. This principle was emulated in America during the Civil Rights struggle of the 1950s and 60s. But the quest for justice and equality under the law remains unfinished.

The problem is centuries old so the solution will not be achieved overnight. But the pervasive net of inequities that our Black compatriots face every day must be dismantled through political action, voting, and yes, dialog.

Martin Luther King said, " The Arc of the universe is long, but it bends towards justice". We in FICA are ready to do whatever is needed to hasten the reality of "And Justice for All". Because without justice and fairness, there will not be lasting peace.

Thanks,
Sudarshan Sathe (Chairperson, Board of Trustees)
Ritu Mahana (President, Executive Committee)

DISCLAIMER: "FICA is a registered non-profit organization under the IRS 501(c)(3) guidelines. It is a non-political and non-religious organization."

Federation of India Community Associations of NEO
• Email Us: socialmedia.ficacleveland@gmail.com
• Call On: 216-791-FICA(3422)

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**Diversity and
Inclusion
must
be the core value
of our community!**



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Shiksha Daan - Highlights from 2019

Shiksha Daan (SD) was established in June, 2013, as a new initiative of FICA. Its goal was to involve the local Indian community, in the education and development of the under-privileged youth of the Greater Cleveland area. Below are some highlights from 2019 SD activities covering March 1, 2019 to Feb. 29, 2020

Cleveland Heights Tutoring: We tutor Nepalese refugee children in Cleveland Heights on Sundays from 2:30-4:30 pm during the school year. This program completed its 7th year of operation and continues to be strong. Sangita Bafna took over the leadership of this program from Nivi Engineer in September, 2019. Currently, there are 22 students enrolled in the program, with typically 10-15 students attending each Sunday. We have over 25 volunteer tutors which allows us to have a good student to tutor ratio. We have seen significant improvement in the skills of students who have been coming regularly.

West Side Tutoring: In October, 2017, we started a tutoring program at the Cleveland Public Library on Lorain and W 117th street. This tutoring is held on Saturdays from 2:30-4:30 pm, with 15 students registered in the program; a significant number of them are refugees from the Middle East. Generally, there are 12-15 students attending each session. This program is managed by Mala Garg.

In 2015, SD started a partnership with "College Now", where volunteers serve as mentors for college students from low-income families. At present, 15 volunteers are actively mentoring college students. There have been many successful mentoring relationships and many students, mentored by SD volunteers, are graduating this summer.

SD also provided funding for partial scholarship to a student in the College Now program.

Other Partnership Programs: SD continued its partnership with Refugee

Response and Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.), with SD volunteers supporting the youth tutoring and mentoring programs of these organizations. Two volunteers were active with Refugee Response and two were active with Y.O.U.

SD Participation in 2019 Cleveland Marathon: Aditi Garg, Mala Garg and Sanjay Garg, accompanied by little Lilly Anne Garg (Sanjay & Mala's granddaughter) participated in the 5K walk on May 18. This was the 4th year of SD participation in Cleveland Marathon; \$3700 were raised through generous contributions from the community.

2019 Open House: SD 6th Annual Volunteer Appreciation Lunch and Open House was held on Sept 18, 2019, at the Lotus Banquet Hall. There were over 45 attendees - it was good to see such strong support from the community. In addition to some of our volunteers, we also had some students from our programs attend and talk about their experience with SD tutoring/mentoring.

Financial Statement: SD received \$8,227 in contributions and had expenses of \$8,564. These expenses include education material for students, snacks for students, rental fee for the Cleveland Heights tutoring location, scholarship for "College Now" student, and operational expenses. SD bank account balance as of March 1, 2020 was \$12,873.

COVID-19 Update: On site tutoring for East and West side was stopped from mid-March, 2020 We continued to provide online tutoring to 11 students from the West side, with one-on-one interaction between tutors and students for at least 2 hours a week. SD also contributed \$2500 towards the recent FICA-led effort to support homeless students and families served by the ACT project of the Cleveland Municipal School District.

For more information about Shiksha Daan programs please contact us at: shikshadaan.fica@gmail.com.



East side working with younger students



West side students and tutors



East side tutoring session



2019 Cleveland Marathon



East side students and tutors



West side students receiving holiday gifts



College Now mentors and mentees

Indians for #BLM

By SUJATA LAKHE

Indian American community in Cleveland rallied against racism and support of "Black Life Matters" on Sunday, June 14, 2020 at 1:00PM. A crowd of about 150 gathered in the shadow of Mahatma Gandhi statue on MLK Jr drive passing through Cleveland Cultural Gardens. Indian community has gathered here numerous times before in celebration of victory over colonial powers and celebrate our heritage, but this time it was different. The outrage felt over treatment of black Americans by the institutions, traditions of our society and especially by Police, culminating with death of George Floyd due to a police officer kneeling on his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, calmly with his hands in his pocket and while George was in their custody, custody of four police officers on the scene.



After gathering at the statue, the group marched silently with plaques declaring "Silence=violence", "Indians for BLM", #Equality to a grassy knoll. Here, Dr. Naaz (Naazneen Diwan), a local writer, artist and social justice activist, performed heart stirring poetry where everyone recited the names of the victims of Police brutality, before taking a knee for 8

minutes and 46 seconds. The wind gust kept getting stronger with each passing second, precisely the time George Floyd must have experienced the wind squeezed out of him as the knee thrust on his neck.

This moment was electrifying, there was a stepping out of the closet of "model minority" and joining forces in solidarity with protests which have happened in over 2000 cities and pre-dominantly white towns by now.

There was ample support displayed by the passing cars as they honked repeatedly. The crowd gathered around the statue for a discussion, lead by the educator Charesha Barrett, about the impacts that racism has had in our daily lives and what we think we can do to end it. There were young adults, professionals, men and women settled in socially distanced rings pondering over questions posited by Char, everyone spoke with openness and vulnerability and then one representative from each circle went up to the mic and made a statement.

Trisha Roy, a shaker Hts graduate and a present student at OSU, shared a memory of her first encounter with racism. It was at a Target, in the check-out line. She had a bracelet on with the Hindu symbol OM on it. Behind her was a burly, older white man. He pointed to her wrist and said, "I know what that means, it means you are a terrorist, bitch." She says the hatred in his voice and a general rise in racism since 2016 election, is making her keep her interactions with strangers to a minimum. Ethan Khorana, a Beachwood High School student related a story where someone asked him to go back to his country. Dr. Malhotra, a local physician remarked on how he felt that he might be a victim of discrimination for work-place promotion as a non-European foreigner.

The consensus was that Indian Americans are victims of micro-aggressions, hate and professional discriminations even in fields such as medicine and science. However, it pales in comparison to Black



Americans, they are losing their lives in addition to institutional and individual racism and oppression. They are losing their lives and the police officers are not suffering the consequence of their action, as they use the doctrine of immunity as their defense. When we hold the placard saying "BLM," we are saying, when a black life is taken on the streets, especially by police, there should be consequences. Otherwise, that black life did not matter to us.

However, Indian American do enjoy success as a class. It is because of the fight and sacrifices of African-Americans and the Civil rights act of 1965. This Act opened the doors of immigration and path to citizenship for foreigners.



A very important point was brought up by Deb Roy, a local entrepreneur, that "when we are new in this country, we are told not to go to certain areas (usually black) and to be afraid of the black youth." He called it racism 101 for new immigrants. Thus, we need to address this irrational fear about the black community and racism. We need to deliberate and discuss within our community to uproot this curse.

Attorney Subodh Chandra -- who was on the legal team representing Tamir Rice's family in its suit against the City of Cleveland -- says solidarity between Northeast Ohio's Black and South Asian communities is of paramount importance at this time in our history.

The Indian group for "Black Lives Matter" is planning eight events this year to attract 5,000 more people to the movement in Northeast Ohio. They're also launching a petition drive, in support of the police reform legislation, which is currently before the U.S. Senate.

The Indian community thanks Nivi Engineer, Hrishue Mahalaha, Subodh Chandra, Ethan Khorana, Charesha Barrett, Ayesha Pathak and Dr. Naaz for organizing, speaking and inspiring. And special thanks to Kimberly Brown (Black Women's Commission of Cuyahoga County) and all those who participated.



Nivi Engineer and Hrishu Mahalaha helped organize the group Indians For Black Lives Matter.

Nivi Engineer ended the rally with a speech. She emphasized how all of history is not in the books taught in school and unfair imprisonment of black youth. She said, "It would be nice to believe that the current system is broken, but in truth, it is working exactly as designed. She urged everyone to learn about Tulsa Race Massacre, Emmet Till and Medgar Evers, redlining. Seek opportunities to hear black voices and believe them. Indians for BLM is not an exclusive club, it is a rallying cry. She asked the crowd which side of history do we want to be on and said it is time to take action now.



The "slogan today", remarked Gandhi, "is no longer 'Asia for the Asiatics' or 'Africa for the Africans' but the unity of all the exploited races of the earth."

Mailing list sign up: bit.ly/I4BLMEmail
Sign petition at: www.change.org/Indians4BLM
Let us make The Lotus our vehicle for public discussion on this issue.
Send your opinions, questions, remarks to the editor.

It takes a village..

BY TASNEEM LOKHANDWALA AND SWATI DESAI

This is truly an unprecedented time in our history. With Covid -19 sweeping the nation, Governor Mike Dewine of Ohio ordered a lockdown for schools and businesses to remain close. In times of this crisis, FICA and all the sister organizations stepped up and lost no time in creating a bank of Indian community volunteers. Within two days, 150 Indian community members all across Northeast Ohio, as far south as Canton, Akron and Ashland, as far east as Youngstown, as far west as Freemont and as far north as Mentor, Cleveland and Avon Lake, signed up to help their community.

This great team of individuals, when needed, would help the seniors in the community with their prescription and grocery pick up and home delivery. Endless grocery runs were made while practicing Covid-19 safety measures and delivered to homes of seniors. Many of our volunteers personally reached out to family and friends in the community who were vulnerable, to see if any assistance was required. This outpouring of help during these challenging times was truly amazing to experience.

The spirit of service is ingrained in our Indian culture and upbringing, but the credit for the outpouring response to the call for volunteers definitely goes to each individual who took the action to do something about it. We are extremely proud of our volunteers and grateful for all the efforts they put forth to serve our community. Sincere appreciation is extended to COVID team leaders who volunteered their time for connecting the callers

with the volunteers – Ritu Mahna, Ameet Bathiya, Utkarsh Hazarnis, Richa Mathur, Manhar Shah, Kalpesh Shah, Tasneem Lokhandwala, Swati Desai, Dipti Shah, and Shekhar Ganore.

A special mention -- Mr. Santosh Patra a resident of Solon city in Ohio, works at Avery Dennison in Mentor, OH office. As part of the U.S. COVID-19 Rapid Response Community Fund program from Avery Dennison Foundation, Mr. Santosh Patra nominated FICA for a \$3,000.00 grant for efforts towards all the community service that FICA has involved with, especially helping citizens providing health and food services during the Coronavirus pandemic.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Santosh Patra and Alicia Procello from Avery Dennison for nominating and processing the grant for FICA under their funding program.

The COVID-19 pandemic is taking a heavy emotional and physical toll on all of us and dramatically impacting the economy and fundamentally changing the way we live. We are proud of being a part of FICA and are extremely thankful for the opportunity to serve the community during these challenging times. On behalf of FICA & the community, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to Avery Dennison Foundation and everyone else supporting FICA during this unprecedented times.



It made a difference - FICA Virtual Foodbank Drive

We all have heard the Starfish story, when the old man throws one more starfish back in the sea and says "it made a difference to this one". As we all know, the Greater Cleveland Foodbank, along with its Northeast Ohio partners (faith-based pantries) donated 45.7 million pounds of food last year alone and also sends food to all 12 major Foodbank centers around the state. There are several ways community members can help Foodbank to combat poverty and hunger: by donating food, donating money, volunteering or advocating. During COVID-19, 7000 new families called for help within the first week of the lockdown. Hence, the FICA ad-hoc committee, Sumita Kedia, Vandana Khanna, and Tasneem Lokhandwala, with inspiration and motivation

from the FICA president, Ritu Mahna, came up with a suggestion to support the Greater Cleveland Foodbank that works to ensure that everyone in our community, receives a nutritious meal every day – especially those who were displaced due to school closings/lost jobs and did not have a reliable source of obtaining their next meal.

The ad hoc committee of FICA started a "virtual drive" to collect funds. The initial goal was to collect up to \$5000.00 from the community but due to a concentrated effort to get the word out from FICA board, members and several sister organizations like AIPNO, ICAGA, IAGC, AFMI, etc., the amount exceed beyond the initial goal within first two days. The goal was

increased twice as result of an overwhelming response from our generous American-Indian community. It is humbling to share that the Indian community was able to collect over \$16,000.00 for the Foodbank drive!

FICA thanks all its sponsors who contributed and made it possible for thousands of school children to receive their Foodbank backpacks, during the lockdown, along with families who lost their income during these challenging times. "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead

The Ohio Bohra Group joins FICA's Foodbank Drive

Dawoodi Bohra Muslim Community of Ohio from India and southeast Asia reached out to help the needy of Ohio's larger community during COVID and their holy month of Ramadan in April-May, 2020. The Ohio Bohra group, which comprises of about 40 families including students, made efforts to donate food for people in need by collaborating with different organizations in the cities of Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati and Dayton.



Cleveland: The community joined FICA, Cleveland and contributed a large amount to the Greater Cleveland Foodbank virtual drive..

Columbus: Dawoodi Bohra community of Columbus raised money and volunteered to pack and provide 53 boxes of essential food items, good to serve a family in need for a month, to My Project USA. "My Project USA" is the largest Social Services Organization in Ohio created to uplift under-privileged neighborhoods. They volunteered to pack food for an

organization called "My Project USA – (<https://www.myprojectusa.org/>)".

Dayton/Cincinnati: The Dawoodi Bohra community of Dayton/Cincinnati, small (less than 10 families and few students), yet vibrant, donated close to 500 lbs. of Canned Food/Cereals and over 200 cans of Evaporated Milk to "Miamisburg Helping Hands," to help feed people in need during COVID-19 crisis. "Miamisburg Helping Hands" is an organization that help serve food to those in need, in the greater Miamisburg, West Carrolton and Moraine area.



Submitted by: Dawoodi Bohra Community, Ohio

FICA Mobilizes the Indian Community to Help Cleveland's Homeless Children

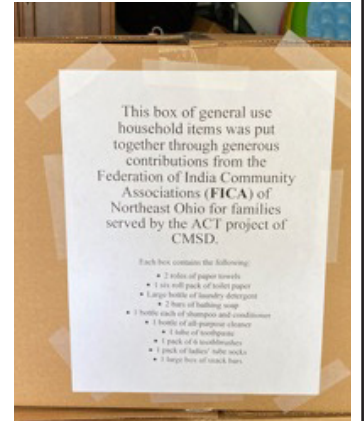
BY MALA GARG

The exemplary generosity of the Indian community, **under the auspices of FICA**, was evident recently as we came together to provide **25 basic need boxes** (including essential household and personal care items), and **25 Chromebooks** for our most needy homeless children and families, greatly impacted by the Covid pandemic. These legally homeless children are all part of CMSD (Cleveland Metropolitan School District) and are supported and mentored by a special arm of CMSD – called ACT.

The request from ACT for supplies and chromebooks was quickly responded to by Mrs. Ritu Mahna (President of FICA) who mobilized the various contributions and also gathered the volunteers to purchase the items for the basic need boxes.



Basic need items were purchased by members of FICA



We want to acknowledge the wonderful service of Guniya Bafna, Chitra Mishra, Seema Sharma and Ritu Mahna who worked quickly and tirelessly to buy all the supplies. Mala and Sanjay Garg were able to procure the needed Chromebooks and get the items packaged and delivered to the ACT team in less the 2 weeks!



25 Chromebooks donated to homeless children attending CMSD so they can continue their lessons online.



The 25 "basic need" boxes have already been distributed to 18 families and 7 unaccompanied youth in need. The 25 Chromebooks have also been distributed to Project ACT students who do not have a computer to complete their academic studies.

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District's Project ACT provides direct instructional and support services to Cleveland's homeless children and youth residing in temporary emergency shelters, transitional housing and doubled-up students staying with other families due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar situations.

The ACT team provides support services including everything necessary to accomplish the goal of meeting students' physical, social and emotional needs, and empowering parents to support their children in this endeavor.

The total amount collected towards this effort was \$12,500.00. The monies were donated by Krish and Leela Swamy, Mala & Sanjay Garg (The Swaminathan and Garg Foundation), as well as through contributions from Project Sewa and Shiksha Daan (FICA Projects).



"The staff at Project ACT cannot say "thank you" enough for the generosity of FICA and the South Asian Indian community. Your kindness is so much appreciated not only to this program, but more importantly to the families and children that will be so positively impacted." – These are the words expressed by the ACT team leaders, and Eric Gordon, Superintendent of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD).

A wonderful example of the Indian community coming together to support and serve the underserved population in Cleveland..

Many thanks!



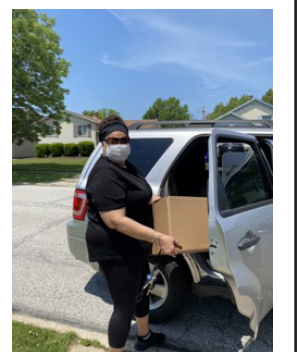
ACT Team members collecting the boxes...



Boxes being delivered to the homeless children and families...



A homeless family appreciative of the generosity...



An update from Indians for BLM:

We're changing our name. We wanted to come up with something more inclusive (we are not restricting our membership only to people originating from India) and clear in its intent and purpose. Therefore, we have decided to change the name to South Asians for Justice and Equity (SAJE). Same group, same purpose, same everything but with new branding.

This group was created with the goal of supporting the Black Lives Matter movement, and that goal remains. We are still focusing on the South Asian diaspora because part of our mission includes not just

advocacy but also education. And that means addressing the inherent racism within the South Asian community. We must have the hard conversations with loved ones who may not see or acknowledge their own biases, call them out, and bear the discomfort for the sake of a more just society. That is on us. And our experiences as South Asians do differ from other communities, and so our conversations and focus will necessarily be different. Hence the focus.

We hope you'll stay with us, and keep up the good fight. Show up, speak up, step up.

DOWN MEMORY LANE.....

BY OM JHULKA



As India's 73rd Independence Day approaches near, I often recall my life on that day..... August 15, 1947.

At midnight on August 15, 1947, the clock struck 12 and India finally gained freedom from foreign domination....not

as one country, but broken in two parts: India and Pakistan. I was a 29 years old young man, living in Delhi and for us, it was still a day of jubilation; a triumph of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent revolution.

At midnight, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of free India, gave a speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort in Delhi. His opening words were "Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge...."

The country was celebrating, however, the ecstasy of freedom was tempered by the sight of grief-stricken refugees who poured into New Delhi, the newly created capital of India. These were all innocent Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and

other non-Muslims who were driven out of their homes by the newly created Pakistan. They suffered communal violence, looting, rapes and murders, at the hands of the new Muslim-dominated population of Pakistan. Even those who, only a few months earlier were living as good neighbors and friends, became enemies overnight, near the end of British rule. In the next few weeks, I noticed that the refugees who had come to Delhi after losing their homes, relations and wealth in Pakistan, started similar kind of retaliation against Muslims in India. The celebration of the Independence was dampened by the sad sight of displaced refugees and violence that followed.

I remember that we had a Muslim neighbor who also became a target for revenge by the Hindu refugees from Pakistan. Myself and few other neighbors decided to save this Muslim family of husband, wife, teen age son and teenage daughter. We were able to give this family a ride in our car and take them safely to a Camp for Muslims, set up in Old Fort called Purana Qila.

Within half an hour of their departure, the Hindu Refugees who had come from Pakistan, came and occupied their house, making use of their furniture carpets etc. We could not do anything to stop the retaliatory violence committed by all the uprooted Hindus, Sikhs

and others in Delhi. Having suffered in Pakistan, their blood was boiling with rage. Our Muslim neighbors were lucky to have escaped unhurt.

Looking back now after a lapse of 73 years, I have come to the conclusion that all of us should "forgive and forget" these happenings. If wiser leadership of newly created Pakistan had prevailed at that time, both India and Pakistan would have enjoyed the fruits of Independence from British rule better. In India, after the formation of Pakistan, there were still 18 per cent Muslims left, as they did not want to move to new Pakistan. They continued to enjoy the benefits of "live and let live" kind of life. However, things were different in Pakistan. Fanaticism, of those that received Pakistan, was the root cause of misery in the country. Unfortunately, the country never recovered from it and is still suffering. If the Hindus and Sikhs, living in the newly created Pakistan, had been allowed to stay on in Pakistan, it would have been to the country's advantage, as trade and commerce would have improved between the two neighboring countries..... just like USA and Canada.

I remember that day, August 15, 1947, as it was yesterday. It's engraved in my memory and I am pleased to go down memory lane and share it with you today.



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RECIPE CORNER

Barely-Blanched broccoli salad with feta and fried pine nuts

Yield: 4 servings
 Total time: 23 minutes
 Prep time: 20 minutes
 Cook time: 3 minutes

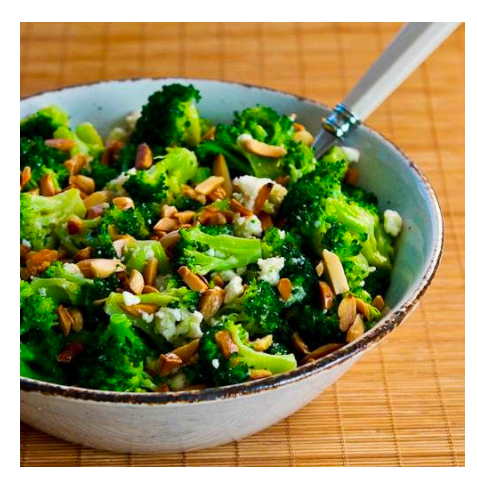
Barely Blanched Broccoli with Feta and Fried pine nuts is an amazing combination of flavors....served as a salad

- INGREDIENTS**
- 1 tsp. + 1/4 tsp. salt
 - 1 lb. broccoli crowns, trimmed and cut into same-size florets
 - 2 large clove of garlic
 - 2 Tbsp red wine vinegar
 - generous pinch hot pepper flakes or Red chilli powder (to taste)
 - 2 Tbsp + 4 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
 - 1/2 cup Pine Nuts
 - 1/2 - 3/4 cup crumbled Feta cheese

- STEPS**
1. In a pot, boil some water and add 1 tsp. salt, and 1 Tbsp of oil
 2. Add broccoli and cook for 3 minutes, drain broccoli and let it cool.
 3. Mash the garlic with 1/4 tsp. salt.
 4. Mix in the hot pepper flakes and red wine vinegar; let it sit for

- about 10 minutes.
5. In a frying pan, heat 1 Tbsp of olive oil and add the pine nuts; fry until golden brown, about 2-3 minutes.
6. Let the pine nuts cool a few minutes. (You can salt them if you want...optional)
7. Mix the remaining 4 Tbsp of xtra virgin olive oil into the vinegar-garlic mixture.
8. Mix the broccoli, Feta, and pine nuts in a bowl; then toss with the dressing to coat.
9. Serve immediately

Recipe adapted from Kalyn's Kitchen. with minor changes





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