

THE LOTUS

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



January - March, 2021

Since 1967

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FICA will be live on FACEBOOK from ICG on Saturday the 23rd of January @ 11:30 A.M. We'll Celebrating India's 72nd REPUBLIC DAY. See you all on FB



"2020" A Glimpse from FICA's Lens

Wishing everyone a Happy and a Healthy 2021. The year 2020 witnessed a lot of suffering and wreaked havoc on the most vulnerable population's livelihoods. As we bid adieu to 2020 and bring in 2021, we want to take this opportunity to tell the community that whilst in pandemic, FICA team members rolled up their sleeves and went to work. Under the amazing leadership and guidance of FICA President, Ritu Mahna; collective energy of the team members and volunteers, coupled with their tremendous dedication and hard work, helped us reach our goal of tirelessly serving our community.

At the onset of Covid-19, we started a drive to deliver essentials like groceries and medicines to the senior and immunocompromised individuals. We also formed a tiger team, and this ad hoc team of FICA started a "virtual drive" to collect funds. The initial goal was to collect up to \$5000.00 from the community. The goal was increased twice as a result of an overwhelming response



from our generous American Indian community. It is humbling to share that our community was able to collect over \$16,000.00 for the Cleveland Foodbank drive!

We as a community came together to provide 25 basic need boxes (including essential household and personal care items including boxes of sanitizers, wipes, detergents, toilet tissues, paper towels, nutritious snack and much more), 25 Chrome books and 25 Hotspots 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).



In addition, FICA also provided Chipotle, Subway, and Dominos gift cards to the homeless children and families part of CMSD.

Continued on Page 3

WEAR A MASK

Non-Profit Organization
 U.S. POSTAGE
 CLEVELAND, OHIO
 PERMIT NO. 1051

FEDERATION OF INDIA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
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 Solon OH 44139
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Helping Hands

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Message from VP of FICA



Dear Friends,

Being a part of FICA's Executive Committee and Vice President has been an honor. We have been working as a team to successfully organize and execute multiple events like Anand Mela to celebrate India's Independence Day, Diwali, Republic Day, Golf outings, etc. Our various initiatives like Project Seva, Shiksha Daan, India Cultural Garden has contributed significantly to the community all across NE Ohio. Helping Hands is another initiative which was launched recently to provide service & support to more families, in need.

Furthermore, FICA hired a team to modify the website: www.ficacleveland.org. FICA's updated website was successfully launched to provide the community easy access to the online content and update everyone with latest news and initiatives FICA is doing. All the latest, LOTUS newsletters are uploaded every quarter for everyone's access.

We provided our response on how to be safe during COVID and the precautionary measures that were recommended by CDC back in Feb/March 2020. FICA started recruiting volunteers and were able to recruit plenty of volunteers for the grocery delivery just when COVID-19 hit hard in the month of March 2020. FICA's goal is to provide full support to the Senior citizens or Immunocompromised individuals who needed to get Groceries or Prescribed Medicines or urgently needed supplies and are unable to go out. We are still providing this service and encourage people to contact FICA in case anything is needed. List of volunteers are posted on our website.

FICA, in collaboration with our Sister Organizations (SEWA, NEOMM, JSGC, IAGC, EKAL, AIPNO, ICAGA, OSA, GGSSC, NEOTA, BCS, AFMI, MARWARI, SHIVA VISHNU TEMPLE, IAGY), wants you to know that we are

here for you. Any kind of grocery delivery services needed will be provided when needed.

FICA continued its Season Of Giving Initiative around Thanksgiving this year. We have partnered with local Indian Grocery stores and requested the community to donate food items that are non-perishables, like peanut butter, canned goods, pasta, rice, beans or anything else the community can think of, which will be donated to the homeless shelters through Cleveland Metropolitan Schools district's PROJECT ACT at the end of the year 2020.

For Our Holiday Cheer initiative, we had 23 members of FICA sponsor and adopt 23 families during the holidays by donating generously to their wish list and make these holiday times a little brighter and joyful.

I personally would like to appreciate and thank all the volunteers who helped delivering the groceries and prescriptions during the start of the pandemic. The service provided by every volunteer was outstanding and the safety measures taken by every individual was up to the mark!

HATS OFF TO THE VOLUNTEERS! THE HEROES!

I wish you and your family a very Happy Christmas. I hope your holiday season is full of peace, joy, and happiness. The magic of Christmas fills every corner of your heart and home with joy — now and always. Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!

I request all to stay safe and take care of you and your loved ones, and also the people around you!

REMINDER - SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU!

Thanks,
Ameet P. Bathiya
Vice President of FICA

Editors Note

SANGITA BAFNA



Editor's Note...

Happy New Year to all!!

The year 2020 was an unprecedented year marked by a Pandemic (Covid-19) that challenged and changed the world forever. Coronavirus raged throughout the year like an uncontrollable fire, taking lives, without discrimination, thus sending a fear in all. The year was consumed by social distancing, masking up, sanitizing, washing hands, and zoom calling. The impact of 2020 will be felt for years to come.

Although, it had been an arduous year that tested the strength and resolve of the world, we must remember the positives of 2020: Nature thrived, as did remote working/remote learning (allowing the world to continue on), family time increased, as did compassion, resilience and support for the community (food drives, donations, volunteering, etc). Self-reflection in 2020 made us realize

that we don't need much in life to survive and thrive. In addition, the challenges of the pandemic lead to tremendous innovations in health care, and increased appreciation for our health care professionals (the frontline workers), who inspired us throughout 2020 with their skills, ingenuity, compassion and tireless serving of the community at large.

We applaud them, as well as our grocery store employees, truck drivers and many more who stepped up to keep us safe and fed during these unprecedented times.

2020, a difficult and eventful year, will go down in history as the worst year. However, with the innovation of covid-19 vaccine, we are finally starting to see light at the end of the tunnel. There is hope in 2021 of resuming some sort of normalcy, after an insane year.

As we wait for everyone to be vaccinated, please continue to mask-up, practice hand hygiene, and limit social gatherings, in order to slow the spread of the virus.

Wishing everyone good health and happiness for the coming year.

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 | Rupesh Raina

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 Sankarasu-
bramian

South Asian Bar Association of Cleveland
sabaohio@gmail.com | Ruchi Asher,
http://ohiosaba.weebly.com/

NEO Sri Lankan Association (NEOSLA)
Cleveland_Lankans@yahoo.com



"2020" A Glimpse from FICA's Lens

FICA began an initiative in 2020 called the Season of Giving. This initiative entailed donating non perishable food items to those in dire need. The community's overwhelming response to the initiative was very impressive. The collection boxes were placed outside our Indian Grocery stores.


People donated non perishables, food items and gift cards to grocery stores with open hearts. FICA would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to Rimi's Bakers and Grocers, Sunny's Asian Food & Spices, and Indo American Foods for their support and service during this initiative. (See pic below.)

FICA also pioneered a Holiday Cheer initiative. We had 23 members of FICA sponsor and adopt 23 families with Project ACT, a program within the Cleveland Metropolitan School District during the holidays by donating generously to their wish list and making the holiday times a little brighter and joyful. (See Pics and Thank you note below)

All of the above could not have been possible without our community coming together and supportin-g FICA accomplish its mission and vision. While we have made some great strides, we still have a lot to accomplish.

We at FICA look forward your continued support now more than ever to help with our ongoing and new initiatives. **Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much" Helen Keller**





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Angeline Sulak, LISW-S
Project ACT

January 4, 2021

To whom this may concern,

I want to genuinely thank you for participating in "Adopt a Family" with Project ACT, a program within the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. With your generosity, 23 homeless families received Christmas presents for their entire family. Some of the items that were purchased were clothing, necessary household items and toys. The families that were chosen were families that lacked any support or financial means but still were committed to their children's educational needs.

As you know, Project ACT (Action for Children and Youth in Transition) provides tutoring, educational enrichment opportunities, and support services to homeless children and youth in temporary emergency shelters. Our programs address the unique and complex needs of children and youth at various developmental stages.

Since it was established, Project ACT has helped more than 70,000 homeless children and youth. The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth named Project ACT "Best Demonstration Model in the Nation."

Once again, thank you for your support of Project ACT, and your dedication to the betterment of homeless students in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Through your generous spirit, you have made a difference in the lives and education of our homeless children and youth.

Sincerely,

Angeline Sulak, LISW-S
Crisis Manager, Project ACT

1111 Superior Avenue • Cleveland, OH 44114 • Office: 216.898.0210



Thank You Key Bank!!!!

FICA would like to thank Key Foundation for their generous contribution of \$7,500. Their support through the years has been greatly influential in accomplishing our vision. It is their continued support that sustains our mission and makes all the difference.



PROJECT SEVA's Annual Blanket Drive

SANGITA BAFNA

Project Seva's annual blanket drive was held on Saturday, December 6, 2020, during which 800 blankets were donated to 10 inner city shelters around Cleveland. The drive was headed by Mr. Satish Parikh and the distribution was made by dedicated committee members (Sangita Bafna, Utkarsh Hazarnis, Chitra Mishra, Poonam Punwani, Harsha Rane and Seema Sharma), their supportive families (Purshotam Punwani, Hira Rane, Varun Sharma) and various enthusiastic volunteers (Mona Bhatia, Shivangi Bhatia, Riya Desai, Swati Desai, Jay Patel, Alpesh Shah, Kalpesh Shah and Ohm Shah). Our sincerest thanks to all the volunteers who got there early Saturday morning for the distribution. We would also like to thank our treasurer, Jyoti Malik, who couldn't participate in the blanket drive, but is an integral part of the team.

In addition, the committee would sincerely like to thank all the donors who made this possible; without your generous support throughout the year, this task and other PS projects would not be possible. We would especially like to acknowledge large donations from the Ahuja Foundation, the Kamla Bafna Foundation, Nitin and Smita Samant and Sudarshan and Swati Sathe.

Also, a big shout out to our donors who sponsor lunches and dinners every Saturday, on a WEEKLY basis, where they pick up the meals and deliver them to the shelters!

Thank you to the following dedicated donors:

Dinesh and Sangita Bafna
 Rohit and Mona Bhatia
 Dhaval and Nisha Chokshi
 Sunil and Ketu Dalal
 Sunil and Parul Desai
 Dhaval and Sonal Ghiya
 Dhiren and Bharti Manek
 Chandu and Maniben Patel
 Anant and Pravin Patel
 Devesh and Mina Patel
 Anil and Hasu Patel

Subodh and Chitra Mishra
 Purshotam and Poonam Punwani
 Sathish and Pragna Parikh
 Shilpesh and Shefali Parikh
 Manoj and Viraj Parikh
 Ramesh and Dipak Pandya
 Bipin and Neela Shah
 Jignesh and Pragna Shah
 Pravin and Aruba Shah
 Shailesh and Bina Shah

Rajesh and Seema Sharma
 Heera and Harsha Rane
 Utkarsh Hazarnis
 Ashok and Mina Sheth
 Jairaj and Binita Sheth
 Krishnakant and Hansa Thakkar



Thank you all!!

-The Project Seva Team

Satish Parikh, Harsha Rane, Jyoti Malik, Ameet Bathiya, Utkarsh Hazarnis, Poonam Punwani, Seema Sharma, Chitra Mishra and Sangita Bafna





Sewa International Cleveland Chapter activities in 2020



**Viji Vijay, President,
Sewa International Cleveland**

Sewa International (sewausea.org), a leading Indian American nonprofit organization, has extensive experience in disaster recovery (rescue, relief, and rehabilitation) operations. In a tumultuous year like the present, the organization stepped-up big time and organized many activities to combat COVID-19 and help numerous people local community all over the country and rest of the world. Cleveland chapter of Sewa with Ms. Viji Vijay as the president worked inline with the national organization and performed number of services to help the local community.

everyone who received them, particularly as they were in short supply everywhere and critically needed for their daily activities. Sewa Cleveland also received a special Congressional recognition from Congressman Anthony Gonzalez for the COVID-19 relief efforts. COVID Plasma Registry Helpline

Innocuously when the year began, Sewa Cleveland organized a Temple cooking drive in January at our local Shiva-Vishnu Temple. Volunteers locally prepared and served lunch for over 300 temple patrons and donated the proceeds to the temple. It was a very successful and well-appreciated event. However, beginning March, COVID-19 started appearing in our community at a large scale, declared as a pandemic and started causing health and economic disasters. Cleveland chapter volunteers jumped into action to help all those in need.

Sewa launched a 24/7 COVID-19 Blood Plasma Registry with Cleveland chapter collaborating with AIPNO (Association of Indian Physicians of Northeast Ohio). The Sewa Plasma Registry (www.sewacovidplasma.org) was the first 24/7 service that offers a national registry for both donors and recipients with live phone and social media support. It is a mobile enabled fully functional, self-registry service that offers both pre-screening and donor-patient matching services. These services adhere to HIPPA medical data protection laws, and protects the privacy and confidentiality of the registered users (donors and recipients). Cleveland chapter actively participated in phone bank and registering potential donors and recipients for over 3 months. Our efforts resulted in Registering over 100 Donors, over 40 Recipients, 6 Plasma Donations and 3 Patients Recovered. The local ABC TV Channel 5 recognized our effort by featuring a story for the local viewers.

COVID-19 Relief Efforts - PPE Distribution

3D Face Shields for Frontline workers

Sewa Cleveland under the leadership of Viji Vijay, President of Sewa Cleveland Chapter along with her dedicated Sewa Cleveland team Hira Fotedar, Anil Singh, Padma Jambhunath, Sunil Narahari, Desi Vijay and Vijay.Kumar arranged and procured many, hard to find and most essential, PPEs from National Sewa team and other local non-profit organizations. Sewa distributed over 1100 N95 masks, 1000 KN95 masks, 20,000 Surgical masks, 500 face shields, 1600 gloves, 500 gowns, 60 hand sanitizer bottles and 7 infra-red thermometers. They distributed these PPEs to local doctors and nursing homes with the help of AIPNO, local businesses, homeless shelters, temples, fire and Police stations, Rotary Club, restaurants & grocery stores, schools and Rotary club. The value of all these PPEs estimated to be over \$25,000 and very much appreciated by

In order to help the local frontline workers, Sewa Cleveland initiated a six-week youth engagement program using 3D printers to make face shields with 3 high school kids with a Sewa volunteer as a mentor. The students created more than 500 face shields and distributed to local nursing homes, assisted living, doctors and businesses. The local ABC TV Channel 5 recognized our effort by the youth by featuring a story for the local viewers.

ASPIRE Program

Sewa started the ASPIRE program in Cleveland, OH with the help of generous donors and the United Way of Cleveland in 2016. So far Sewa has tutored around 200 students for inner city students (Euclid High School and Garfield Heights High School). Over 12 students got



Sewa International Cleveland Chapter activities in 2020

scholarships from Colleges to pursue their education. Conduct classes for high school students in English, Math and science. Helping students develop and improve their academic and social skills. This year we tutored 40 Students from South Euclid School and 30 students from Garfield High School.

Sponsor Food for Homeless Shelters

Sewa Cleveland along with AIPNO has been sponsoring food for a number of local homeless shelters for the past several months. The volunteers have visited Laura's Women's Crisis Center Home, Norma Herr Woman Shelter, Family Promise of Greater Cleveland, Zelma George Family Shelter, Front Steps Housing and Services, St. Elizabeth Catholic Charities and St. Herman's Cleveland to meet with the shelter administrators and residents, distribute food and PPEs for their use. Sewa also distributed 150 pairs of new sneakers with the help of TANA (Telugu Association of North America). This effort was well received and appreciated by all the shelters.

Music event with Kailash Kher

In order to show our appreciation to the hard-working frontline medical personnel, Sewa Cleveland in collaboration with AIPNO and National team organized a virtual concert program by world-renowned singer, lyricist, and music composer Padma Shri Kailash Kher. This concert, "Music is the Medicine of the Mind", brought-in several thousand viewers all over the world and was a monumental success in de-stressing healthcare workers.

International Yoga Day

Sewa Cleveland Collaborated with University Hospitals Avon Health Center and organized the 6th Annual Virtual Summer Sun Salutations yoga. More than 120 people attended the event through Facebook Live. Special thanks to yoga teachers Renee Barret and Stacy Teter for another successful yoga event.

Family Services

During this pandemic, Sewa Cleveland undertook many services for the benefit of local families

- Helped 2 Needy Homeless students of Indian Origin with their rent
- Along with Sewa National team we established *One exclusive helpline for Cleveland* which handled about *12 calls per week*
- Helped 4 local families who lost their job due to COVID, to buy groceries for 3 months
- Helped 12 senior citizens with delivering groceries during the local COVID surge
- Helped 14 local international students with shelter, food, help with immigration and answering travel related queries
- Provided Case Management for 2 individuals and families requiring long term assistance
- Collaborated with National to conduct periodic webinars conducted by physicians, therapists, immigration attorneys and other professionals – *More than 25 webinars and over 75K viewers*

Collaborators

During this testing year, Sewa Cleveland organized, participated and collaborated with many local organizations like AIPNO, FICA, TANA, Project Seva, Helping Hands, SAGA, HAF, HSS, IndiaFest USA, Community Relations Board, City of Cleveland, Rotary Club of Bay Village and Westlake.

Sewa Cleveland team would like to thank all the organizations for taking Sankalp in joining hands with Sewa Cleveland for helping and supporting the community in need. Special Thanks to Dr. Raina, Dr. Dharmesh Mehta, Dr. Mukunda, Dr. Goyal, Dr. Malahala, Dr. Saloni, Ritu Mahna, Ashok Kolla, Jitin Mehta and all AIPNO members.

AAIWO Scholarship

The Association of Asian Indian Women in Ohio (AAIWO) announces its annual program for scholarships to attend College and University courses. Scholarships awards are need-based and limited to women of Asian Indian descent and high school seniors (male and female) of Asian Indian descent. The deadline for application is March 15, 2021. For more details and to submit your application, please visit <https://www.clevelandfoundation.org/scholarship/association-of-asian-indian-women-in-ohio-scholarship/>. From this page, select "Application Method" and follow the directions.

Learn more about AAIWO at: <http://www.aaiwo.org>

Self Care Tip



Packing Light for the New Year

While the new year can be a great time to plan for the things we want to start, do, and accomplish in the months ahead, it is also a perfect opportunity to reflect on what we plan to leave behind in the previous year. What is something that you hope to "declutter" from your life in 2021? Perhaps it's a bad habit or negative feelings. Or maybe it's literal clutter that you need to clear. (Who says you have to wait until spring to give your space a good cleaning?) By clearing your life of the things that no longer serve you, you can give yourself a fresh outlook on the year ahead.

HEALTH CORNER

Panch Vayu Mudras



- 1. Apana Vayu Mudra**
-influences energy in pelvic and lower abdomen area
-helps with constipation and urinary issues

centered in the third eye; energy pervades the chest region
-nourishes the brain and eyes
-improves eyesight
-improves immune system



- 4. Udana Vayu Mudra:**
-flow of energy to the neck, head and throat region
-improves communication power, spiritual power, balance and confidence



- 2. Samana Vayu Mudra**
-influences energy in the navel and abdominal areas
-helps with digestive system/ indigestion, absorption and assimilation of nutrients



- 5. Vyana Vayu Mudra**
-affects the heart and lungs and flows through the body
-fountain of life
-improves clamped blood vessels, and regulated blood circulation
-reduces cholesterol



- 3. Prana Vayu Mudra:**
-activates energy in the head;



Shiksha Daan Continued to be Strong in 2020

By Sanjay Garg



Happy Holidays and New Year to you all from the Shiksha Daan Committee (Nivi Engineer, Mala Garg, Sanjay Garg, Gita Gidwani, Meera Kansal, Vinod Nagpal, Prashanth Subramanian and Pranay Verma). Shiksha Daan – Gift of Education is an activity of FICA which was started in 2013. Our objective is to get the local area Indian community members more involved with the education and development of underprivileged youth and adults in the Greater Cleveland area. We achieve our mission

by conducting our own tutoring programs and partnering with other non-profit organizations which are working in this area. Thanks for your continued support in helping us make Shiksha Daan stronger in 2020. We specially want to thank all our volunteers and donors for their valuable support.

Here is a brief update on our 2020 activities:

- Online tutoring - because of the COVID situation we moved to online tutoring in early March. We currently have 12 students enrolled in our program. The Shiksha Daan volunteers provide one-on-one online tutoring to a student for two hours a week. The focus on the tutoring is to help the students with English and Math literacy and also help them with their homework. We plan to enroll more students with the start of the Winter semester.
- College Now Mentoring - we had 15 Shiksha Daan volunteers serving as mentors for college students. They enjoy the interaction with the students and helping them succeed in college.
- Refugee Response - we continued supporting their programs. We have 3 volunteers currently serving as youth mentors.
- Seeds of Literacy - we established a new partnership with this organization which provides tutoring for adults who want to complete their high school equivalency diploma. So far we have 4 volunteers signed up to be tutors.
- Computers for children from homeless families - Shiksha Daan contributed \$2500 to the FICA effort to provide household supplies and computers to 25 families of homeless children registered in the Cleveland Municipal School District system.

For 2021, our plan is to:

- Strengthen our online tutoring program and make all our processes to be web based;
- Continue to grow our partnership with College Now, Refugee Response and Seeds of Literacy;
- Reinitiate our partnership with Youth Opportunities Unlimited.

If you will like to volunteer with any of our programs, or have suggestions on how we can continue to help the underprivileged youth in the Greater Cleveland area with their education, then please get in touch with us at shikshadaan.fica@gmail.com.

We use the funds contributed to Shiksha Daan to cover the expense of our tutoring programs as well as to provide additional support to students by buying school supplies, helping the families of the students we are tutoring, and making specific contributions to our partner organizations for activities that are aligned with our mission. If you will like to donate to Shiksha Daan, then please visit the FICA website, www.ficacleveland.org, click on the Donate button, and in the comments section indicate that your donation is for Shiksha Daan. Alternatively, send a check made out to "FICA - Shiksha Daan" to Shiksha Daan, C/O Sanjay Garg, 28853 Woodmill Drive, Westlake OH 44145.

I will like to reiterate that we highly appreciate the strong support we have received from the community which has enabled us to continue with our mission. We hope that the new year will be joyous and fulfilling for you.

Cake Artist, Seema Acharya

Seema Acharya, an Indian American from Ohio, became the first Indian origin to be on Netflix Sugar Rush Baking Competition. She competed in Netflix Sugar Rush: Season 3: Extra Sweet. The confectioner dessert that she created on the show was an Indian fusion dessert with the star element of the dessert being 'Ghevar' a popular Indian dessert.

"It was an intense competition and was even more exciting to help Sugar Rush host Hunter March, Judges Adriano Zumbo, Candence Nelson and Justin William to pronounce "Ghevar," said Seema Acharya, when asked about her experience. Sugar Rush is an American baking reality web television series. The series features four professional teams of two competing in a baking competition for a prize of \$10,000. Teams compete in 3 elimination rounds Cupcakes, confections and Cake.

When Seema Acharya, converted her cake art hobby into a business and started her licensed home bakery "Frosted Cake Art" (frostedcakeart.com) in 2014, she never expected the business endeavor to become so successful. She had won a lot of awards and had baked for some celebrities but she never imagined in her wildest dream that she will one day get a call from Netflix producers to participate in one of the most popular baking shows. Her creative forte is sculpted all edible cake art, and can virtually create anything in cake form. These are so realistic that it is hard to tell the difference between cake and the real object. She is also in a lot of demand for creating human bust cakes. A lot of her clients ask her to make cake toppers and cake art with rice crispy base so that they can keep them as a memento.

She is based out of Chagrin Falls, Ohio and you can always reach out to her through her webpage contact form at www.frostedcakeart.com and follow her on Facebook and Instagram to view her latest creations.



RECIPE CORNER

Loaded Totchos

Hands-On: 25 mins

Total: 55 mins

Yield: Serves 6 (serving size: 1 cup)

salt in a blender until smooth, about 3 minutes, stopping to scrape down sides as necessary.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 frozen potato tots
- 2 ripe avocados, halved
- 4 fresh tomatillos, husks removed, halved
- ½ cup fresh lime juice (from 3 limes)
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
- 1 teaspoon ancho chile powder
- 1 8-oz. container of white cheese dip, warmed
- 2 cups charred corn kernels (3 ears)
- ½ cup diced tomato
- 2 jalapeño chiles, thinly sliced

Step 3

Stir together ancho chile powder and remaining 1 teaspoon salt in a small bowl; sprinkle mixture over hot potato tots. Drizzle with warm cheese dip and avocado mixture. Top evenly with corn, tomato, and jalapeño slices. Serve immediately.

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1

Cook potato tots according to package directions.

Step 2

Process avocados, tomatillos, cilantro, lime juice, cumin, and 1 teaspoon of the





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