

THE LOTUS

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



January, 2022

Since 1967

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Message from the President

Namaste and
Happy New Year 2022 to all.

I regret to inform you that FICAs annual Republic Day Event has been cancelled, due to concerns of the rapid spread of 'Omicron' (Covid-19) variant. At the moment this is the best course of action for everyone's health and safety.

The FICA team is working on a special event that we can hopefully celebrate together soon. The date will be decided once the current crisis (Omicron) is over.

On behalf of FICA, I would like to acknowledge and thank the following organizations for their generous and continued contribution to FICA:

- Key Bank
- Avery Dennison
- Assurant, Inc.
- Margaret Wong & Associates

FICA would also like to thank the Bafna Family and the Kamala Bafna Charitable foundation for their continued

support to FICA. In addition we have an extremely generous anonymous donor family who wishes to keep their name and the donation amount anonymous. We sincerely thank that family for their generosity.

Many thanks to ALL our donors in the community. No donation is too big or too small. Every donation is sincerely appreciated and put towards a good cause... whether it's helping an Indian community member in need or going towards the need of the greater Cleveland community in which we live and support by "paying it forward."

So thank you always for your donation.

Wishing everyone a safe and wonderful 2022.

Jai Hind!

Sincerely,

Ritambhara (Ritu) Mahna
President, FICA

Rain, shine or frigid cold weather of Cleveland did not stop FICAs Executive Committee from gathering at the Indian Cultural Garden to unfurl the Indian flag, on India's Republic Day, January 26, 2022





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Helping Hands

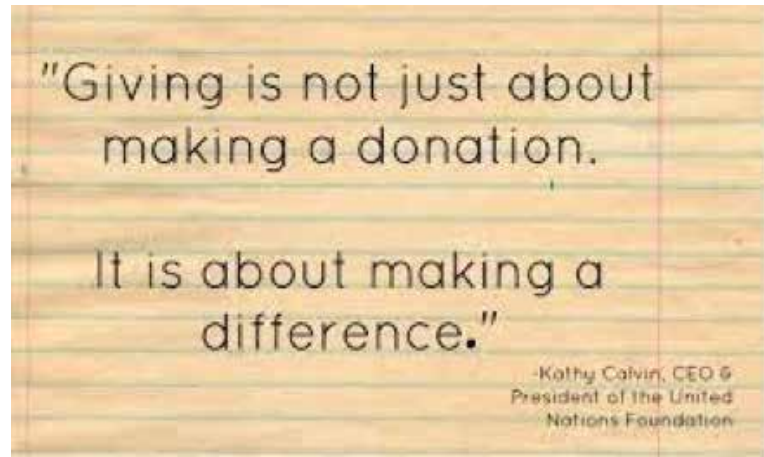
Poonam Punwani - Chair

Message from the Editor

A very Happy New Year 2022 to all.

Hopefully 2022 will bring calmer waters in this pandemic storm that is being endured by all.

I'm proud to say that during this storm, our community came together to help those in need, those suffering, those requiring assistance. FICA and organizations under its umbrella, such as **Project Seva, Helping Hands, Shiksha Daan**, and many more, have come together and gone above and beyond to serve the Indian community and the Greater Cleveland community. Kudos to FICA for building an unparalleled legacy of service, which would not be possible without donation of time and money from our generous Indian community. We applaud all of you who have contributed, giving hope to people in need. Thank you for your generosity!



Donation of hand knitted caps from Dr Mandakini Tamaskar



Refugee Response Needs Donations of Items for Afghan Refugees

By SANJAY GARG

The Refugee Response is an organization in Cleveland which has the mission to empower resettled families to grow roots, supporting them in becoming engaged, self-sufficient and contributing members of their new communities. Months after the collapse of Kabul and the end of the American evacuation effort in Afghanistan, families are still in the process of moving off of American military bases and to their new homes in places like Cleveland. Currently about hundred Afghan Refugee families are settled in the Cleveland area. Refugee Response is operating an "Afghan Response Store" where members of the Afghan Refugee community can choose what they need from donations provided by the community.

The Afghan Response Store will accept in-kind donations through Feb. 16. See the list below for the items that are being requested – please note that Refugee Response will only accept the items in that list. Donations can be dropped off at the Afghan Store, 6515 Bridge Avenue, Cleveland OH, on Wednesdays from 9 am to 5 pm through Feb. 16.

There are other ways to contribute after Feb. 16, including gift cards to Walmart and money that can be used for gift cards to local Halal grocery stores. If you're a landlord willing to rent to new arrivals who may not have a credit history yet, please contact our Afghan services coordinator, Sydney Kornegay, sydney@refugeerresponse.org.

Information about what Refugee Response does can be found at www.refugeerresponse.org. Shiksha Daan already has a partnership with Refugee Response to have members of the Indian community serve as mentors in their Youth Mentoring Program. We hope that the Indian community

Afghan Response Store
NEHEMIAH MISSION BRIDGE AVE ENTRANCE- 6515 BRIDGE AVE CLEVELAND, OH
The Refugee Response has been serving 100+ families at our Afghan Response Store. We cannot accept anything not on this list due to space. Any questions email -becky@refugeerresponse.org

LAST CALL FOR DONATIONS THROUGH FEBRUARY 16

Corn Oil	Pots (Full sets only)	New Towels
Pasta	Microwaves	Blankets
Flour	Sets of Tea Cups	Spices- Cumin
Sugar	Toilet Paper	Turmeric
Salt	Baby Diapers all sizes	Coriander Seed
Lentils	Paper Towels	Cardamom Seed
Red Dried Beans	Laundry Detergent	Tomato Paste
Green/Black Tea	Dish Soap	Dried nuts/fruits
Non-Perishable Milk	Shampoo, Conditioner, etc..	Walmart Gift Cards

Donation Drop Off Hours!
EVERY WEDNESDAY IN
JANUARY FROM 9A-2P

The Refugee Response

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. Dharmesh Mehta

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
sabaohio@gmail.com | Ruchi Asher, <http://ohiosaba.weebly.com/>

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



Project Seva, 2021.....a year in review

As the Calendar page turned from 2020 to 2021, Project Seva (PS) continued with its work of service to "the most in need."

Over the year, it continued to:

- Serve weekly and monthly meals to various churches and shelters around the city
- Conduct its annual blanket drive, delivering over 300 blankets to different shelter and the Afghani refugees
- Deliver hygiene packages to various shelters around the city every quarter, or on as needed basis
- Work with the Afghani Refugees, lead by Gauri Wagle Masurekar

Special thanks to Mr. Satish Parikh and his team of volunteers who sponsor meals every Friday to West Side Catholic Center, providing for 14+ homeless families

In addition, Mr. Ramesh and Dr. Jaya Shah joined hands with PS to sponsor 250 privately funded vegetarian meals to the Afghani refugees. Thus, on a cold, frigid December 21st (Winter Solstice), the PS team, along with other community members responded immediately to deliver the meals to Afghani families scattered around west side of Cleveland.

PS would sincerely like to thank all its sponsors and donors for their generosity, making it possible for the PS team to serve. Special acknowledgment to the Ahuja Foundation, Kamla Bafna Foundation, Sathe Family, Samant family and Progressive Insurance for their generous donation to PS.

Last but not the least, Kudos to the Project Seva team, who is always willing and ready to help when the need arises. Thank you!



Afghan Refugees...an Opportunity to 'Pay Forward' (Jai Ho-Movie)

By JAYA & RAMESH SHAH

USCRI advances the rights and lives of those who have been forcibly or voluntarily uprooted. The unwavering commitment of our leadership, team, network of service providers, and advocates has helped redirect the destiny of countless vulnerable lives. Established in 1916, USCRI Cleveland has served refugees and immigrants for 100 years. In the neighborhoods across Cleveland, Ohio, USCRI opens doors for uprooted people, helping the world's most vulnerable rebuild their lives. USCRI is part of a nationwide network that breaks through social, cultural, and economic barriers so previously interrupted lives can flourish. The first welcome begins with navigating American culture, laying solid foundations for a fresh start, and making essential community connections to successfully integrate them into Greater Cleveland community.

FICA is an organization dedicated to serving the needs of the Asian Indian Community in Northeast Ohio. From its humble beginnings as a student association in 1962, it has grown to be the voice of a diaspora of over 20,000 and on the increase. FICA helps Asian Indian families assimilate into the mosaic of greater Cleveland. Its community service arm, known as Project Seva, and the India Cultural Garden have been instrumental in building bridges and in promoting greater understanding of Indian culture.

Project Seva (FICA) decided to team up with USCRI to show Indian welcome (अतिथी भगवान है) to Cleveland Afghan Refugees by providing Hot Vegetarian Meals (Biryani, Naan, Chhole and Kadi Laddu) on Decemebr 21, Tuesday. 250 Meals were ordered from Paradise Biryani Pointe, Parma, Oh. 20 Volunteers drivers assembled in the parking lot of USACRI at 3671, Fulton rd. at 3 pm; each one of the driver picked up 12-16 meals for 3-4 families and delivered them personally. Now Project Seva is planning to donate blankets for the winter. Project Seva gratefully appreciate the support of generous donors & volunteer drivers of the community.

(Personal NOTE:

- My in laws, nepehews, nieces & toher relattives were evacuated from Uganda in 1972-73 and they settled in London,UK starting as Refugees.
- A few of my Cleveland friends left Pakistan during 1947 partition of India & Pakistan and they had to start all over again in India)



Annual review of Helping Hands

Dear Helping Hands Volunteers and Donors,

I wanted to take this opportunity, with my fellow Helping Hands Board Members, to wish you and your families a very joyous holiday season and a happy and healthy 2022.

2021 has been unprecedented and we all continue to deal with the turbulence and pain caused by the terrible pandemic. The number of people and families that are being impacted by the virus, both economically and emotionally, is growing every day. If we can make a difference in the life of one or many we can count ourselves blessed.

We at Helping Hands, thanks to the generosity of our many donors, and the help of our volunteers, were able to reach out and assist people in need in our community. We have had a good year but much still needs to be done.

Please see attached a Helping Hands Year End Review document that highlights our activities and plans. We hope you will find it informative and useful.

If the Mission of Helping Hands continues to resonate with you, we would appreciate you joining our growing volunteer team. Your contributions are always most appreciated and put to good use. If you would like to donate please click Helping Hands Donation. We look forward to meeting more of you (in person or virtually through Aangan) in 2022.

Wishing you and your family a wonderful and healthy new year.



Helping Hands

A project of FICA
2021 - A year in review

A challenging but productive year!

As we come to the end of 2021, on behalf of the Helping Hands Board, I wanted to take this opportunity to give you an update on how we at Helping Hands have been able to support members of our community, even through these challenging pandemic times.

The mission of Helping Hands is three fold:

- support South Asian women, their children and families, trying to break the cycle of domestic and sexual violence
- assist the elderly in our community
- provide referral assistance for medical and non-medical needs for visitors and/or new immigrants

(All Helping Hands services* are free and confidential)

Notwithstanding the pandemic, our Board members and volunteers got the opportunity to assist several clients in need of help arising from domestic and/or sexual abuse. Sad as it might be, this issue is very prevalent in our community, and the personalized and confidential support we offer has allowed our clients find relevant support services helping them on their way to emotional and financial independence.



Year-end Helping Hands Board Meeting (+Holiday celebration)!

Our Board members who had met on zoom for over 18 months, met for the first time in person to recognize and celebrate achievements, elected new Officers and created plans for 2022

We also got to launch our new services for Seniors starting with our monthly webinar series called "Aangan". Aangan aims to organize a gathering place "virtual or in-person", where seniors from our community can come together and hear about, and discuss topics of importance including health, self-care, and well-being. **We have held 6 Aangan sessions in 2021** with excellent feedback from our viewers and hope to bring a regular stream of relevant topics to our seniors in 2022.

We continued to assist families in our community through the pandemic and our volunteers joined the FICA team to deliver food and other supplies to families and elders in need.

The generosity of our donors continued to be heartwarming. With your donations, we are well on our way towards creating our endowment fund while maintaining enough in operating dollars to meet our yearly service needs.



Our Aangan series brought experts to discuss topics of relevance for seniors. The webinars have been well attended and appreciated.

Looking ahead at 2022.....

The focus of 2022 will be to expand our volunteer base to cover all the areas in Greater Cleveland, and to increase the awareness of our services within the community.

Through Aangan, we are now connecting with the seniors in our community, and find that there is a growing need for information on support services for seniors to include items such as access to cooked food, and availability of physical and emotional support services etc. Our team will continue to investigate how best to address these needs for the growing elder population in our community.

We will also join FICA to support the needs of the new Afghani refugees - particularly as it relates to the needs of the displaced women and children.

My tenure as Chair of the Helping Hands Board comes to an end as of December 31, 2021. **I will transition off and welcome the new Chair Poonam Punwani and the new Secretary Swati Sathe to lead Helping Hands for the next term.**

On behalf of the entire Helping Hands Board, I want to express my sincerest thanks to all of our donors and volunteers for your support and faith in us.

If the Mission of Helping Hands continues to resonate with you, we would appreciate you joining our growing volunteer team.

Your contributions are always most appreciated and put to good use. If you would like to donate please click [Helping Hands Donation](#).

We look forward to meeting more of you (in person or virtually through Aangan) in 2022.

Wishing you and your family a wonderful and healthy new year.

Mala Garg
Chair, Helping Hands

For more information on Helping Hands please feel free to contact:

Board: Mono Aag: 440.796-5524, Mala Garg: 216.533-5789, Gita Gidwani: 440.646-9163, Sumita Kedia: 216.390-0107, Hemanti Kenodia: 440.503-9345, Poonam Punwani: 440.349-2513, Jaya Shah: 216.650-7886, Nipa Turakhiya: 440.668-0378
Members at Large: Guniya Bafna: 216.832-4646, Swati Sathe: 440.796-5950

Paying it forward- Afghan Refugees FICA Initiative

By GAURI WAGLE MASUREKAR



Federation of India
Community
Associations of
NEO

During our routine and mundane lives, rarely we get an opportunity to do something that is far bigger than ourselves; something that inspires our kids, our families, friends and community to be kind; to be good; to be human. The unfortunate situation in Afghanistan leading to scores of refugees being resettled in North East Ohio presented such an opportunity. It's not how much we earn but how much we give that determines the richness of our society.

FICA's President Ritu Mahna received a heartwarming support from NorthEast Ohio Indian community for helping resettle Afghan families. FICA, through its campaign and with the help of Project Seva leadership, was not only able to provide the families with the groceries, clothing and hot meals

but also, good employment opportunities and accommodation. FICA's Shikshadaan initiative will as usual play a crucial role in tutoring the refugees.

Next generation of the Indian diaspora stepped up big time too. As a part of FICA's Youth initiative, **Kabir Gulati** who is **Senior at University schools & Pooja Vallampati**, a **junior at Aurora schools** contributed their time and resources to



collect donations and help the families in need.

Youthup – a nonprofit led by **Kabir Gulati** along with his friends (**Javan Cobb, Aetan Parmar**), recently conducted a Holiday Drive and had an impressive collection of winter clothes, blankets, laptops, clothes etc. They dropped off 5 cars full of donations to USCRI – Cleveland office. These young volunteers, through their winter drive, provided families with warm clothing and bedding. It was a delight to see the young generation giving back to the community.



FICA is truly grateful to all the donors and volunteers who proved again that "You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give." And, for that, we salute you.



Holiday Winter Drive

By KABIR GULATI



Hello! I'm Kabir Gulati, and I am a senior at University School in Hunting Valley, Ohio. I am so excited to tell you about a unique holiday drive that I am currently leading in partnership with FICA. Through my nonprofit, YouthUp, I got introduced to **Mrs. Gauri Wagle of FICA who is leading FICA's Refugee Program in partnership** with the United States Committee of Refugees and Immigrants (Cleveland Chapter). From Mrs. Wagle, I learned that some 500 Afghan refugees, who resettled in Cleveland over the past few months, were in dire need of warm clothes and blankets for the winters.

Upon learning this, I took the initiative to lead **FICA and YouthUp's Northeast Ohio Region-wide Holiday Drive** to collect donations of gently used winter wear, blankets, old tech devices, toys for refugee kids, etc., from donors across Northeast Ohio.

I'm pleased to share that my teammates **Javan Cobb, Aetan Parmar**, and I have collected donations from generous donors from over 10 cities just in the first two weeks. And more and more people are reaching out to us every day. I'm super excited to share that I was also able to gain the support of **North Face, one of the largest winter clothing companies in the world**. Mrs. Rena Mazzei of North Face, who said "It's a great cause and we are happy to help," has played an instrumental role in **assisting this student-led drive- through employee donations** - a perfect example of corporate social responsibility!



We drove down to the USCRI office for the first round of donations, where we met Graham Ball, a very kind USCRI Development Associate, who helped us unload 5 cars full of donations. Graham was amazed at the amount of stuff we had collected and the generosity of the donors- **about 100+ comforters, blankets and bedsheets, about 50 coats and**

jackets, 30 pairs of shoes, 20 bags of clothes, 2 large boxes of board games and toys, 2 boxes of utensils and cutlery, 1 computer and 1 tablet. Graham couldn't help but remark, "This is one of the best donations so far" and lauded efforts of FICA and Youthup! Graham told us that USCRI is expecting many more Afghan refugee families in the next few months. These families would so much appreciate the contributions from all our generous donors. We promised him we would be back with more.

On behalf of FICA's leadership, Mrs. Ritu Mahna and Mrs. Gauri Wagle, I invite you to contribute towards helping local Afghan refugees who are rebuilding their lives in our wonderful city of Cleveland. I also invite interested youth to join our team and help with the mission. Thank you so much!

Sincerely,
Kabir Gulati - 440-384-8795
kgulati22@us.edu
kabirgulati@youthup.org



Doing My Part

By POOJA VALLAMPATI



My name is Pooja Vallampati and I am a junior at Aurora High School. The recent developments that exacerbated the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan have been on my mind just as much as they have been on the minds of so many around the world. When the outreach from FICA, an organization of which my family and I are members, came, I knew I wanted to help, albeit in a small way. FICA's partnership with the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) to collect monetary and material contributions in support of the displaced Afghan refugees is much needed and timely. Knowing about the situation in Afghanistan and their imminent state, I could not begin to imagine

what hardship these innocent people plagued by ravages of natural, socio-political, and economic crises must be going through. Their courage inspired me to take on this project to be a part of something bigger than myself, to use this opportunity to spread awareness about the circumstances of the newly relocated.

In researching the crisis, I learned that Afghan refugees constitute one of the largest protracted refugee situations in the world. There are nearly 6 million Afghans who have been forcibly displaced from their homes. Of those, 3.5 million are displaced within Afghanistan and 2.6 million are living in other countries as refugees. An estimated 667,900 Afghans have been newly displaced inside the country since January 2021 – primarily due to insecurity and violence. The impact of the conflict on women and girls has been particularly devastating — 80 percent of newly displaced Afghans are women and children. Those who have had to flee suddenly are acutely strained for shelter, food, water, non-food items, health services, livelihood opportunities and cash assistance. In addition, the population has been pushed to the limit by prolonged conflict, high levels of displacement, the impact of COVID-19, natural disasters, and deepening poverty. As a result of the recent turmoil, a total of 30,000 - 40,000 displaced Afghans



are expected to arrive in the US for resettlement, of which 300 - 500 will be received by Cleveland.

The Afghans who have had to leave their beloved home have been extremely brave and inimitably resilient through their relocation to the United States and other countries around the world. With Cleveland being one of the resettlement centers, the donation drives, and additional support initiatives are essential to getting them what they need to find their feet, especially as they arrive during our inclement winter. For those who have lost their homes and most personal belongings, this is a small, but hopeful start. They have had to let go of what comprised their lives for so many years, and to be relocated into an unfamiliar environment far away and vastly different from what they had experienced, can only be



overwhelmingly unsettling, to say the least. In light of that sentiment, it only seems righteous that we support and welcome them with warm and open arms into their new home, Cleveland!

It was for these reasons that I chose to spread the word to collect warm-weather and other clothing, toys, dishware, food, and monetary donations from friends and relatives around Cleveland. It was especially important that I shared this message with others, especially my agra. I believe it is crucial that young people understand the positive impact of their actions for our current and future generations, and how we may be able to rally for

what's just. I learned that whatever our station is at a given moment, when we think of others' needs, we can empathize. We can realize through our intentions and actions that we are able to soften the impact. For our refugees, we can provide means to acclimate and integrate into their new normal.

I am truly grateful to all the families who came forward to contribute to this initiative, and to FICA for the opportunity to lend a kind hand to help.



In honor of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, here is just a small selection of Dr. King's many moving, thought-provoking quotes to inspire us all to work together for greater equality, inclusion, and justice in our community, in our country, and in the world:

"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the

whole staircase."

"If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way."

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

"The time is always right to do what is right."

-Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

CLE INT'L FILM FEST 46 SAVE THE DATES

CIFF46 AT PLAYHOUSE SQUARE
MARCH 30-APRIL 9, 2022

CIFF46 STREAMS
APRIL 10-APRIL 17, 2022

CLEVELANDFILM.ORG



Shiksha Daan Activities in 2021

By SANJAY GARG

Dear Friends:

Happy Holidays and New Year to you all from the Shiksha Daan Committee (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 keep Shiksha Daan strong in 2021. We specially want to thank all our volunteers and donors for their valuable support. Overall Shiksha Daan volunteers gave over 1200 hours of their time in 2021 in tutoring/mentoring students through our own program and through programs of our partners: College Now, Refugee Response, Seeds of Literacy and Youth Opportunities Unlimited. Thanks to our donors we were able to provide \$1000 worth of school supplies for children in the Salvation Army Family Homeless Shelter, and \$1000 each to our partners Refugee Response, Seeds of Literacy and Youth Opportunities Unlimited to support their education and training programs.

With the help of two high school students, Manav Malik and Saija Shah, under the guidance of our committee member Prashant Subramanian, we were able to establish a new website: www.shikshadaan.org. Please visit this website if you are interested in: learning more about our activities: volunteering for one of our programs; and/or donating to Shiksha Daan. You can also click here to donate to Shiksha Daan. Shiksha Daan is an activity of FICA which is a 501(c)(3) organization, and your contributions to Shiksha Daan are tax deductible. Also, we will like to have more volunteer tutors for our online tutoring program. If you are interested, please fill out the volunteer form at our website or contact us at shikshadaan.fica@gmail.com. The required commitment for the tutors is to spend two hours a week – preferably in the evenings on school days, helping the student with homework and any other special needs such as English Language.

Below is a brief update on our 2021 activities. Please feel free to reach out to us at shikshadaan.fica@gmail.com if you have any questions regarding our activities and how you can participate. We are currently looking for a couple of new committee members who will help our programs grow and be more effective. Please contact us if you are interested in taking a more

active role in helping with the mission of Shiksha Daan.

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.

2021 activities update:

- Online tutoring – We continued our online tutoring program with 13 students enrolled in the spring semester and 14 students in the fall semester. 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. The feedback from the parents is that they find the tutoring very helpful for their children and the students are doing better in schools since they started the tutoring with Shiksha Daan. The volunteer tutors have also stated that they enjoy working with the students and seeing them make progress.

- College Now Mentoring - we had 18 Shiksha Daan volunteers serving as mentors for college students. Thirteen of them are currently mentoring students while some are waiting to be assigned a new student for the 2022-23 academic year. The mentors spend 1-2 hours per month interacting with their mentees via e-mail or phone. They enjoy the interaction with the students and helping them succeed in college. Shiksha Daan volunteer Mala Garg was selected to be one of the two College Now Mentors of the Year for 2021.

- Refugee Response - We have 3 volunteers currently serving as mentors in the Refugee Response Youth Mentoring Program which is for students in grades 2 to 8 who are from refugee families settled in the Cleveland area. These mentors spend two hours a week interacting online with the student assigned to them, helping them with school work, English literacy, and emotional development.

- Seeds of Literacy – We have 3 active Shiksha Daan volunteers serving as tutors for adults who are working on completing their high school equivalency diploma. The volunteer tutors spend at least one hour each week doing online tutoring.

- Volunteer Recognition – We were not able to hold our annual volunteer appreciation luncheon again this year due to the COVID situation. However, thanks to one of our generous donors, we were able to provide Amazon gift cards to all our active volunteers as a small token of our appreciation.

“Our everyday acts of kindness, no matter how small, make a difference in someone’s life. How we treat each other makes us a better team.”

Obituary: Dr. Nelson D’Silva

By CHERYL D’MELLO



Nelson John D’Silva, MD, a Family Medicine and Primary Care Specialist in Westlake, Ohio, passed away on January 14, 2022 at the age of 69. He leaves behind his wife Marietta (nee Rodrigues) of 34 years, children Malcolm, Andrea, and Tracey Pore (Ratnesh), grandchildren Arnav and Aaliyah, his brothers Joseph and Dr. Orlando; sister Vanessa Oliveira (Chris), and several nieces and nephews.

Dr. D’Silva grew up in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and graduated from Goa Medical College (University of Bombay), India in 1978. He was the doctor for the Mormugao Port Trust in Vasco, Goa before moving to the U.S. He did his residency at Southern

Illinois University, Springfield, Illinois where he won the Resident of the Year Award in 1992. After moving to Cleveland, he joined the Premier Physicians Health Center in Westlake. He was affiliated with St. John’s Medical Center, Westlake, the Cleveland Clinic, and Fairview Hospital. He had over 45 years of experience in the medical field.

An active member of the community, Dr. D’Silva was known for his genuine care and concern for people. He used to mentor and teach others, setting an example for young doctors. “A brilliant physician, he had extraordinary diagnostic skills and dedicated his life to helping others. He cared deeply about us,” said one of his patients. “There will never be another like him,” commented another; “he was not just a doctor but a true friend.” He was generous to the end, and donated his organs to save the lives of others – the ultimate sacrifice. He will be greatly missed.



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