

THE LOTUS

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



Feb 2026 - May 2026

Since 1967

INSIDE

FICA Matters.....
pgs 1-4

Community News.....
pgs 5 - 16

Please email us at:
Lotus.ficacleveland@gmail.com

Sign up to receive
The Lotus in your inbox at:

<http://www.ficacleveland.org/fica/lotusPage.html>

Or email us at:

lotus.ficacleveland@gmail.com



FICA Celebrating India's 77th Republic Day



The Republic Day program started with the US and India National Anthems sung by students of Mrs. Shanti Raghavan. Sahana Skiftenes, Sunitha Skiftenes, Sujith Aring, Anaya Singh, Aadya Jain, Yajurv Patel, Mahee Pandey, and Veeraj Katiyar. This was followed by a speech by State Senator Mr. Tristan Radar. After the speech, young kids dressed in vibrant colors in ethnic dress from Cleveland Bollywood danced gracefully-Shloka Nidhi Suragan, Chirush Kotaprolu, Navishka Kotaprolu, Anvika Ranjith, Avika Koppula, Anaya Singh, Abhiram Sai Ponnam, Sarvaani Sai Ponnam, Anvitha Ganji. This was followed by Unsung Hero Awards and student awards. The performances continued after the award ceremony. A few other performances were -Dance by Aya Dance Academy, Aigerim Alibek- dancer and choreographer, Astra Driscoll, and Devyn Etling. This was followed by Fusion Dance from Manasa and Maitri Radhesh. Beautiful ladies of Cleveland Bollywood performed to various tunes of Bollywood.



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

FEDERATION OF INDIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 39474
Solon OH 44139
United States
Or Current Resident



FICASTAFF

Administration Board of Trustees

Sudarshan R. Sathe (Chairperson)
chairman.ficacleland@gmail.com

Rupesh Raina (Vice Chairperson)
vicechairperson.ficacleland@gmail.com

Swathi Desai (Secretary)
botsecretary.ficacleland@gmail.com

Members

Guniya Bafna
Dinesh Bafna
Purshottam Punwani
Ritu Mahna
Rajesh Sharma
Dharminder Kampani

Executive Board

Shekhar Ganore (President)
president.ficacleland@gmail.com
Manish Ishwar (Vice President)
vicepresident.ficacleland@gmail.com
Deepa Rao (Secretary)
secretary.ficacleland@gmail.com
Hemant Kanodia (Treasurer)
treasurer.ficacleland@gmail.com
Deepak Sahoo (Co-Treasurer)

Officers

Amit Jain
Bhavin Patel
Somnath Roy
Parul Bafna
Jay Mendpara
Abhijeet Runwal

LOTUS

Deepa Rao (Editor in Chief)
Lotus.ficacleland@gmail.com
Mahima Rao (Managing Editor)
Shivani Patel
Mahesh Desai
Anika Rao (Youth Editor)
Ameyaa Gargsha (Youth Editor)

Design and Layout
Santosh Bhandari

Publisher

The Federation of India Community Associations (FICA)

Project Seva

Satish Parikh- Chair
216 577 1628

Helping Hands

Mrs. Guniya Bafna

India Cultural Garden

Hira Rane - Chair
Icg.ficacleland@gmail.com

Shiksha Daan

Harsha Rane- Chair
sangarg@aol.com

Unsung Hero Awards and Student Awards



Raman Patel is known across Northeast Ohio not by title, but by his constant presence and service to the community. Rooted in the values of seva, he has spent decades supporting families, guiding people through difficult times, and serving on the management boards of several Hindu temples. Beyond temple administration, he has become a trusted figure during times of loss, helping families coordinate final rites and navigate emotional moments with compassion and dignity. Mr. Patel has also played a major role in Hindu temple construction and architecture for over 30 years. He completed the present Shiva Vishnu Temple building in 1997 and continues to advise and support projects for BAPS and Swaminarayan temples across the region.

Shanti Raghavan has devoted decades of selfless service to the Cleveland Indian community through education, music, culture, and volunteer leadership. She re-founded the Sanatan Dharma classes at the Shiva Vishnu Temple, creating a curriculum that teaches Hindu epics, slokas, bhajans, and festival traditions to younger generations.

A respected Carnatic music teacher for over 40 years, she has taught hundreds of children and organized numerous fundraising concerts for temples and charitable organizations. She has also played a key role in cultural programs such as Thyagaraja Aradhana, Geethanjali, Composers Day, and Nrithyanjali, helping preserve and promote Indian traditions in the community.

Through every stage of life, Shanti Ji has remained deeply committed to serving others, making a lasting impact on generations of families in Northeast Ohio.

Shobha Narayan has dedicated her life to preserving and promoting Indian classical arts through music, dance, and mentorship. Trained from the age of four under her guru Kalaivani Natyathilakam Smt. Rajee Narayan of Nrithya Geethanjali, she continues to inspire generations by teaching not just technique, but also discipline,



expression, and cultural values.

Through performances, cultural programs, and years of committed teaching, Shobaji has helped countless students stay connected to their Indian roots. Her guiding philosophy remains simple and timeless: "Take your time. Discover yourself. Respect the tradition. And above all, find joy in the journey."

Mr. Mahesh Desai has been a dedicated media partner with FICA for the past 14 years and is widely known across the Cleveland Indian community for capturing memorable moments through his photography and videography. Through his work with TV Asia, he brings events to life and creates special memories for countless families and organizations. Known for his professionalism, compassion, and community spirit, Maheshji has been recognized by several respected organizations for his outstanding service and positive impact on the community.

Student Awards

1st - Nandita Srikumar
2nd - Falak Dahiya
3rd - Mannat Thumati

All Rounders: Samyutha Polaconda, Aarnav Soin

Rising Star: Riya Gudguntla, Anushka Pagare, Kaustubh Devarakonda, Arya Deshpande

Shining Stars: Anusha Bangalore, Meenakshi Puram

Indian Associations/Organizations in the Greater Cleveland Area

Agarwal Samaj of North America (ASONA)
Vibhav Agarwalla
Vick.Agarwalla@Gmail.com

AIPNO Association of Indian Physicians of Northern Ohio
Prakash Chand

Association of Asian Indian Women in Ohio (AAIWO)
Ruby Behl - aaiwoleveland@gmail.com

BAPS
Ashish Patel - 2162801894

Bengali Cultural Society
Arunabha Kundu - 2164651638
bcscle.president@bcscle.org

Cleveland Moms 4 Moms
Vidhya Ramachandran
Info@clevelandmoms4moms.org

Ekal Abhiyan
Vikas Jain - Vikasjain365@yahoo.com

ICAGA (Indian Community of Akron)
Duriya Dhinojwala

Isha Foundation
Ram Appana - appana0213@gmail.com

India Fest
Bharat Kumar -2165325532

Jain Society
Sangita Bafna - 216-906-9064

Coalition of Hindus of North America (CoHNA Cleveland)
Rakesh Ranjan
rranjan@charakresearch.com

Kasturi Kannada Sangha
Lokesh Venkatasaiiah - 25kasturi@gmail.com

Kerala Association of Ohio
Rijesh Bhaskaran - 512-954-0412
president@kaoh.org

Marwari Association of Ohio
Bhavika Aggarwal - 330-356-1692

North East Ohio Marathi Mandal
Abhijeet Kulkarni - president@neomm.org

Northeast Ohio Women in Tech
Srajanthi Vallampati
clevelandohioneowit@gmail.com

North East Ohio Telugu Association
Madhu Majji - 7696661744

Northeast Ohio Tamil Sangam
Mahalakshmi Ramaswami
216 318-7733

Sewa International
Anil Kumar Singh - Cleveland@sewaua.org

Tamil Nadu Foundation USA, North East Ohio Chapter
Venkatesh Harikrishnan
Northeastohio@tnfusa.org

The Odisha Society of the Americas, Ohio Chapter
Deepak Sahoo - sahoodk@gmail.com

Gujarati Samaj of Greater Cleveland
Shilpa Patel
president.gsgc2025@gmail.com

Swami Narayan Temple
Rakesh Patel - 4406675943
Cleveland State University Indian Student Association
Surabh - 2167133865

Case Western University
Amala Penumaka
http://community.case.edu/uisa/contact-us

Opportunities for Doing Business with India

By Dan Hanson



Left to Right: Above Pic - Con. Gen. Binaya S. Pradhan, Sudarshan Sathe, Ritu Mahna

The Consulate General of India, New York, along with the India Ohio Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Indian Community Associations (FICA), came together to explore new opportunities for business collaboration between India and Ohio. The event was held on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at the Ariel International Center in Cleveland.

The program featured keynote speaker Honorable Ambassador Binaya S. Pradhan, Consul General of India, New York and included remarks from community and government leaders including Radhika Reddy (President of the India Ohio Chamber of Commerce and owner of Ariel International), Ritu Mahna (FICA Board of Trustees), Sudarshan Sathe (FICA Chair), Charles Slife, Joe Cimperman, Tobias Engel, and Rajlakshmi Kadam, who presented the new India-USA Trade Facilitation Portal.



Left to Right - Radhika Reddy, Ritu Mahna



In addition, the FICA Executive Committee team proudly represented FICA at the Solon Spring Festival held on April 22, 2026, at the Solon Community Center.

Left to Right Below Pics - Con. Tobais Engle, Con. Charles Slife, Con. Cimperman, Team FICA with Con. Gen. Binaya S. Pradhan



Youth Public Speaking Camp



A youth public speaking camp led by Aaryaa More drew more than 50 participants ages 8 to 16 for an engaging three-hour

workshop supported by Federation of Indian Community Associations (FICA). The camp focused on building confidence, communication skills, and leadership through interactive public speaking activities.

The workshop covered key speaking techniques such as voice control, body language, speech structure, engaging introductions, rhetoric, and impactful conclusions. Students also participated in hands-on activities and concluded the session by writing and presenting their own debate speeches before peers.

Aaryaa, President of the Solon High School Speech and Debate team, is a two-time national qualifier, two-time state semifinalist, and four-time Ohio State qualifier, ranked among the top speakers in Ohio in Original Oratory. In 2025, FICA honored her with the All-Rounder Achievement Award for excellence in academics, leadership, and Bharatanatyam dance. FICA representatives Deepak Sahoo, Somnath Roy, and Daisy Sahoo attended the event and presented Aaryaa with the FICA Coach Award. Shekhar Ganore and Deepa Rao also played important roles in organizing and supporting the successful program. The event reflected FICA's continued commitment to empowering youth and inspiring the next generation of confident communicators and leaders.



FICA SHIKSHA DAAN

High School STUDENT Volunteers for tutoring

We are looking to enroll more students for the 2026-27 school year! The basic requirements for the student are that the student has access to a computer/laptop and a good internet connection, can be attentive on the computer for an hour, and has a quiet, private place to participate in the tutoring session.

Please register using this link <https://www.shikshadaan.org/student-registration>



<https://www.shikshadaan.org/tutor-registration>
<https://www.shikshadaan.org/>

To learn more about Shiksha Daan programs and to volunteer to support one or more of our programs. Please visit www.shikshadaanusa.org

You can also contact any one of the Shiksha Daan committee members listed below:
Mrs. Harsha Rane, Chairman - hrane05@gmail.com, 440-567-0972

FICA SHIKSHA DAAN TUTORS - Adults interested in Volunteering
We are looking to enroll more tutors this year as well! Our main requirement to be a tutor is that you can interact with young students in a meaningful way. Please note that you will also be expected to go through a security check.

Mrs. Deepa Rao, Vice Chairman - deepa.arun.rao@gmail.com, 440-529-1968
Mrs. Parul Jain, Secretary - paruljain77@gmail.com, 973-652-3148
Mrs. Mahima Rao Project Chair - mahimaprao@gmail.com, 480-720-7772



NEOTS - A Celebration of Culture, Community, and Cinematic Storytelling

By Mahalakshmi Ramaswami

The Consulate General of India in New York, in collaboration with the North East Ohio Tamil Sangam (NEOTS), hosted a special cultural event in the Cleveland area featuring the acclaimed Tamil film Amaran with English subtitles, marking the first time such a CGI-hosted screening was held in the region.



The event drew more than 230 RSVPs and welcomed a diverse audience of community leaders, academics, professionals, and members of both the Indian diaspora and the broader American community. Guests enjoyed a networking reception featuring traditional Tamil folk dance performances

and Indian refreshments before the screening.

NEOTS President Mrs. Mahalakshmi Ramaswamy welcomed attendees and honored Mrs. Pragya Singh from the Consulate General's office. Distinguished guests included Annette Blackwell, Sudharshan Sathe, Sunil Ahuja, Anand Natarajan, and Bharat Kumar.

The screening of Amaran drew nearly 180 attendees, many of whom experienced Indian cinema for the first time. The event highlighted the power of film in fostering cultural understanding, strengthening community bonds, and celebrating shared values through storytelling.

Northeast Ohio Marathi Mandal 2026



Makar Sankranti – NEOMM welcomed 2026 with a vibrant and auspicious Makar Sankranti celebration, bringing the community together through the cherished Maharashtrian tradition of sharing tilgul and warm wishes. Families enjoyed traditional delicacies, lively conversations, and specially

organized games for the ladies, while children enthusiastically participated in a colorful kite-making workshop. From elegant sarees to handcrafted kites, the event was filled with joy, culture, and togetherness, setting a positive tone for the year ahead.

Kidney Health & Awareness Camp – February 2026 - Continuing the year with a meaningful initiative, NEOMM hosted a Kidney Health and Awareness Camp for the Cleveland community at the Vadtal Dham Temple in observance of World Kidney Day. Led by renowned nephrologist Tushar Vachharajani, the camp focused on the theme “Kidney Health for All,” educating attendees on the silent nature of kidney disease, prevention, early detection, and managing risks such as hypertension and diabetes. The event combined expert medical guidance with community outreach, encouraging proactive healthcare and awareness.

Shiv Jayanti Speech Competition for Kids – To honor Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on the occasion of Shiv Jayanti, NEOMM organized a speech competition for children, encouraging them to learn about and present the life, courage, and vision of the legendary Maratha ruler. The event provided

a meaningful platform for young participants to connect with their heritage while confidently expressing pride in India's rich history and culture.

Marathi Movie & Drama Night - NEOMM also brought the spirit of Marathi entertainment to Cleveland with a special screening of the Marathi film Swari Agra along with the popular Marathi stage comedy Thet Tumchya Gharatun. Featuring talented artists traveling from India, the evening offered the community an unforgettable experience filled with laughter, live performance, and cultural celebration.



NEOMM Upcoming Events 2026 – Save the Date

- PuLanchya Athvani – May 9th 2026
- Maharashtra Annual Fair (Food/Shopping and much more) – May 30th 2026
- Picnic in the Park – June 28th 2026
- Kids Summer Camp – July 25th 2026
- Temple Lunch & Vari – August 2nd 2026
- Mangala Gaur – August 16th 2026
- Ganesh Festival (Cleveland cha Raja) – Sep 14th to 26th 2026
- Diwali Celebration – November 2026

The Women's Day Event 2026 at Vadtal Dham Cleveland

By Niharika Kommusetty



The Women's Day Event 2026 at Vadtal Dham, Cleveland, was a vibrant celebration honoring the strength, resilience, and contributions of women across all walks of life. The

program opened with an inspiring introduction emphasizing the importance of recognizing women's empowerment—not just as a theme for the day, but as a continuous effort to uplift voices, encourage equality, and celebrate self-worth. The ceremony formally began with the traditional lighting of the lamp by Mayor Kim Thomas of Richmond Heights, symbolizing positivity, knowledge, and new beginnings.

Setting an energetic and joyful tone, the Vadathal Dham ladies presented a beautiful Garba by Sejal and team. Their dance showcased cultural pride

and the dynamic energy women bring to their communities.

The event continued with a diverse set of impactful speeches. Palak Patel delivered a thoughtful address highlighting the significance and activities of the Vadtal Dham Temple. This was followed by an engaging and heartfelt talk by Aditi Narayan, a sophomore from Mayfield High School, who spoke courageously about teenage anxiety, depression, and the journey of overcoming fear—resonating deeply with both youth and adults.

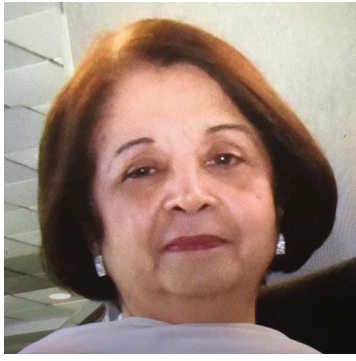
A powerful speech by Priyanka Ramilia centered on Stree Shakti – Samarpan bhi, Swabhimaan bhi, emphasizing that true women's strength lies in the harmony between devotion and self-respect. Her message encouraged women to embrace their identity with pride while honoring their innate compassion.

Adding energy to the celebration, Sangeeta Teegala led a lively Bollywood-inspired fitness segment, encouraging everyone to come together in movement, rhythm, and wellness. The event concluded with a heartfelt Award Ceremony, recognizing remarkable women whose achievements and service embody leadership, courage, and community impact. Together, the day celebrated the spirit of womanhood, unity, and empowerment.



Beyond Region, One Community Mrs. Mona Alag's FICA Era

By Mahima Rao



Mrs. Mona Alag's leadership of FICA was defined by a singular refrain: unity over region, shared ownership over silos, and service that shows up in public. Her philosophy was grounded in a simple truth: if your passport says India, the community should act like it.

Mrs. Alag's message to the Northeast Ohio diaspora was insistent. She encouraged members to celebrate their unique traditions but leave old divisions at the door. "When the Indian flag is raised," she urged, "we are all one." To younger members pulled toward narrower identities, her reminder was sharp: "Your passport doesn't say Punjab or Gujarat. It says India."

This unity was built on rigorous process, not luck. Starting each summer, Alag professionalized FICA's outreach through structured committees and democratic leadership. "I may lead, but I'm one vote," she told volunteers, demanding collective buy-in.

This disciplined approach expanded the community's civic reach, transforming annual gatherings into premier events that drew dignitaries ranging from Congressman Louis Stokes to state leaders and diplomats. Through Alag's vision, regional silos dissolved into a unified, professional, and influential force.

It also mattered that she was leading when many community leadership roles were still predominantly held by men. Mrs. Alag says she met with cooperation and cordiality, and she credits a deliberate style she sums up as "use honey, not vinegar." Be fair, stay prepared, and refuse to build prominence by diminishing someone else. The point, she believed, was to widen the circle of leadership, not to win an argument.

Under her presidency, starting in 2007, FICA also pushed outward into partnerships that signaled the Indian community's place in Northeast Ohio's broader civic life. One early milestone was joining the Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio's annual walk. The Indian contingent showed up in matching T-shirts and handed out water and bananas to participants, small gestures that, in community work, often carry the most meaning. Years later, some volunteers still pull out their long-worn shirts and remember the day.

FICA also became one of the early ethnic-community members of the Cleveland Asian Festival, a weekend that draws tens of thousands through its gates. Mrs. Alag didn't keep that work at arm's length: she personally ran a mango lassi stall to raise funds for FICA, coordinated volunteers, and kept the line moving, leadership measured in sleeves rolled up and a steady presence.

Inside the community, she focused on issues that surface at home but rarely make it onto formal agendas. Two workshops on communication between parents and children addressed a familiar tension: Indian parents raising American children "by osmosis," as she puts it. Her message was not to police identity, but to guide it, hold on to values, yes, but don't "stem

their growth." "Change is necessary for growth," she told families, urging encouragement over fear.

Her most visible experiment in unity came with an Independence Day celebration that brought sister organizations together, each contributing what it did best. Sweets arrived from one group, grilling from another; dosa came from the South Indian community; street food from others, together creating "mini India" to showcase it to the outside world with unity. Children's performances pulled families in, and the food kept newcomers lingering long enough to meet people. The success, Mrs. Alag says, came from shared ownership and making sure every group felt represented.

Women's empowerment was another priority she approached with practicality. When an unclaimed grant connected to domestic-violence prevention surfaced, she helped ensure the funds didn't disappear due to a lack of coordination. Instead, the money became a starting point for women's empowerment programming. She frames strength as something built in ordinary life: resilience, economic power, and the confidence and resources to face hard moments without isolation.

For Mrs. Alag, community service works best when it is clearly defined and consistently delivered. In Seva-related work, she emphasized that funds raised by Indians should serve the broader mainstream community, and she warned that mission drift can undermine trust. Her advice to new volunteers is grounded in context: learn the institution's history first. "Everybody brings their own flavor," she says, but "keep your feet deeply grounded." Build on what exists, modernize what no longer works, and don't discard a foundation you haven't understood.

That belief in systems, not heroic individuals, was shaped by experience. She recalls a time when FICA's treasurer did not drive, and commuting made routine tasks difficult. So Mrs. Alag and her husband made weekly winter trips from Kirkland to the ICC building to pick up bills and keep operations moving. She calls it "not reasonable," a reminder that good intentions still need a workable structure.

After her presidency, Mrs. Alag moved from the executive board to the board, staying involved while watching the community's organizational map change. Regional groups, she notes, have developed strong identities of their own, and participation in federation-wide work can become more event-driven than organization-driven. She hopes that, even as organizations grow, they keep returning to what unites them.

In the end, Alag's record is both visible and quietly personal: major celebrations that grew in size and stature, and the smaller acts, calls, committee meetings, and volunteer shifts that made people feel invited rather than merely informed. Her message to the next generation, especially young Indian-origin women stepping into leadership, is to assimilate without erasing yourself: work sincerely, learn what came before, and then bring change that fits today's world. Former colleagues describe her as steady and hands-on, someone who paired big ambitions with practical follow-through. The power, she insists, is collective, and it starts when a community decides to stand together.

Leadership Spotlight: Mrs. Meenakshi Sharma (Acting President & CEO) - Cleveland Museum of Natural History

By Deepa Rao

Please share about your childhood and journey till you joined the Cleveland Museum of Natural History?



I grew up in different parts of India, which gave me early exposure to diverse cultures and perspectives. Because of my father's job, moving frequently became a way of life, and I learned to adapt quickly and stay curious about the world around me. I completed both my undergraduate and master's degrees at the University of Delhi.

In 2001, I moved to the United States, starting in Minneapolis, where my husband was completing his master's degree. We later relocated to Maryland,

where I pursued a second master's degree at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. After graduating, I continued there in a full-time professional role, which helped me build a strong foundation in higher education and

administration.

In 2007, we moved to Cleveland for my husband's role with KeyBank Capital Markets. I joined Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management as an International Development Specialist. Over time, I grew within the institution, eventually serving as Director and Assistant Dean. During my time at Case, I also completed my Executive MBA, which further strengthened my leadership and strategic perspective. In 2018, I transitioned to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History as Chief Strategy Officer, drawn by the opportunity to contribute to an institution with a powerful mission around science, education, and community impact. In 2022, I was honored to be promoted to Senior Vice President, where I continue to help guide the museum's strategic direction and growth.

Tell us something about your role at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History?

I serve as the acting President & CEO of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. In this role, I lead multiple Museum departments, including Visitor Experience, Operations, Education, Wildlife, and Exhibits.

Cntd on Pg 6...



Leadership Spotlight: Mrs. Meenakshi Sharma (Acting President & CEO) - Cleveland Museum of Natural History

...Cntd from Pg 5

I was instrumental in the development and implementation of the Museum's strategic plan, which is guiding the organization forward. As the Museum reimagines its campus, programs, and accessibility initiatives, I oversee the execution of integrated programming, partnership alliances, and visitor-engagement strategies that will help redefine the Museum's role for the 21st century. Since its grand opening, the museum has welcomed guests from all 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico, and many visitors from around the world.

In your spare time, what is your favorite hobby?

In my spare time, I enjoy staying active and creative in ways that also reinforce skills I value professionally. I have been playing tennis for the last four years. I regularly participate in USTA matches, which I find both energizing and rewarding. Tennis, for me, is not just about fitness; it builds discipline, resilience, and teamwork, especially in a competitive setting.

I also have a passion for home décor. I enjoy reimagining spaces, which allows me to express creativity and attention to detail skills that translate well into strategic thinking and problem-solving in my professional life.

And, like many, I appreciate the importance of recharging. I enjoy watching South Korean shows, which give me a mental break while also exposing me to different cultures and storytelling styles.

How has your journey influenced the way you mentor other women who are looking to enter leadership roles in the arts, sciences, or non-profit sectors?

My journey has been shaped by the people who believed in me long before I fully believed in myself. At home, I've always had strong cheerleaders, my mother, my sister, and my husband, who have been my first source of encouragement and honest advice. Professionally, I've been equally

fortunate to learn from exceptional mentors, both women and men, who opened doors, challenged me, and helped me see possibilities I hadn't yet imagined.

Those experiences have profoundly influenced how I mentor others. I often tell women aspiring to leadership roles that hard work truly matters; it builds credibility, confidence, and resilience, but it's only part of the equation. You also have to stay open, take risks, and be willing to step into the unknown. Growth doesn't come from waiting until you feel ready; it comes from trying, learning, and evolving.

When I transitioned into the museum world, I was stepping into something entirely new. But I quickly realized that leadership transcends sectors. Whether in higher education, nonprofits, or cultural institutions, organizations need people who can think strategically, collaborate effectively, and inspire others toward a shared purpose.

So when I mentor, I encourage women to trust their voice, even in rooms where they may feel like an outsider. I remind them that they don't have to have all the answers; they just need the courage to begin. And just as importantly, I emphasize the power of lifting others along the way: trusting your team, empowering them, and creating space for them to lead.

Because true leadership isn't just about the path you carve for yourself, it's about the paths you help create for others.

If there is one Indian philosophy or value you treasure, what is that?

अच्छे कर्म करो, फल की चिंता ना करो

Do good work without chasing immediate results and trust the people around you. When you lead with integrity and consistency, outcomes follow, and strong, empowered teams make that success sustainable.

A Symphony of Science and Grace: Dr. Shriya Srinivasan's Inspiring Journey

By Mahima Rao



At the intersection of surgical precision and rhythmic geometry, Dr. Shriya Srinivasan performs a high-stakes duet with the laws of nature. In Harvard's labs, she helps "rewire" human nerves so the body can interact with machines by sending and receiving more natural signals. Hours later, under stage lights, she draws on that same understanding of anatomy to command the intricate, thousand-year-old storytelling of Bharatanatyam. To Shriya, the mechanics of a dancer's leap and the neural coding of a bionic leg are not separate disciplines; they are two dialects of the same language: human motion.

That unifying art and engineering as mutually reinforcing was shaped far from Cambridge. Raised in Northeast Ohio, Shriya describes herself as a "tinkerer," drawn to how systems work, whether mechanical or biological. She also absorbed a Midwestern ethic of quiet consistency. "People don't talk endlessly about ambition there," she has said. "They show up, they work, and they're consistent." The combination of curiosity and steadiness would become her signature in environments where the pressure to specialize early can be intense.

At Case Western Reserve University, she pursued biomedical engineering while continuing to deepen her dance training and creative work. She also spent weekends volunteering at the Free Clinic of Greater Cleveland and MedWish International, where she confronted the reality that life-changing technology often sits just out of reach for the patients who need it most. The experience planted a question that still drives her: why does medical innovation so often arrive late and at a price only a few can afford?

Graduate study brought her to the Harvard-MIT Health Sciences and Technology program, where engineering is taught in constant conversation with medicine. Srinivasan completed medical-school coursework and clinical rotations, learning to see translational problems through two sets of eyes: the clinician's demand for reliability and the engineer's impulse to iterate. That dual exposure bench to bedside and back again helped her focus on interventions that can move beyond elegant prototypes and

toward real-world function.

Even as her research accelerated, Shriya refused the familiar ultimatum to "pick a lane." "I've never thought about them as needing to pick one or the other," she says of dance and science. "Life is long. The pressure to specialize early is something we impose entirely artificially." Trained under her mother, the renowned dancer and artistic director Sujatha Srinivasan of Shri Kala Mandir, she has performed widely and contributed to collaborative performance work, in her own life, that professional-level artistry can coexist with world-class research.

For Shriya, the lab and the stage form a feedback loop. Her scientific training sharpens her mind-body connection: she thinks explicitly about muscle groups, joint mechanics, and efficiency of movement when she dances. Conversely, dance keeps her grounded in the physical reality behind every diagram and dataset. "Small variations in movement lead to big global changes in how an expression looks," she notes, and, in the clinic, small changes in a nerve interface can translate into massive functional gains.

That philosophy is clearest in her work on haptics, the science of touch and neural interfaces that can restore sensation and control to people with limb loss. In research that spans engineering and surgery, she collaborates with clinicians to connect remaining nerves to advanced prosthetics, aiming to move feel less like commanding a tool and more like reclaiming a body. The technical challenge is enormous, but the outcome is deeply personal: restoring sensation means restoring a sense of self.

Running through her story is a strong thread of service. She credits her parents, Sujatha and Srinivasan Ranganathan, for building that instinct early through community volunteering, the unglamorous work of setting up, fundraising, and cleaning up. That "moral compass," as she describes it, shaped how she measures success: not only by innovation, but by who can access it.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, that commitment became urgent. Shriya helped spearhead Project Prana, a nonprofit effort that developed a low-cost ventilator "multiplexer" designed to allow a single ventilator to support multiple patients in crisis conditions. The project demanded more than clever design; it required navigating regulations, safety constraints, and the messy logistics that determine whether a promising idea reaches the bedside.

Cntd on Pg 7....

A Symphony of Science and Grace: Dr. Shriya Srinivasan's Inspiring Journey

By Mahima Rao

...Cntd from Pg 6

In her view, this kind of “access-aware innovation” is not a compromise; it is the point. “We can send people to the moon,” she says, “but our healthcare technology often lags...because of cost and access constraints.”

Today, as a professor and director of the BIONICS Lab at Harvard, she is shaping the next generation of researchers and trying to protect them from the myth that excellence is the same as constant breadth. Her guidance echoes the discipline of classical training: choose what matters, then practice it for long enough to become fluent. “Pick the top two or three things you are most passionate about and go deep,” she advises students. “Cut out anything you’re doing for the sake of your CV.” In a culture of short attention spans and instant feedback, she argues that long-term vision is a competitive advantage.

Despite a collection of prestigious grants, awards, and accolades for her research and Bharatanatyam, Shriya remains remarkably unassuming.

When asked about her future legacy, she bypasses the allure of titles, choosing instead to envision a life of sustainability and purpose, one where rigorous interdisciplinary work never loses its human pulse.

The “underdog confidence” she traces back to her Cleveland roots defines her presence in elite spaces: she is steady, persistent, and entirely unflashy, always pushing past what is merely impressive toward what is truly meaningful. Even as her influence grows, she stays refreshingly grounded, consistently pivoting the spotlight toward her students and her dance community.

Shriya’s journey is a masterclass in refusal: a refusal to choose between passions. By embracing the full spectrum of her talents, she has done more than just double her achievements; she is redefining the very boundaries of human potential. As she continues to scale new heights, she does so with a spirit that is as inspiring as it is relentless.

Charak Mind Body Wellness Opens in Pepper Pike, Redefining Whole-Person Care

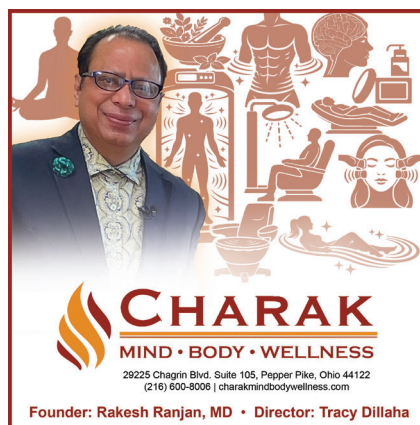
By Rakesh Ranjan M.D

Charak Mind Body Wellness is ushering in a new standard of wellness for the Greater Cleveland area with the opening of our newest location in Pepper Pike. Designed as a physician-led, head-to-toe wellness center, the clinic introduces a modern approach to care that highlights non-invasive, non-medication, and time-efficient treatments.

At its core, Charak Mind Body Wellness is built on a simple yet powerful idea: wellness should be comprehensive, accessible, and evidence-based. The center offers a wide array of advanced therapies that have been studied in carefully designed clinical trials. It will continue to participate in ongoing clinical research to remain at the forefront of mind-body innovations in the wellness space.

The clinic’s offerings span both aesthetic and functional wellness, addressing concerns that range from skin health and body composition to muscle function and cognitive performance. Treatments such as EmSella and EmSculpt NEO provide targeted support for the pelvic floor and core, with demonstrated success in reducing urinary incontinence and improving muscle strength and recovery, as well as enhancing sexual experience. EmFace offers a non-invasive approach to facial rejuvenation by simultaneously targeting facial muscles and skin, helping to improve tone and reduce signs of aging. EmVital supports cellular energy and metabolic function, and reduces inflammation, promoting overall vitality and systemic wellness. These technologies also support improved circulation, increased range of motion, and muscle re-education following injury or inactivity.

In addition to physical restoration, Charak Mind Body Wellness emphasizes



neurological and cognitive wellness. Advanced therapies like ExoMind are designed to enhance focus, memory, and mental clarity by supporting neural communication within the brain. These treatments are non-invasive, free of medication, and typically completed in sessions under 30 minutes, making them accessible for patients with busy lifestyles.

The center also introduces HaloRed therapy, representing the evolution of red-light therapy through the combination of red light, halotherapy, and oxygen to support respiratory health, circulation, skin repair, and overall relaxation.

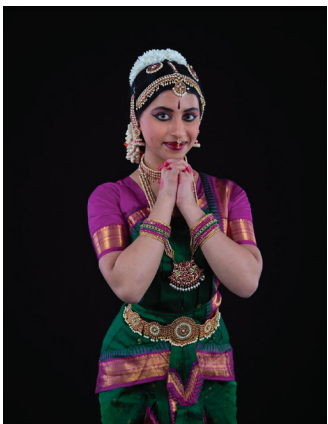
Complementing advanced technologies, Charak Mind Body Wellness also offers Transcendental Meditation, a guided practice that supports stress reduction, mental clarity, and overall emotional well-being. This further reinforces the clinic’s commitment to whole mind and body care.

What sets Charak Mind Body Wellness apart is its commitment to corrective and proactive care. Rather than focusing solely on symptoms, treatments are designed to support long-term function, recovery, and overall well-being. With no downtime and minimal disruption to daily life, patients can pursue meaningful improvements without the burden of invasive procedures or side effects of medications.

The clinic brings together aesthetics, performance, and whole-body wellness into one integrated concept. Contact us today to schedule your first consultation. We look forward to helping you begin your journey to mind-body wellness.

Where Art Meets Science: Sneha's Bright Path at Harvard

By Mahima Rao



Arriving at Harvard from a top high school in Northeast Ohio, Sneha expected rigor, but not the abundance of choice that came with it. Now a freshman on the pre-med track, she was most struck not by pressure, but by possibility. With endless courses and interests pulling at her attention, she quickly learned that success at Harvard requires intentional focus as much as ambition.

Committed to medicine yet drawn to exploration, Sneha embraces Harvard’s liberal arts philosophy, pairing rigorous STEM coursework with the humanities and social sciences. She believes this

balance will shape her not only into a strong physician but a thoughtful, empathetic one.

Her fascination with medicine is fueled by a specific curiosity: CRISPR-based gene editing in CAR-T cell cancer therapies. That interest began in high school, where time spent working and briefly shadowing in an immunotherapy lab sparked her passion for translational research. At

Harvard, and within Boston’s broader research ecosystem, Sneha hopes to continue exploring how scientific innovation can move from the lab to patient care.

Outside the classroom, Sneha draws strength from an unexpected source: Bharatanatyam! Having completed her Arangetram, she understands the discipline required to master something deeply demanding. Dance taught her patience, resilience, and comfort with struggle. When problem sets grow frustrating or lab hours stretch long, she leans on that mindset, viewing difficulty as a sign of genuine growth rather than failure.

Bharatanatyam has also shaped Sneha’s vision of who she wants to be as a physician. The art form emphasizes empathy through bhava (emotion) and rasa (essence), asking dancers to inhabit others’ experiences fully. Sneha sees a clear parallel in patient care, where listening carefully and responding with sensitivity can matter as much as clinical expertise.

Despite the intensity of pre-med life, dance remains central to her identity. She stays connected through campus groups like Deepam and performances such as Ghungroo, Harvard’s largest student-run South Asian arts production. Dance offers her both relief and structure, a space that restores

Cntd on Pg 8...

Where Art Meets Science: Sneha's Bright Path at Harvard

...Cntd from Pg 7

balance while reinforcing the discipline she brings to academics. Equally important to Sneha is community. She is active in South Asian and Hindu student organizations, blending leadership, service, and the arts. When she looks ahead, the achievements she values most are not lines on a résumé, but the relationships she continues to build along the way. Her advice to younger students is simple: be genuine. Rather than chasing formulas for success, she encourages pursuing what truly excites you. Passion, she believes, is what ultimately leads to meaningful impact. At the heart of Sneha's journey is gratitude. She credits her parents, Dr.

Mamatha and Dr. Shankar, whose resilience as physicians modeled perseverance, cultural pride, and commitment to education. She also acknowledges the lasting influence of her gurus in dance and music, Smt. Sujatha Srinivasan and Sri Lalit Subramanian, as well as her teachers, who nurtured both excellence and curiosity. Together, their guidance grounded Sneha's ambitions in purpose, humility, and balance. As she continues to soar, we're thrilled to celebrate her accomplishments and cheer her on for all the success ahead!

By Mahima Rao



New CareForever Senior Adult Day Health Center

By Bharath Kumar

A new Senior Adult Day Health Center is set to open in Broadview Hts, Northeast Ohio, bringing much-needed, high-quality daytime care services to older adults across the region. Designed to serve individuals from all backgrounds, the center places a special emphasis on meeting the needs of the area's rapidly growing South Asian and multicultural communities. The center will provide a safe, engaging, and supportive environment for seniors who require supervision, socialization, and assistance with daily living activities. Services will include structured recreational programming, health monitoring, personal care support, and nutritious meals tailored to diverse cultural and dietary preferences.

- Provide an authentic South Asian Indian nutritional meal per state guidelines
- Transportation services for convenient access across surrounding communities

With the senior population in Ohio steadily increasing, adult daycare services play a critical role in supporting both older adults and their caregivers. The new center aims to provide families with peace of mind, knowing their loved ones are in a compassionate and professionally managed setting during the day.

"As Northeast Ohio continues to become more diverse, it is essential that senior care evolves to reflect the cultural, linguistic, and social needs of the communities we serve," said Binta Patel, Founder and Director of the center. "Our mission is to create a welcoming space where every senior feels respected, understood, and connected—regardless of their background."

In addition to serving private-pay clients, the center plans to work with Medicaid waiver programs and local agencies to ensure accessibility for eligible participants. The official opening is anticipated in May 2026, with community tours and enrollment information to be announced soon.

The facility will feature:

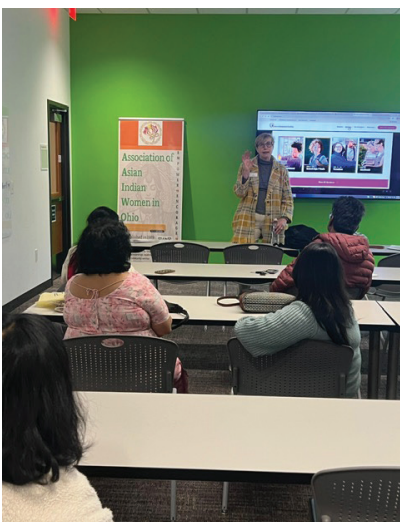
- Culturally responsive care programs, including South Asian music, activities, and celebrations
- Multilingual staff to better serve non-English-speaking participants
- Personalized care plans aligned with individual health and wellness needs
- Social engagement opportunities to reduce isolation and improve quality of life

About the CareForever Senior Adult Day Health Center:

The CareForever Senior Adult Day Health Center is dedicated to enhancing the lives of older adults through inclusive, person-centered care. By combining clinical support with culturally meaningful engagement, the center strives to be a trusted resource for families throughout Northeast Ohio.

For more information, visit <https://careforever.com/> or call us at (216) 496-2617 for a FREE Consultation.

AAIWO Empowering Parents!



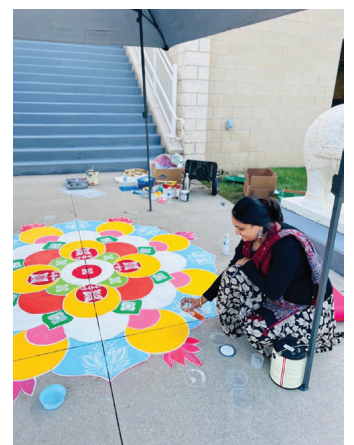
Highlighting its commitment to community support, the Association of Asian Indian Women in Ohio (AAIWO) recently organized and hosted a specialized empowerment session at the Solon Library on April 19. The event, led by Sarah Rintamaki of Connecting for Kids, provided parents of special needs children with essential tools to navigate complex medical and school systems while asserting their legal rights. Bringing together board members, parents, and school aides, AAIWO created a vital space for open dialogue regarding future planning and daily challenges. By hosting this informative gathering, the organization successfully equipped local families with the resources and advocacy skills needed to champion their children's success.



Sri Balaji Temple - Richfield, Ohio



A group of volunteers welcomed guests with colorful Rangoli designs at the temple entrance.



Akron Aruna Run

The Akron Aruna Run unites our community, committed to supporting survivors of human trafficking through the work of the Aruna Project. Over the past four years, 685 participants have come together to raise more than \$54,000 through registrations, donations, and unused sponsorship funds. Each step taken and dollar raised helps provide long-term care, employment, and empowerment for survivors on their journey to lasting freedom.

Through Aruna's social enterprise model, survivors are equipped with life skills, stable employment, and holistic support that foster independence and dignity. This approach drives lasting impact—Aruna's sustained freedom rate is an impressive 86%, reflecting one of the lowest re-trafficking rates in the field. Be part of this life-changing movement—register now for the <https://raceroster.com/events/2026/116965/2026-akron-aruna-run> and help turn miles into meaningful impact.



Aruna
FOR HER FREEDOM
5K
Saturday, June 13 in Akron, Ohio

COPLEY HIGH SCHOOL
3807 Ridgewood Rd
Copley, OH 44321

REGISTRATION
March 6 - May 9: \$35
May 10 - June 6: \$40
June 7 - June 13: \$45

RACE DAY SCHEDULE
7:15 am - Packet pick up & walk-up registration open
8:30 am - 5K start

100% OF REGISTRATION FEE goes to free, employ, and empower victims of human trafficking

Register by **May 25th** to guarantee t-shirt & size.



Learn more about the mission at www.arunaproject.com

Color Walk 2026 - Vedantic leadership Academy

By Krivam Rastogi

The Color Walk is a student-run fundraiser put on by high school leaders of the Vedantic Leadership Academy. We've been doing this for six years now, and every year the goal is the same: get beyond our own friend and family circles and bring more of Cleveland out to support nonprofits that are doing real work in our city. This year, every dollar raised goes directly to the Thea Bowman Center, a pillar of the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood offering food support, adult education, youth programs, and resources that help families stay on their feet.

On June 28th from 10 am to 12 pm at Mall B in Cleveland, come grab a bag of colored powder, throw it around, play some cornhole, meet new people, and hear about the work the Thea Bowman Center does for Cleveland families every single day. At the end of the morning, everyone walks together as one big, colorful group.

When you show up, you're not just coming to a fun Saturday event. You're helping high school students practice real leadership, shining a light on organizations that don't always get the attention they deserve, and putting money directly into a community that needs it. Your presence and your donation both matter. Please consider donating or buying your tickets at: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/cleveland-color-walk>.

Cleveland Color Walk

CHINMAYA MISSION CLEVELAND
VEDANTIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

A NON-PROFIT EVENT - ALL FUNDS AND DONATIONS FROM THE EVENT WILL GO TO THE THEA BOWMAN CENTER!

10 AM - 12 PM

SUNDAY, JUNE 28TH 2026



PLEASE PURCHASE TICKETS OR DONATE FROM THE QR CODE OR WEBSITE: WWW.CLEVELANDCOLORWALK.COM



LOCATION: MALL B CLEVELAND - 1 ST CLAIR AVE NE, CLEVELAND, OH 44114

Cleveland International Film Festival Celebrates 50th Anniversary!



The Cleveland International Film Festival marked its historic 50th anniversary with ten days of powerful storytelling, community celebration, and cinematic creativity. The festival opened on April 9 with the premiere of *A Man with Sole: Impact of Kenneth Cole*, where fashion icon Kenneth Cole and director Dori

Berinstein participated in a special Q&A discussing Cole's "cause over commerce" philosophy. The golden jubilee transformed the opening into a lively celebration filled with networking, live music, and meaningful exchanges between filmmakers and audiences.

Over the course of the festival, CIFF showcased an impressive range of films, from emotional dramas and thought-provoking documentaries to imaginative animated shorts. A special highlight this year was the growing participation of younger audiences during Family Day screenings, where student reviewers shared fresh and insightful perspectives on the films they experienced.

Third grader Amogh Krishna Gargasha praised *Sunspark* for its moving story of sacrifice, friendship, and kindness told

entirely through animation without dialogue. He also enjoyed *The Apricot*, a touching film about a young boy discovering his own strengths while helping on his family's apricot farm.

Seventh grader Anika Rao highlighted themes of empathy and community in *My Neighbor* and *CAKE*, both films centered around compassion and helping others during difficult times.

Eighth grader Ameyaa Gargasha reflected on *The Girl and Her Piano*, a documentary following young climate ambassador and pianist Hillary O'Sullivan as she uses music to spread awareness about climate change around the world. She also reviewed *First Light*, a visually stunning and emotional animated film exploring imagination, hope, and the realities of illness.

As CIFF celebrated five decades of independent filmmaking, the festival also highlighted the importance of nurturing the next generation of storytellers, critics, and film enthusiasts, ensuring a bright future for Cleveland's cinematic community.



A Young Voice from Solon Joins the Global Climate Conversation



Solon sixth-grader Devang Pareek earns worldwide recognition from the Pulitzer Center for his climate advocacy letter connecting global environmental challenges to Solon's waterways.

SOLON, OH — Devang Pareek, a sixth-grade student at Solon Orchard Middle School, has been named a global finalist in the 2025 Local Letters for Global Change competition organized by the Pulitzer Center. His submission was selected from nearly 1,500 entries representing 30 countries, 25

U.S. states, and Washington, D.C., placing him among only 23 students worldwide chosen for publication. His essay earned finalist recognition in the Climate and Environment category and is now featured on the Pulitzer Center website alongside top student voices from around the world. The competition encourages students to study Pulitzer Center-supported journalism, conduct independent research, and write solution-focused letters to real decision-makers about pressing global issues through a local lens. Devang addressed his letter to Eddy Kraus, connecting international environmental concerns to local challenges affecting the Tinkers Creek and Lower Cuyahoga River watershed. His essay explored

Cntd Pg 10...



A Young Voice from Solon Joins the Global Climate Conversation

...Cntd from Pg 9

pollution, nutrient runoff, aging wastewater systems, and climate-related weather impacts while encouraging continued investment in stormwater management, stream restoration, and community education.

As part of his recognition, Devang received: Publication of his letter, biography, and photo on the Pulitzer Center website International recognition as one of the top student climate advocates of 2025 A civic engagement grant awarded to his classroom to support global and environmental education initiatives

Beyond academics, Devang is a black belt in Taekwondo, a former Sea Cadet, and participates in National History Day. He also supports pediatric cancer research through the St. Baldrick's Foundation and enjoys basketball, tennis, LEGO building, and science-fiction films and documentaries.

Devang's achievement reflects not only his dedication and curiosity, but also the strength of a community and educational environment that empowers young students to engage thoughtfully with global issues while creating meaningful local impact.

History is made; NRI Physicians & Biophysicists pushed YATRA at highest peak ever in 25 years.

YATRA screened women at 50+ locations, in 5 states & towns with Self Testing Kits and 150 out of 3,000 women are found HPV Positive potentially carrying Precancerous lesions.

ALL have been REMOVED with Thermal Ablation by Dr Stacie Jhaveri & Cleveland Clinic team & Bangalore Team. Some are followed up with Gynac physicians. Medical YATRA will provide all the help to get them treated.

"... this is the first time, WHO approved-Early Detection/Analysis/and REMOVAL In Medical Camps in India. Congratulations to AIPNO-Medical YATRA!'- Mukesh Doshi- Trustee at Bidada Sarvodaya Trust.

AIPNO Global embraces P.M. Modi's Vision in Medical YATRA-2025 to Reduce Women's death from Cervical Cancer by using Self testing Kits for Early Detection in India.

Medical YATRA- employs TWO Teams- Cleveland Clinic-Dr Stacie Jhaveri and AURA Biotech from Chennai-Dr. Muthu & Dr Bhuvana Sharma.

History made by Medical Yatra

The process is very simple, easy to follow and rural & tribal women friendly. Women were given a swab to take sample from their own vagina in privacy in less than 10 mts.

These Swab samples were analyzed by laboratory in 24 hrs.

Results HPV-POS or NEG. were given to Gynec physicians for follow up. Precancerous Lesions (following W.H.O. guidelines) can be removed with Thermal ablation.

(NO anesthesia NO Toxic procedure required.)

FUTURE PLANS:

We applaud P.M. Modi-& Indian Govt making Vaccines for Girls 9-14 available FREE to reduce the women deaths.

Medical YATRA has established working relationship with multiple sites around India.

"Cervical Cancer is PREVENTABLE; Affordable, Inexpensive Early Detection tools & System are AVAILABLE."

Ramesh Shah-Executive Director

Medical YATRA-2026 @ Indore, MP - Cervical Cancer Testing Preview

Totally 900 kits delivered to Indore -First batch 300 kits 267 tested...3 positives

-Second batch 300 kits - 243 tested... 5 positives

The 8 positive women called during Medical Yatra Robert Nursing home

for Precancerous lesion Removal by Thermal Ablation

(NO Anesthesia, NO Hospitalization, NO Toxic Drugs)

-4 women accepted and undergone treatment by Dr Stacie Jhaveri

-4 Referred to Ob/Gyn

-Third batch 300-145 tested, 0 positive and

-91 samples sent last week, still the results not out.

Since Inception: Total Women Screened 3,000.



CPR TRAINING...SAVING LIVES!



Dr. Anand Kalepu & Dhiraj Patadis were invited by various institutions in Barwani, MP to demonstrate the skills required to save a life.

Classical symptoms of Heart attack:

Chest Pain, Squeezing in the chest, Unconsciousness, Perspiration,

Radiating to Arms, Neck, Jaws, Vomiting, Shortness of Breath, Lightheadness These are ignored because of ignorance & lack of awareness. With rubber dummies, they demonstrated step-by-step procedure to perform to save the lives until help.

Institutions Visited:

- Takshita High School where Principal, Management, Teachers and well Students
- Barrwani-Police Learning Center- 100 Police officers
- Barwani Government College -200 Students. & Professors
- Court House -60 lawyers & district judge Mr. Mahendra Jain
- Vohra community -30 people with their Chief Cleric of the mosque

AIPNO Medical YATRA-Silver Jubilee-Accomplishments

1. Gujarat Earthquake-2001 in Kutch inspired AIPNO leadership to Extend their skills, talents & resources to Motherland 'Bharat Mata'.
2. Medical YATRA provided Relief in various Disasters around the World, -Earthquakes, Hurricanes, & Tsunami.
3. "Take Hospital to Patients' Doors"-Mobile Medical Vans Three in Gujarat & Three in Bangalore doing early detection of Cancer, Eye checks, & Lab tests work weekly.
4. 30,000 School Children in Guj. Getting Clean water thru Water Treatment Plants, helping them to FOCUS on studies and avoiding sickness.
5. Dialysis Centers in Ludhiana & Jalandhar P., providing relief to kidney patients daily.
6. 200,000 Sanitary Pads to Girls in 2,000 Families provides hygienic pads and prevents infections.
7. 3,000 Women screened for "Early HPV infections", to prevent Cervical Cancer. Precancerous lesions are removed by Thermal Ablation as per W.H.O. guidelines.
8. Dr. Jaya Shah was inducted in the Cleveland International Hall of Fame-2012.
9. Ramesh Shah was inducted in the Cleveland International Hall of Fame 2020.
10. In 26 yrs. Of Medical YATRA provided Medical Services & FREE medicines to more than 300,000 rural folks in India.



AIPNO Medical YATRA-Silver Jubilee-Accomplishments

11. More than 100 Physicians & 150 Volunteers have been Inspired with Selfless Services in Medical Yatra.
12. Medical YATRA has been conducted in 13 States of India.
13. Medical YATRA Physicians have also travelled Internationally to-Mexico, Honduras, Haiti, Dominic Republic, Guyana, Ecuador, Uganda, Kenya, & Burundi.
14. Medical Services provided from Primary Care to Cardiac care & Cancer Care.
15. Services provided to 'Viklang'-Physically Challenged-Hands & Legs Amputees.
16. Empowered Blinds with AI powered SMART GLASSES, making them Self Reliant & Independent.
17. Established Networking relationships with 50+ Rotary Clubs of India.
18. Gets Funding support from 10+ Foundations.
19. SURGERY: In Ludhiana P. & Gandevi, Guj, provided Surgeries-Cardiac, Cancer, Knee/Shoulders, Breast, Hernia, ALL supported by Rotary Foundation.
20. CPR Training to School Children, Police Officers, Vohra Community & Attorneys
21. DENTAL Hygiene and Fluoride Treatments to school children.
22. Established Reliable, Dependable supply chain in India for regular weekly work.
23. Created "SEVA" spirit revolution in N.E. Ohio Indian Community
24. Inspired ALL religious organization devotees to perform KARMA YOGA-SEVA-
25. Awarded Travel Scholarships to Residents & Medical Students.

What Empowerment Means to Me

By Sravanthi Vallampati

Writing on the eve of Equal Pay Day feels like an act of self-permission—an opening to name what I value and to honor the quiet, persistent voice within each of us that longs to be heard. Empowerment, I've learned, isn't always bold or sweeping; sometimes it is simply choosing rest, reclaiming joy, returning to an old hobby, or whispering, "I need a moment."

When I arrived in Cleveland as a young bride over 30 years ago, I carried not just sarees, keepsakes, and reminders of home, but the legacy of women whose strength was expressed through duty, dharma, and devotion. The lives of my grandmothers, mom, aunts, and community elders were stories I never wanted to put down; from their soft, well-worn pages I learned the shape of power, passion, and persuasion, even when they were not popular or celebrated.

Over time, what I carried with and within me aged like fine wine, deepened by the love and opportunity my new hometown offered. Within Cleveland's Indian community, empowerment revealed itself not as a slogan but as an inheritance—passed down by extraordinary women who crossed oceans, bridged cultures, held families together, and stood firm with

grace as professionals, artists, entrepreneurs, innovators, policymakers, and caretakers. Their example turned possibility into proof; their agency became our shared identity.

Today, empowerment takes many forms: choosing one's own career path, honoring tradition without being confined by it, or allowing young women who straddle Diwali and homecoming the courage to be whole without choosing between worlds. I believe at its heart, empowerment is the freedom to be fully human—to embrace the beautiful, the messy, and everything between—and to offer others the courage to do the same.

Empowerment grows through small, deliberate acts: supporting someone struggling, mentoring the uncertain, listening to a daughter with a different dream, writing to a legislator, interrupting bias, seeking an ally, daring to debate, the list can be endless. And perhaps most powerfully, it multiplies when seen—because one woman's rise becomes another's invitation. Visibility becomes a possibility. Courage becomes communal. And strength, once witnessed, quietly lifts us all.

Reset + Balance: Designing a Life That Works

By Sachin Deshpande

In many Indian homes, there is an unspoken expectation placed on women — to manage everything, hold everything together, and do it all with grace.

She plans, she adjusts, she absorbs. She keeps things moving. And somewhere in the middle of all this, a quiet question appears: "Where am I in all of this?"

We often hear that it is possible to "have it all." But very few conversations talk about what that actually takes or costs. Not because women are incapable. But because energy is limited.

Think of life like a stove with four burners: family, health, relationships, and career or personal growth. At any given time, we try to keep all four running at full flame. For a while, it works. Until it doesn't.

When everything is on high, something gives. And often, that something is the person holding it all together.

What makes this even harder is that much of what women do every day goes unnoticed. Managing emotions in the family. Keeping track of countless small details. Thinking ahead. Holding relationships together.

This is leadership. Real leadership. Just not the kind that gets recognized or named.

Over time, this invisible load becomes heavy, not just physically, but mentally and emotionally. That is where the idea of a reset becomes important. Balance is not something we achieve once and maintain forever. It keeps changing, just like our lives do. Different seasons demand different priorities.

There are times when the family needs more attention. Times when health cannot be ignored. Times when personal growth starts calling more strongly. The challenge is not that life becomes unbalanced. The challenge is that we rarely pause to notice it and adjust.

Without that pause, we slip into reacting. We keep doing what feels urgent. We delay what truly matters. A reset is simply that pause.

A moment to step back and ask:
What matters most right now?
What can wait?
What needs to change?

It does not require a dramatic overhaul. Often, small, conscious shifts are enough.

Choosing one area to focus on more deeply.
Maintaining what must continue.
Letting go of what can be temporarily lowered.
And, importantly, communicating this to others.

This is not about doing less. It is about doing what matters, with clarity.

There is also a deeper question worth asking:
If all your roles were taken away not as a loss, but as a pause — who are you?

It is not an easy question. But it is an important one. Because beneath every role — mother, professional, partner, caregiver there is an individual identity that often gets pushed aside. Resetting is also about reconnecting with that identity.

Cntd on Pg 12...



Reset + Balance: Designing a Life That Works

By Sachin Deshpande

...Cntd from Pg 11

Not to walk away from responsibilities, but to show up to them with more intention.

Reset + Balance is not a technique. It is a way of thinking.

It permits us to make choices without guilt. To accept that not everything can be prioritized at once. To recognize that different phases of life will look

different — and that is okay.

Most importantly, it reminds us that leadership is not something that begins with a title.

It is already present in the way you show up every day — in decisions, in care, in responsibility.

The real question is: Are you living by design, or by default?

2026 UH Cleveland Marathon: Call for Volunteers & Performers

Volunteers Needed!

Sewa International and Ekal Vidyalaya are looking for 40 enthusiastic volunteers to help manage a two-way water stop for an upcoming race event!

We're also looking for course entertainment including bands, cheer squads, dancers, and performers to help energize and motivate the runners along the route. Volunteer service hours available for high school and college students.

Date: May 17, Time: 6:00 AM – 10:30 AM

(Please arrive by 6:00 AM. First runner expected at 7:30 AM.)

Location: 2885 West 14th Street

Register Here: <https://forms.gle/2Ticmge62trDPrpRA>

Come be part of an energetic morning of community service, teamwork, and fun while cheering on the runners!

Shri Kalaa Mandir proudly presents “Crucible of Honor” — a powerful Ramayana

Shri Kalaa Mandir proudly presents “Crucible of Honor” — a powerful Ramayana Dance Theatre featuring our distinguished company dancers, accompanied by live musicians.

<https://www.clevelandart.org/events/crucible-honor-indian-dance-theatre-live-orchestra>

Sunday, August 2 @ 2:00 PM

Tickets are now on sale. Please book early to take advantage of discounted student ticket offers before they sell out. Your support and presence are vital in making this production a memorable success. We look forward to seeing you there with family and friends.

The Courage To Remain Calm



Most of us have come across many such situations in life wherein the question of Tolerance comes up, and we are required to make a choice of whether to tolerate or retaliate. If, for example, a person who has no control over his tongue or is uncultured, impolite, short-tempered, and ill-mannered, and talks in an offensive or insulting language or behaves rudely and roughly with us, then what would we do? Well, a cultured and spiritualised person, under such a situation, would choose to tolerate, because he knows very

well that when tolerance is lost, temper is also lost, and the loss of both means the loss of mental balance. Hence, in such a situation, one should not feel hurt, injured, or mauled and should not think of revenge. Instead, one should pity such a person and give him vibrations of peace to recover from his temper. This kind of approach or attitude would enable one to remain calm, composed, and dignified. Tolerance, in such provocative situations, is a Value that saves one's life. And tolerance, joined by humility, has great value even as a matter of policy, strategy, or tactic. So, if one loses Tolerance in such hot situations even for a moment, one may even have to lose one's life or face a still more complicated situation, fraught with grave consequences and unpredictable repercussions. Looking at it from this angle, one can say that tolerance is not only a high-class virtue and moral value, but it is a non-violent strategy for self-defence and survival, and a weapon for victory. Remember! Our tolerance and Humility can melt or mellow the minds of our bitter critics and opponents while it enables us to be in the state of peace. It creates harmony in the course of time, and even the most arrogant person, at some point in time, expresses appreciation of our amazing tolerance in the face of grave aggravation. Along with this, we should also learn to forget and forgive some lapses and shortcomings of others in the spirit of friendliness or brotherhood, or else we cannot have goodwill, amity, and co-operation and peace.

Most of the people ask this question: how long should we allow our

By Rajyogi Brahma Kumar Nikunj Ji

tormentor to continue with his cruel acts, his nefarious designs, and his dirty ways? If we do so, wouldn't it mean our silent consent to his acts of depriving those who deserve justice? Also, it would mean our connivance

in his acts of punishing those who are not at fault? Isn't it a kind of self-imposed servitude, servility, and slavery? The answer is that we must put forth our moral resistance. We must make our disapproval manifest through our non-cooperation in such acts. Better still, we must use our skill of persuasion at the proper moments. We must make efforts to enable this man of blinded intellect to see the real nature of his act, the attendant evils, and the following consequences. We must have the spiritual power to change his heart, to transform him from being stone-hearted. We must try to give a healing touch to this mentally and morally sick person. We must pity him rather than lose our own moral sense and react with a feeling of rancour and vengeance. That would be our tolerance.

But the question that ultimately comes up is whether we have that spiritual power to transform a sinner into a saint? For that, we must check up on our stock of spirituality and fill ourselves with the power again through Yoga-Mediation as one would recharge one's battery with the help of a dynamo. With our high spiritual power, we can use tolerance as a tool of social transformation and can be God's instruments for uplifting a man, fallen from his seat of morality. So, let us all strive to develop this virtue and create a world where love, compassion, and harmony triumph over anger, hatred, and division.

nikunjji@gmail.com

www.brahmakumaris.com

Nikunjji is a spiritual educator and popular columnist for publications across India, Nepal & UK. Till Date, 9000+ Published Columns have been written by Him

Crucible of Honor Indian Dance Theatre with Live Orchestra



AUGUST 2, 2026 | 2:00 P.M.
Suzanne and Paul Westlake Performing
Arts Center | Gartner Auditorium



Colors of Culture Come Alive on Fox 8's Kickin' It With Kenny

By Santosh Bhandari



Recently, Nirali Shah from Akron Henna Art was invited by Kenny Crumpton from the Kicking It With Kenny segment on Fox 8 Cleveland to create a live Rangoli, and

Kenny shared that, being from the West Coast, he had seen Rangoli in many different places over the years and was always curious about it. He genuinely wanted to learn more about the tradition, its meaning, and why it holds such cultural significance.

Rangoli is a traditional Indian art form, especially practiced across many parts of India, created to welcome positivity, good energy, and blessings while removing negativity. In many Indian homes, mornings begin by cleaning the entrance and creating Rangoli using chalk, colored powder, sand, rice, or flowers.

It is also considered auspicious to create Rangoli during festivals and celebrations such as Diwali, Holi, Makar Sankranti, and many other special occasions.



she graciously extended the invitation to a few of us from the community. Ananya Somwanshi, Tejashri Newaskar, Deepa Rao & Santosh Bhandari joined Nirali on the set.

Together, we spent almost nine hours creating a huge, beautiful Rangoli using colored sand. Being at Fox 8 with Kenny and his crew was truly an amazing experience. Everyone who walked in was so warm, welcoming, and genuinely curious to learn what we were creating and the meaning behind it.

Grateful to have been part of such a beautiful cultural moment and to share this tradition with the Fox 8 Cleveland community.

BAPS Cleveland Celebrates Divine Birth Anniversaries

By Nisha Jain

A Vibrant Celebration Honoring Bhagwan Swaminarayan and Bhagwan Ram

In March, devotees of BAPS Cleveland gathered for a vibrant cultural program to celebrate Shri Swaminarayan Jayanti and Shri Ram Navami. The event reflected a deep sense of devotion and unity, honoring the birth anniversaries of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and Bhagwan Ram through spiritual traditions such as singing, dancing, and storytelling.

The air was filled with divine harmony as the kirtan team, consisting of children and adult devotees, led the assembly in bhajans, highlighting the love God showers upon His devotees. The program also addressed contemporary life through the lens of spiritual values:

Parent-Child Relationships: A skit highlighted the struggles in current generation relationships, encouraging parents and children to be honest, open, and non-judgmental, much like the values exemplified by Bhagwan Ram.

Partnership and Communication: Two women shared daily struggles and drew inspiration from the lives of Sitaji and Urmila. The discussion emphasized that marriage is "you and I versus the problem" rather than "you versus me," encouraging partners to communicate intentions clearly

and invest in patience.

The celebration then took an energetic turn with dances performed by devotees of all ages. The program concluded with a focus on the continued tradition of love and care seen through the actions of Mahant Swami Maharaj. Guidance was shared regarding living a life of understanding, devotion, and unity.

The community is now looking forward to taking part in the spirit of service walk supporting our community, which is scheduled for June 6th at 10 am at Upper Edgewater Park in Cleveland. The walk will support BAPS Charities' 5 key initiatives in health awareness, educational services, humanitarian relief, environmental protection, and community empowerment. Aligning with its community-focused initiatives, the local beneficiary of the walkathon is the Brunswick Police Department. For over 25 years, the City of Brunswick has proudly been the home of the BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir, and the local police and fire department have worked together to ensure a safe and secure environment for everyone.

You can learn more about the walk and register at the following link: <https://walk2026.na.bapscharities.org/event/baps-charities-walk-or-run-2026-cleveland-oh/e743599>.



Ink: Chirpy Penguin

Markers: Portals

Artist:

Viaan Bhandari

Age: 12 years



ART CORNER





Daasa Vaibhava celebrations in northeast Ohio

By Naveen Uli

The Kannada-speaking Indian diaspora has carried the Daasa Sahitya tradition across the globe to the places they call home, including major cities in the USA. In Cleveland, the Daasa Vaibhava festival was conceptualized by Dr. Naveen Uli and first celebrated in 2017 under the auspices of the Kasturi Kannada Sangha. In the initial years, this was held in conjunction with the Ganesha Pooja festivities in August or September of every year, except for 2 years during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers and students of Carnatic classical music across the northeast presented compositions of various daasas over 2-3 hours.

To time the musical celebration closer to Purandara Daasa Aradhana, the Daasa Vaibhava program was presented as a standalone event this year on March 07 at The Cultural Arts Center at Disciples Church, Cleveland Heights, from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM. A unique aspect of this year's program was that students of classical dance teachers in the Bharatha Natyam and Kuchipudi styles also presented dance performances of these compositions.

The program began with a group musical performance of basic compositions called geethams in raga Malahari by beginner students from multiple schools. Students of Guru Chandrika Gopal then presented excellent renditions of Devaki Kanda Mukunda (Purandara Daasa), Kangalivyatako (Sripaadaarayaru), and Raagi Thandeera (Purandara Daasa). Students of Guru Lalit Subramanian (Madhuralaya School of Music) presented the compositions Jaya Jaanaki Kaantha (Purandara Daasa) and Raaghavendra Guru (Vijaya Daasa) with clarity, harmony, and energy. Guru Shruti Aring then presented a very soothing violin performance with her student and son, Sujith Aring: Sakala Graha Bala Neene and Raama Raama (both by Purandara Daasa).

Guru Lalit Subramanian then presented a very informative lecture-demonstration program, narrating the origins of the Daasa tradition from Narahari Teertha through Sripaadaarayaru, Vyaasa Teertha, Purandara Daasa, and Kanaka Daasa. The illustrative music performances by Guru Lalit Iyer and his advanced students were exceptional in their originality and improvisational aspects. The music program concluded with a collaborative presentation of Bhaagyada Lakshmi Baamma, a traditional benedictory composition of Purandara Daasa, by students from many schools.

The music programs benefited immensely from the accompanists. Medha Lalit Iyer provided able accompaniment on the violin. Dr. Ajay Ravichandran's supportive accompaniment on the mridangam enhanced

the aesthetics of all presentations.

Students of Guru Kalyani Veturi (Sree Mayuri Dance Academy) kicked off the dance program with an eye-catching Kuchipudi performance of Gajavadana Beduve (Purandara Daasa). Students of Guru Sudha Totapally (Nartanam Dance Academy) performed next, with a soulful presentation of Baaro Krishnayya (Kanaka Daasa) in the Kuchipudi style. Students of Guru Sujatha Srinivasan (Shri Kalaa Mandir) then presented 2 compositions of Purandara Daasa in Bharatha Natyam style. First came an exhilarating group performance of Jaya Jaanaki Ramana (Thodaya Mangalam). Her senior student, Sweta Balaji, then gave a stellar performance of Chandra Chooda Shiva Shankara. Students of Guru Shoba Narayan (Nriyita Gitanjali School of Dance and Music) then put on a splendid Bharatha Natyam performance of Aadidano Ranga (Purandara Daasa). Students of Guru Sudha Totapally (Nartanam Dance Academy) concluded the evening with a serene Kuchipudi performance of Pankaja Mukhi, a Dasaavataaram keertana composed by Purandara Daasa, featuring the 10 avatars of Lord Vishnu.

The 240-plus audience was very supportive throughout, enjoying all the programs and enchanted by the quality of the performances. What stood out in the evening's festivities was the commitment of the teachers and students alike to carry on the rich traditions of South Indian classical music and dance forms thousands of miles away from India and present them with high fidelity and quality. The collaborative efforts of the teachers to combine their beginner students and train them to present a unified performance were a commendable but formidable challenge, which they all executed in an exceptional manner.

Dr. Naveen Uli coordinated the event.

Mrs. Mahima Rao ably compared the evening's program, providing helpful context to the composers and compositions being presented, holding the presenters to the times allotted, and the audience respected the artists on stage.

Teachers were felicitated on the stage by Dr. Lokesh Venkateshaiah, president of Kasturi Kannada Sangha, and Dr. Naveen Uli.

Many office bearers of the Kasturi Kannada Sangha executive committee silently contributed behind the scenes, executing the many tasks necessary to pull off the event without a glitch.

The evening ended with a boxed dinner for all participants and members of the audience.

Cleveland Asian Festival



The 17th Annual Cleveland Asian Festival returns May 16-17, bringing a vibrant weekend of culture, food, and entertainment to the community. The festival website is now fully updated with the current performance schedule and a strong lineup of over 140 merchandise, informational, and food vendors, offering everything from authentic Asian cuisine to cultural crafts and community resources. Attendees can also visit the Health Pavilion inside Asia Plaza for free screenings and wellness resources.

This year's festival features two packed performance spaces: the Jack Entertainment Stage and the Cleveland Foundation Stage, both showcasing a full slate of live entertainment, cultural performances, and demonstrations. A standout addition is the newly founded Silk Road Cultural Collective, presenting an immersive showcase of Tang and Ming dynasty real armor and beautiful Hanfu, bringing Asian history and heritage to life in a powerful, interactive way.

Festival goers can also enjoy popular competition activities including the Egg Roll Speed Eating Contest, Asian-themed cosplay, trivia, and the Colors of Asia

Fashion Show. Volunteers are still needed to help make the festival a success, and anyone interested is encouraged to get involved in one of Cleveland's most anticipated cultural celebrations. Check out Cleveland Asian Festival website for more information.



Thank you for your endless love,
care and sacrifices.
You make the world
a better place.

Team FICA

The 16th Annual Cleveland International Hall of Fame (CIHF)

By Dan Hanson



The 16th annual Cleveland International Hall of Fame (CIHF) induction ceremony was a sold-out affair held on April 21, 2026, at Windows on the River. The Indian community was well represented, with FICA serving as a Silver Sponsor and the Bengali Cultural Society hosting a table. The Indian community is tied for the most inductees in the Cleveland International Hall of Fame, dating back to the inaugural class in 2010, when the late Paramjit Singh was inducted.

annually to one man and one woman who do not seek the limelight but are always there, willing and able to help in any way possible with their community. That is a perfect description of Anjan Ghose.



You can see photos and video of Anjan and the entire ceremony at <https://clevelandinternationalhalloffame.com/anjan-ghose/>

Previous inductees Mona Alag and Sudarshan Sathe were in attendance at the event.

The 2027 CIHF inductions will be held on April 20, 2027. Nominations may be made at any time via the website at <https://clevelandinternationalhalloffame.com/nominate-somone/> which also explains the criteria for selection.

When CIHF co-founder Dan Hanson recognized FICA during his welcoming remarks, he mentioned the numerous Indian cultural events (Deepavali, Republic Day, Independence Day, Holi, etc.) that FICA produces each year. He added that what impressed him most were the many community service projects of FICA, such as Project Seva, Shiksha Daan, Helping Hands, and the India Cultural Garden.

Each year, about 100 people are nominated. Those names are sent to previous inductees, who then narrow down the list.



It was a special night because the past-president of FICA, Anjan Ghose was honored with a special award. He was honored with the inaugural Debbie Hanson Forever Young award. Debbie was the co-founder of the CIHF, and her health issues began in her 50s, so her passing in 2025 was too early, and hence she will remain Forever Young. This award will be given

Congratulations to Anjan Ghose and the Indian community.

Mango Rasam – sweet, tangy & soul-warming

By Sushma Lohit



- Salt to taste
- Small piece of jaggery
- Water as needed
- Fresh coriander leaves for garnish

Method:

Boil the mango in water for 5 mins. Grind it along with rasam powder using the same water. Heat oil, add mustard seeds, hing & curry leaves. Pour in the ground mixture and cook for 5 mins until the raw smell disappears. Add water as needed for the desired consistency. Add jaggery & salt to taste. Let it simmer. Finish with fresh coriander leaves. Perfect with hot rice or to sip on a cozy day!

A beautiful balance of tangy and gentle sweetness from ripe mango... light, comforting, and full of flavor

- Ingredients:
- ½ mango (not too raw, slightly ripe)
 - 1 tsp oil
 - ½ tsp mustard seeds
 - A pinch of hing
 - Curry leaves
 - 1-2 tbsp rasam powder

HAPPY
Mother's Day ♥

HOME IS WHERE
MOM'S LOVE LIVES.

♥

This Mother's Day, celebrate the one who made every house feel like home.

Looking for a bigger space for growing memories, downsizing into comfort, or investing in your family's future—
I'm here to guide you every step of the way.

♥

Let's make your next move as special as Mom.

Sell Smart. Buy Brilliant
WITH SAN.

SANTOSH BHANDARI
440-360-0927

BUYING
MADE EASY

SELLING
MADE SMART

CLIENT FOCUSED
ALWAYS

INTEGRITY. TRUST.
RESULTS.

YOUR TRUST. MY PROMISE. YOUR HOME. OUR MISSION.

JOKE CORNER

Q. WHAT DID THE MOM SPIDER SAY TO HER BABY SPIDER?
A. STOP SPENDING SO MUCH TIME ON THE WEB



WEDDING *and* CORPORATE *Catering experts*

INDIAN CUISINE CATERING



Chef-driven Indian catering delivered with precision, consistency, and refined service. From planning to execution, we manage the details so you can host with confidence.



MODERN PLATED

Curated Dining Experiences

Modern plated dining and refined passed bites for elevated celebrations.



CLASSIC INDIAN

Grand Wedding Buffets

Traditional favorites served in abundant, beautifully presented spreads.



SOCIAL GATHERING

Effortless Party Catering

Bold Indian flavors and party trays designed for effortless hosting.



info@safarcl.com



11526 Clifton Blvd,
Cleveland, 44102



**NOW BOOKING 2026
WEDDINGS & EVENTS**

(216) 860-0040