

India Cultural Association of Central Iowa



Celebrating Thirty Years

**Bridging Cultures - Building Community
(since 1992)**



Hosting Community Events since 1992



1995



2018



1993



1994



1995



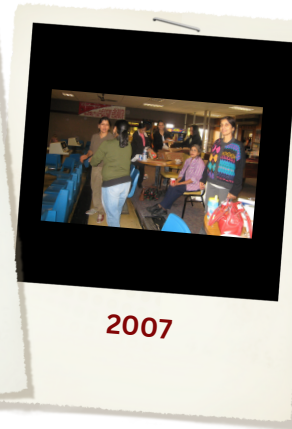
1999



Early ICA Years



Early ICA Years



2007



2000



2002



2018



2002



ICA - 2nd Generation



2005



Early ICA Years



Early ICA Years



Early ICA Years



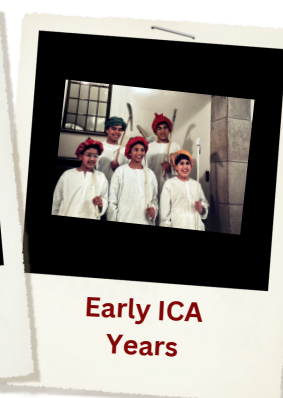
2018



Early ICA Years



2002



Early ICA Years



1990



1992-93

ICA Sanskriti: The Beginning by Madhu Gadia

Sanskriti was India Cultural Association's wing for children, started in 1991. The initial ICA organizers recruited Rani Athreya, Madhu Gadia, and Rema Nilakanta as the first Sanskriti coordinators to envision and establish the program.



From L - R :
Madhu Gadia &
Jayati Mitra
with Sanskriti
Kids

Rema, Rani, and I made sure we adhered to ICA principles of secularism and inclusion. What could we do in two hours? What was meaningful to the children, and what would hold their attention? The goal was to expose them to the culture of India through storytelling, music, art, history, festival celebrations, and games in a fun experiential way. We set up a simple format; 40 minutes of one program, 40 minutes for snacks and Indian games, and 40 minutes for the 2nd topic, and we met on the last Sunday of each month. There was just one requirement; children must be 5+ years old and independent. The parents were very cooperative with drop off, pick up, and providing snacks.

We were about 30-35 Indian families in Ames, and most of us became ICA members. ICA was and is a family organization. Most of the ICA children participated in Sanskriti. The children and parents were equally enthusiastic about Sanskriti, and most children participated until about 15-16 years of age. We typically divided them into two groups, 5-10-year-old and 11+-year-olds. Typically, the coordinators presented one of the programs, and we often had outside speakers for the second half.

We had an amazing slate of programs presented by numerous local experts, such as ISU students, parents, or outside guests. Along with participating in Talent Night and other ICA events, Sanskriti organized the Annual picnic in which the parents and children participated in competitive games from the 100-meter dash to tug of war. Everyone had a blast and won ribbons, to boot.

The children loved it; the fact that they kept coming every Sunday and year after year says it all. Rani, Rema, and I, as coordinators, also thoroughly enjoyed it. I think we had fun learning as much as the kids. Sanskriti gave children a sense of community, which they talk about even today.

Dipayan Mitra says: "Sanskriti offered me a wealth of experience. Aside from the various projects about India's agriculture, fashion, and arts, we performed plays and dances that brought a little piece of India to countless Ames community events over the years. With that being said, the lifelong friendships were the most significant impact Sanskriti has had on me. The bonds created between myself, my peers and their families are truly something special."

Haema Nilakanta says: "When I think of Sanskriti, I think of being with my friends and community, participating in plays, and learning about India in a fun way. Later, I realized Sanskriti was my initiation into the diversity of India."

Rema Nilakanta adds: "Sanskriti was a lot of fun. We got to create programs from scratch. I got to work with two dedicated and creative friends, Madhu Gadia and Rani Athreya. It gave us a chance to relive our own childhood as we designed the curriculum. We selected games and activities we participated in, as kids. But, the best part was when the kids took the lead and created short skits on their own Indian experiences. We had come full circle!"

ICA Executive Committee 2022-23



From R - L: Anjani Jha (Secretary), Soma Chaudhuri (Treasurer), Rama Sridhar (Member at large), Manusmriti Agnihotri (President), Nappinnai Rajagopalan (Member at large), Indira Reddy (Vice President), Ajay Nair (Member at large).



It has been a great journey so far! Team ICA Feels proud to accomplish their goals together while making fun memories.

Three Generations with ICA

By Jayati Mitra

Our family embraced the idea of the formation of ICA and the valuable role of an organization like ICA for ourselves, our children, and the community. In this forum, we were able to share with the community, our unique Indian heritage in the cultural, culinary, intellectual, and social realms. I reflect and reminisce about the opportunity we had, for the last thirty years, in belonging to this extended ICA family.

Ambar and I have been part of multiple ICA committees where we served in various roles. Despite ICA's limited financial resources, we believed in showcasing renowned Indian maestros for our community. Grants were written and we walked door to door for sponsorships from our business contacts. This was well before social media became part of our daily lives! We posted fliers all over town to spread the word and emailed neighboring communities to build our audience. Over the years, ICA committees were able to organize highly acclaimed programs by many Indian maestros like Late Pandit Birju Maharaj, Late Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Pandit Zakir Hussain, beautiful dance performances by Nrityagram, Mamata Shankar and troupe, a magical solo Bharatanatyam performance by Ms. Alarmel Valli and so much more. A proud moment for our family was when my daughter Ujjaini accompanied Late Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia on the tanpura. We also hosted some fabulous talent grown right here in the USA. During my tenure as the ICA Secretary, we hosted the impressive band Karyshma. The members of the band were students at MIT and Harvard. A March concert was scheduled. Mother nature threw in a curve ball, as she often does here in Iowa, with a severe snowstorm! Fortunately, the storm subsided, the artists arrived as scheduled, and it was a rocking concert with almost 200 people in the Ames City Hall auditorium.

The Talent Night provided us with a stage to showcase our very own members' – both adults and children - talents. We proudly prepared and presented many group song programs, multi-lingual as well as thematic compositions like 'Mile Sur Mera Tumhara' and 'Meghdoot' with poetry and prose readings, and background with relevant slides. Our children, Ujjaini and Dipayan, danced, played popular Bollywood songs on the violin, and participated in plays during Talent nights with their friends. The all-men skit "The Tiger and the Brahmin" and the murder-mystery play "Sorry

Wrong Number" directed by Ambar resonated with our audience.

As a Sanskriti coordinator, I got to know and work with our amazing children. We had the age spread from 5 years to high school-age kids. We read stories, invited ISU students to talk about our cultural diversity and heritage, demonstrated and taught kids to tie the turban, and so on. Our children worked on a serious book project, "The Glimpses of India". The topics covered were: History, Geography, Art & Architecture, Music and Dance, and Poetry & Literature. Each team had a high school student as the team leader. We had two volumes with writings and illustrations by the children, an impressive outcome. At the end of the project, we celebrated an event where the children presented their work to their parents. The Ramayana play performance directed by Professor Krishna Vedula was also a highlight during our tenure in Sanskriti. From stage decoration, costumes, drawing, and coloring monkey masks, to make-up, it was a project where the adults and kids participated with gusto.

We have the privilege of having **granddaughter Launa** a part of the ICA community. Launa attended Sanskriti, enjoyed stories, filled Christmas goodie bags for donation, sang, danced, and played the violin with her friends in the Talent Nights. Launa says " Sanskriti was a fun and knowledgeable experience. I enjoyed learning about India. The dances were so fun, a very good experience". We look forward to the continuing evolution of ICA under the next generation. Cheers and our best wishes for the next thirty years!

Ujjaini MitraShah (Jayati & Ambar's Daughter) adds:
" I have very fond memories from my childhood of the ICA organization. It was a wonderful space to connect with the Indian community and friends as well as Indian culture in the 90s. My favorite memories from the community events were the ICA talent shows, performing dances and instrumental music to Indian classical songs and Bollywood hits with my friends, as well as Ames Public Library cultural showcases. My favorite cultural events were the performance by a famous Odissi dance troupe and the beautiful flute music of Hariprasad Chaurasia. The ICA organization is a very important part of the Indian community in Ames, for both legacy and new families. I'm so happy to see it thriving for 30 years and hope it will continue for more decades in the future."

ICA Annual Membership Drive



Our Annual Membership Drive event was well attended! We appreciate our members/sponsors for their continued support! Thankful for our volunteers, without their help we could not have done it. Punk Punditz, ISU Music Band, was the highlight of the event. Their performance followed the theme of our 30-Year Celebration of ICA.

ICA Holiday Party



ICA Holiday Party was a great kickoff to the Holiday Season! Holiday-themed decorations, dress-up, food and to top it (all) off, there was BINGO! We continued our 30-year celebration. Sreeparna Mitra and Rana Biswas shared stories from the past on how the ICA committee managed to bring artists to Ames during challenging weather and pre-social media era!

ICA Mela: A Celebration of India's Diversity



Thanks to Discover Ames for supporting our event through a community grant. ICA Mela was a HUGE success. Despite of the bad weather, around 160 people showed up and enjoyed learning about India's diverse culture through booths, and cultural performances. Thanks to Neha, Kavita, Sandhya, Indira, Shreya, Sudhalaya School of Dance, Harsha, Abhinav, Madhyami, Hrutvi, Rayansh, Sirisha, Anindita, and Sia for their wonderful contributions through booths, and performances! We appreciate all of you.

Upcoming Events

**AN OPEN
EVENT FOR
ALL, WITH
ENGLISH
SUBTITLES!**

**CHAI &
SAMOSA
WILL BE
SERVED!**

**THANKS TO
COTA
BOARD OF**

**CITY OF
AMES FOR
THEIR**

**SUPPORT
THROUGH
A GRANT.**



**Hum Honge Kaamyaab: February 25, 2023
@ Ames City Auditorium, 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm**

**• ICA Talent Nite: April 2, 2023
@ Ames City Auditorium, 4 pm – 7:30 pm**

**• Chai tunes: May 7, 2023
@Ames City Auditorium, 5 pm – 7 pm**

Kid's Corner

FIFA World Cup, 2022 **By: Rayansh Das - 3rd Grade**

I started playing soccer when I was 6 years old. I joined the Ames soccer club and looked forward to going for practice twice every week and for a game with another club team over the weekend. I played as a defender, and then as a midfielder and forward. I have learned a lot from playing soccer in how I can get better at something by practicing it regularly. The recently held FIFA World Cup was a very exciting moment for me to watch the best players in the world play with each other. I want to share all about the tournament and especially the final game.

The World cup is hosted by FIFA, once every four years. The top 32 teams from around the world come together to play in groups first and then 8 teams advance to the quarter final, 4 teams to the semifinal, and the top two teams play in the final game. The 2022 FIFA world cup was held in Qatar, which is a country in the middle east. They built 8 stadiums in different locations where a total of 64 games were played. All the stadiums looked very beautiful.

The first shock of the World cup happened when Argentina lost to Saudi Arabia. My favorite player, Lionel Messi became very sad. But he wanted to show to the world that he was a champion and player very well in the rest of the games and helped Argentina reach the final. I am also a big fan of the France national team, and Kylian Mbappe is also one of my favorite players. Mbappe won the world cup in 2018 and scored one goal in the final. he became the second teenager after Pele to score a goal in a World cup final match. He also played very well in 2022 and helped France reach the final, again. I also liked that Morocco, a small country beat Portugal who had their star player Cristiano Ronaldo in the team. I also like how the goal keepers played a big role in the game. I usually thought that goalies were not very important, but that changed after watching the World cup.

I was excited for the FIFA world cup final! I was rooting for Argentina because it was Leo Messi's last time playing international soccer. I felt very proud watching the Argentina and France teams walk out to the field and their country's national anthem played. For Argentina, Messi scored in the 23rd minute and Di Maria scored in the 36th minute. I thought Argentina would win the final. But Mbappe scored twice in the second half to tie the game. I thought anything was now possible. In the extra time, Messi and Mbappe scored again to end the game tied at 3-3. Argentina won in the penalty shootout. I was very happy for Messi as he held the world cup in his final game playing for Argentina.

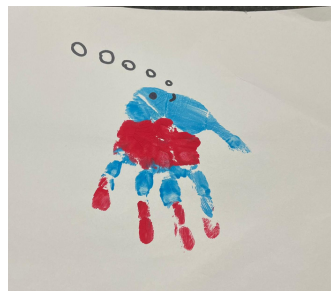
I love soccer even more now. It makes people all over the world so happy. I keep trying to be better. I love how practicing makes me do new things on the field. I love my teammates and how well we play together. Playing soccer in a team shows that everyone is important. Playing the matches with other clubs, I learn how well others are trying to play and that means I need to try harder. Hope you enjoyed reading my story.

A Magical Journey **By: Parvati Ajay - 3rd Grade**

This story starts in a library, a magical library where creatures come alive and out of books. One day, a magical BLAST teleported three creatures; a dinosaur named Fiona, a mermaid named Charlotte, and a dragon named Rex. Their journey took them to an island. Fiona, a Troodon and the smartest one said, 'Look, we have got to find our way back home'. Charlotte and Rex agreed, and they decided to get help from their families. Rex flew them and they made stops to the three lands, the Land of Merpeople, the Land of Dragons, and the Land of Dinosaurs. 'Yay!' Charlotte exclaimed as the land of merpeople came into view. They were greeted by Charlotte's large family of nine sisters and five brothers. Charlotte's dad gifted them with newly made magical pearl bracelets which shimmered beautifully. He said, 'In your darkest hour these bracelets will save you'.

Rex cheered 'Land of Dragons!', as they flew to the next stop. Fiona and Charlotte met Rex's family, who invited them to eat the smores they had just made from dragon fire. As they ate, they heard a low rumble from the land of dinosaurs. Fiona jumped up and cried, 'My family is in danger, we have to go right away!'. They witnessed a catastrophe in the land of dinosaurs. It was a meteor heading straight for Fiona's den! This seemed like the darkest hour of their lives. Charlotte quickly reminded them about the magical bracelets, and they immediately put their hands together and said in unison, 'Magical bracelet, let your magic shine and make the meteor melt away'. The meteor melted like it was ice. As the meteor melted, a key and a map popped out of it and flew into Fiona's claws. The three of them squealed with excitement, 'Look it is our library keys and this map shows us the way home!' They flew back to the library and entered their book just in time for the customers to come and check it out.

A Palm Fish **By: Anika Jha - Preschool**



An Umbrella **By: Arnav Jha - Preschool**



Capitol Building **By: Shaila Chouhan - 1st Grade**



Indian Village **By: Parvati Ajay - 3rd Grade**



The Lonely Pirate **By: Aarna Agnihotri - 1st Grade**



Community Outreach



Ames Community Arts Council Director, Jennifer Brockpahler attended ICA Mela event with her team! We were glad to help them collecting surveys on Arts & Economic Prosperity Study (AEP6). To learn more about this study, click on QR code.



Thanks to Discover Ames for hosting ICA along with other local non-profit organizations, at their First Look Reveal party! It was an astonishing event. We loved being part of it.



~Giving Back to the local community~
A group of volunteers from ICA contributed to Mid Winter Food Drive organized by Home Allies, Inc. The food drive yielded 2500 meals for seven local food pantries!



Thank you very much to all who contributed to our **Ethnic Clothing Donation Drive!** The first set of donations are received by Refugee Alliance of Central Iowa (RACI) based in Des Moines area.

In the picture with Rama Sridhar is Stephanie Moris, Director of RACI and a part of donations we received :). The rest of the donations will be given to local organizations in Ames!!



ICA Knitting Club is off to a great start! Anjana Kanwar's kind & giving heart is our inspiration behind starting this club. She is an avid knitter and as stories unfolded during our first meeting, everyone in the town has something knitted by her. So, we all posed wearing hats knitted by her, in the picture on the right. She is very patient with us novices and we are planning to knit hats as our first project. ICA will donate those hats to the local hospitals. **Big Shout out to Anjana! We need more people like her in this world!!**

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY AND GIVE BACK, PLEASE JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER GROUP!
IF YOU ARE A KNITTER, A GARDENER, OR JUST LOOKING FOR SOME FUN COMPANY, PLEASE JOIN OUR KNITTING GROUP OR SOON-TO-BE STARTING A GARDENING GROUP. PLEASE EMAIL MANU AT MANU@ICA.IOWA.ORG WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS!

Thank you to **Heroic Hair** & Chai tunes for their support through donations!

A Big shout out to Deb at Nite Owl Printing for providing us with the BEST quality and service over the years!

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Celebrating Thirty Years

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Follow us on FB @IcaAmes, or on Instagram @ica_ames or on BOTH!:)

**Please share your suggestions and contributions with us
at contactus@icaiowa.org**

Thank you to the City of Ames - Commission on the Arts and
Discover Ames for their continued support through their grants.



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COMMISSION ON THE ARTS

