

ICA Newsletter



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Pictures from ICA Talent Nite 2026: Top left: A celebration in Dance was a heartfelt tribute to Tagore's vision of a world illuminated by bliss, unity, and divine beauty. Performers (from L to R): Jayati Mitra, Soma Mitra, Debolina Roy, Twinkle Pandit, Sreeparna Mitra and Mandira Chandra. Top Right: Rushwika's performance was a tribute to art, discipline, and the beauty of discovering one's true calling. Bottom left: Divija Roy (left) and Ridhima Das (right) showcased the vibrant cultural harmony of tribal and regional folk traditions. Bottom Right: Classical Fusion Dance performance by Kavita (left) and Kria (right) includes the dance steps of traditional Kuchipudi combined with a high energy music score. Pictures credit: Piyush Jaware



Top row left: (L to R) Ajita Rajput, Shubaktiga Bhar, Shaila Chouhan, Rashi Chouhan, Aarubi Sharma (all standing) Parvati Ajay and Divija Roy (sitting in front) danced with lamps to mark a joyous occasion. Middle: Reyna Sharma, Shaila Chouhan, Rashi Chouhan, Ajita Rajput and Aarya Devrajani brought the most foot tapping Bollywood hits from 2025. Right: The two siblings Angelia and Mivaan sang together to express the true spirit of companionship. Middle row left: Moksha Nelli, Aarya Devrajani, and Anya Basak (L to R) put up a teamwork to share their passion of music. Middle: Madan Manaval, a cute and spirited 7-year-old, showed his obsession with music and singing. Right: Soma and Sharvil the mom-son duo presented Tagore Song Fusion with Sargam. Bottom row from L to R: Aishwarya through her performance captured the spirit and freshness of rain. Vishnu Ajay and Ajay Nair, the dynamic dad-son dancing duo is known for their style and swag. Raji welcomed the season of spring and love with her music. Bihaan performed Do Re Mi from "Sound of Music". Vijay and Padmavati added vocals to Rushwika's dance steps as described earlier. Pictures courtesy: Piyush Jaware

ICA History – by Ambar Mitra

One ICA Executive Committee member has asked me to write about the history of ICA. I will do my best from my memory with apologies for errors and omissions.

I came to Ames in 1984 with my wife, Jayati Mitra, and my children, Ujjaini and Dipayan. At that time, the only event connected to Indian culture was the Diwali festival arranged by the India Student's Association at the Great Hall of the Memorial Union—a few non-student talents from the community performed at that event.

From the beginning of the 1990's, we often discussed the launching of an Indian Association at social gatherings. On a summer afternoon in 1992, about thirty families assembled and formed ICA. This assembly, by voice vote, selected the first Executive Committee and set the membership dues at \$35 per family per year. Members in the first Executive Committee were Late Krishna Athreya, Sanjeev Agarwal, Vinay Dayal, Late Nani Ghoshal, Ambar Mitra, Sridhar Ramaswamy, and Sunanda Vittal. This committee continued for two years for continuity.

The Late Prof. Krishna Athreya was the driving force behind ICA. Without his vision and leadership, ICA wouldn't have existed. Sanjeev Agarwal filed the paperwork for the 501c(3) filing, and Shashi Gadia wrote the Bylaws and the Constitution.

In the first membership drive in the Fall of 1992, about forty families signed up, and ICA started with a bank balance of about \$1500. The financial strategy of ICA was revenue equals expense, with a minimal balance forward. Often, the projected expense was larger than the revenue, and the Executive Committee members tirelessly solicited membership and sponsorship.

The first ICA program was in the Fall of 1992, where Ulhas Bapat performed on the Santoor at the Carver Hall auditorium. Over the years, this program was followed by instrumentalists, such as Hariprasad Chaurasia (flute), Shivkumar Sharma (santoor), Zakir Hussain (percussion), Vishwa Mohan Bhatt (guitar), Shahid Parvez (sitar), etc. We were fortunate to hear vocalists such as Rashid Khan, Rajan and Sajjan Misra, Jagjeet Singh, etc. Dance performers who have performed under the banner of ICA were Alarmel Valli (Bharatnatyam), Birju Maharaj (Kathak), Nritya Gram group (Odissi), Vempati Chinna Satyam and his group (Kuchipudi).

Sanskriti (the Sunday school) was an integral part of ICA activities and the educational part in ICA's 501c(3) application. Children ranging from elementary to high school participated in Sanskriti. Two projects that Sanskriti children completed with distinction were: (i) geography, architecture, religion, and festivals of India, and (ii) states of India, depicting the cultural diversity in India. Two plays staged by Sanskriti children were: (i) an hour-long Ramayana where children of all ages performed, and (ii) a short play on Vikramaditya from Vetala Panchabingshathi (25 stories of Vetala).

For many years, my wife Jayati and I served ICA in various capacities. Our children participated in Sanskriti and Talent Night, even when they were in college. In an unforgettable experience, my daughter, Ujjaini, accompanied Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia on the Tanpura in a recital at the Ames City Hall. Our family is deeply embedded in the Indian culture, and ICA laid the foundation for our children.

Meet the ICA executive committee



“Music, dance, and local talent are powerful forces that strengthen community bonds, foster cultural pride, and create shared experiences that unite people across ages, backgrounds, and cultures. We are thrilled to witness such richness of talents in our community and look forward to experiencing the continued enthusiasm of participation among our members and showcase of their talents.”

- ICA executive team.

ICA Executive Committee (2025-2026): From right to left, Vijay Kalivarapu (President), Sanjay Thangavel (Board Member), Poonam Dubey (Vice President), Meera Vaswani (Board Member), Soma Banerjee (Secretary), Santosh Rajput (Board Member), and Asha Neeraj Singh (Treasurer). Picture courtesy: Piyush Jaware.



Madhu Gadia, one of ICA's founding members gave a speech at ICA Talent Nite 2026, where she took a brief walk down the memory lane of ICA Talent Nite show. Madhu ji has been active in ICA from the beginning. First, as one of the coordinators of “ICA Sanskriti,” an ICA children's program, and later as President of ICA. She has served as the ICA President a couple of times: 2006 and 2016. She says she has always enjoyed ICA and is grateful that it's still around.

Upcoming ICA Events: Vivaah (The Indian Wedding)

Date: April 11, 2026

Venue: Oakwood Church of Ames.

Time: 2 PM to 9 PM

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our members, sponsors, and the City of Ames Commission on the Arts for their generous support.

