

*India Cultural Society of Rockland*

*(ICSR)*

Wishes you a

**H a p p y**

*Diwali*



*2020/2077*



**Wishes you a very  
Happy Diwali & A  
Happy New Year**

**Patel Family  
Alpesh, Monika,  
Jay & Aryan**



**\$1 ZONE**

199 Route 46 west  
Saddle Brook, NJ 07663  
(201) 291-9160

*Compliments from  
Nitin , Usha, Kunj & Jay Gala  
Bharat, Priti, Ricky & Rema Shah*



## *President's Message*

Namaste,

I wish you all a happy and safe Diwali and a fantastic year ahead!

While this has undoubtedly been a challenging year for everyone, I hope all are keeping safe and sound. The year 2020 started well with membership drives organized by the active and enthusiastic ICSR committee and youth wing. Many new members joined ICSR like past years, and it is a pleasure to see our community growing. The diverse and dynamic ICSR committee started the year with our first event Vasant Utsav, which was very well appreciated by the community. Although the last eight months' pandemic has taken a toll on all of us in diverse ways, I am genuinely proud of how the ICSR committee has united in adjusting to the new normal. I want to take this moment to reflect on how we came together to overcome numerous obstacles and reflect on the exciting accomplishments that are worth celebrating, maybe more so than in a typical year. It is also inspiring to see the passion and organizational skills that many of our ICSR committee members have exhibited over the last several months.

Despite challenging times, our generous sponsors came forward to help ICSR. ICSR would like to thank you for your constructive support; your contributions have made a huge difference! Given the challenge of navigating our lives amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, ICSR committee members continued to excel and brought several events to our community. All the modified hybrid events organized this year went very well with excellent participation (virtual or in-person) by the community. This year, ICSR has celebrated Father's Day virtually and brought seven talented and renowned singers together, presenting Bollywood songs, both old and new, Ghazals, Qawwali, Semi-classical & Sufi music for us to enjoy and celebrate an extraordinary day. ICSR is so fortunate to bring this special event to our community. ICSR has organized a food drive to help COVID-19 impacted community in Rockland. It was a success in collecting and distributing food to people affected by this health crisis.

Our India day Parade and festival were modified, shortened, and celebrated as "Indian Flag hoisting and virtual cultural event." A virtual cultural event was participated and performed by our ICSR youth wing kids. As we hoisted the Indian flag at the New City courthouse, followed by the Indian national anthem sung by our youth wing kids, all of us shared a special moment of feeling very proud of being an Indian in America. Our special thanks to our youth wing for being such a significant component of our organization. This year, like every year, the Hudson Valley Malayalee Association joined us in an Indian Flag hoisting ceremony. We appreciate their active participation at our event. Jeevan Jyoti is another organization that is always there at all our events, and we would like to applaud their involvement. A resolution passed at Albany & Rockland county declaring August as India Heritage Month. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, our upcoming virtual events include an ICSR annual meet instead of Diwali and a virtual program instead of youth meet to help our youth wing college planning.

I wish to offer my warmest regards to all the individuals who contributed one way or another during this challenging year. Their unsolicited help enabled the ICSR committee to execute unique and different events than previous years. I am privileged to have worked with such a dynamic and committed committee. I truly appreciate the hard work and ingenuity shown by our committee. I also appreciate the enormous amount of needed guidance from the experienced committee members and past presidents.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my family (Rekha, Neha, and Siya) for their support throughout the year.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Basavaraj Balapal  
President ICSR



## Secretary's Message...

Dear ICSR Families,

Namaste & Season's greetings. I hope you all had a wonderful Diwali.

I am honored to have this opportunity of serving you as the Secretary for ICSR 2020. Our organization has been serving the Indian Americans in the Tri-State area for over 45+ years with a mission to bring cultural events that showcase Indian heritage.

This year's team comprised of experienced, dedicated, and selfless committee members and youth volunteers. 2020 started on a high note under the leadership of our President Dr. Basavaraj Balapal as youth volunteers alongside the committee members diligently participated in membership drives throughout Rockland County. Emerging from our successful membership drives, ICSR celebrated the arrival of the spring season with the Vasant Utsav event held in the Palisades Mall. Families enjoyed live music, Jeopardy, and an authentic Indian assortment of dishes. We were in awe of the families that dressed in vibrant colors, expressing their competitive spirit to win the crown King and Queen titles.

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, the hardworking and passionate ICSR committee swiftly changed gears to respond to the pandemic by organizing activities such as a food drive & assisting our seniors with groceries. Furthermore, committee members came together with the idea to host events such as the virtual Father's Day concert and the Indian Independence Day flag hoisting ceremony at the Rockland County courthouse.

My sincere thanks extend to all the ICSR families for their active participation, support, and contribution. I am also grateful for all the sponsors for their financial support that allows us to continue bringing you all our events at a nominal or free of cost.

It has been an honor working with an extraordinary group of people dedicated to serving the community. I must thank my wife Shweta and son Swaneet for their continued support. My family and I are proud of our association with ICSR.



With best wishes,

*Abhinav Jha*





**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

11 New Hempstead Road  
New City, New York 10956  
Phone: (845) 638-5122 Fax: (845) 638-5856  
Email: CountyExec@co.rockland.ny.us

**Edwin J. Day**  
*Rockland County Executive*

Dear friends,

It saddens me that we are not able to join together this year to celebrate all your accomplishments. But I want to extend my deepest thanks to everyone at the India Cultural Society of Rockland (ICSR) for your work in adapting your programs and events to meet the needs of our community, despite the pandemic we are currently facing. You found ways to reach our residents in a safe manner and our community is a more culturally rich place thanks to your efforts.

I cannot stress how important it is that we keep our traditions alive and do so both safely at a distance and virtually. I have seen from your Facebook page that you have done so much for Rockland this year. You have provided viewers with virtual concerts, hosted the annual Independence Day flag hoisting ceremony, the India Day Festival which was celebrated with an array of performances and dances, and numerous other events.

I also saw how you diligently worked to care for the people of our County. Your efforts to keep people connected and ensure everyone had the food and household supplies they needed did not go unnoticed. We are fortunate that the Indian American community is a part of our diverse county and that you are so active here in Rockland.

As we look ahead, it is my hope that we will soon be able to gather again to celebrate the Indian culture that is so vibrant here and share it with all of those around us creating many more fond memories together. Thank you for everything you do for Rockland County!

Sincerely,

Ed Day  
Rockland County Executive



ELLEN C. JAFFEE  
Assemblywoman 97<sup>th</sup> District

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

CHAIR  
Committee on Children and Families  
COMMITTEES  
Environmental Conservation  
Health  
Mental Health  
Steering Committee  
Education

November 18, 2020

Dear Friends,

Please accept my warmest greetings as we gather to celebrate the annual Diwali Festival.

This year, the Festival of Lights has an extra special meaning to us all. As is tradition, the flames that burn brightly during Diwali serve to remind us of how our own inner light can help guide those struggling through darkness. During this pandemic, we have all had to reach inside ourselves to find the potential to do good and be a force for good in the lives of others.

With deepest gratitude for fostering true compassion and goodness in our community, I applaud the Indian Cultural Society of Rockland County on this joyous occasion.

Best wishes,

Ellen C. Jaffee  
NYS Assemblywoman, 97th District



KENNETH P. ZEBROWSKI  
Assemblyman 96<sup>th</sup> District  
Rockland County

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

CHAIRMAN  
Committee on Banks  
COMMITTEES  
Rules  
Codes  
Judiciary  
Governmental Employees  
Ethics and Guidance

Dear Friends:

While I am saddened we are unable to gather together and celebrate at your annual Diwali & Dinner with you all this year, I wanted to send my best wishes for a very Happy Diwali.

These are unprecedented and challenging times, but I am grateful for our friendship and to work alongside the Indian Cultural Society of Rockland for all these years. ICSR has been an integral part of our community, representing hundreds of Indian American families throughout the county. Each Legislative Session ICSR members travel to the Capitol in Albany where we pass a resolution celebrating the achievements of all Indian Americans across the State of New York. I am honored to author this resolution each year and am hopeful we can pass it again soon to recognize the countless contributions of Indian Americans in Rockland and throughout the entire State.

Wishing you a Diwali that brings happiness and joy to you and your family. Please be well and stay safe.

As always, never hesitate to reach out to my office with any questions or concerns. We can be reached at (845) 634-9791 or by email [zebrowskik@nyassembly.gov](mailto:zebrowskik@nyassembly.gov).

Sincerely,

Kenneth P. Zebrowski  
Member of Assembly





# TOWN OF CLARKSTOWN

GEORGE HOEHMANN  
SUPERVISOR

November 2020

Indian Cultural Society of Rockland  
c/o Ms. Nikita Krishnan  
8 Senator Levy Drive  
Montebello, New York 10901

Dear ICSR Family,

Diwali is such a beautiful and important feast that speaks to us in a typical year but especially during COVID and these very trying times of 2020. The triumph of good over evil and light over darkness symbolized in this celebration reminds us of the triumph we expect during these difficult past few months. While Diwali means many things to many people, for Hindus the triumphant return of the deities Rama and Sita from a fourteen year exile; for Jains the release or attainment of the state of Moksha for Lord Mahavira; for Sikhs the release from prison of the sixth guru Hargobind Singh or for others simply celebrating the harvest time, today it means so much more.

Today as we gather remotely let the light of Diwali shine within our hearts, within our families and in our lives. For me personally, ICSR and the people have been a light to shine forth in the world in Rockland. In a most practical way, during this pandemic I have thought often of the ICSR family and the light you continue to bring to me and our community. I am grateful for that light and all that you do to make our community a better place.

So next year I look forward to an in person series of celebrations with the greater ICSR community including Diwali. All of my best to you and your families. Thank you for all that you do and continue to do to make our world a brighter and happier place--let your light shine forth.

Sincerely,

George Hoehmann  
Supervisor  
Town of Clarkstown

# India Cultural Society of Rockland

## Acknowledges your support

1. MR. DEO NARIAN, MRS. MOHINIE OF AURO CHEMICALS
2. MRS. ALKA AND DR. VIKRAM SHAH
3. MRS. ANJU AND DR. SATISH SHREEDHAR
4. MR. ALPESH PATEL OF HILCREST BEVERAGE CORP
5. MRS. AMI AND MR. RAJESH SOPARIWALLA OF REGENCY AND BEST WESTERN
6. BERGER CPAs
7. DR. BINA BHATIA
8. DR. BRIJENDRA BATRA
9. CARDIOLOGY CONSULTANTS OF ROCKLAND
10. EASTCHESTER SERVICE CENTER INC
11. MR. GEORGE JOSEPH OF MASS MUTUAL
12. GLOBAL FINANCIAL SERVICES
13. MR. GOPALA SWAMY AND MRS. VIJAYA LAKSHMI MANDAPAKA
14. MR. HETAL AND MR. JIGNESH RAVAL
15. DR. KAMINI AND DR. RAKESH SHREEDHAR
16. KUMON MATH AND READING CENTER OF NEW CITY AND SPRING VALLEY
17. MR. MAHESH AND MRS. BHAVANA PATEL
18. MR. MANISH AND MRS. NIKITA KRISHNAN OF ATCS
19. MR. MAYANK PATEL OF CONGERS WINE AND SPIRIT
20. MR. SAMEER PATEL OF DUNKIN DONUTS
21. MR. SANJEEV AND KASHMIRA PATEL OF KG CONSTRUCTION
22. MRS. SEEMA AND MR. VIPUL PATEL OF NEHAL CONSTRUCTION
23. MR. SHASHI KUMAR AND MRS. SUSHUMA OF CV ASSOCIATES
24. MR. SHASHI PATEL OF TAPPAN ZEE HOTEL
25. MR. SHIVA BHASHYAM OF AMERIPRISE FINANCIAL
26. MR. SRINIVASA RAO AND MRS. SANTA KUMARI BONAM
27. MRS. SUSHMA AND DR. VIJAY SONI
28. MRS. USHA AND MR. NITIN GALA OF ONE DOLLAR ZONE
29. MR. VASU AND DR. AMALA CHIRUMAMILLA

**ICSR IS THANKFUL TO ROCKLAND COUNTY & ROCKLAND TOURISM DEPT FOR THE ANNUAL GRANT AND TOURISM GRANT**



# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



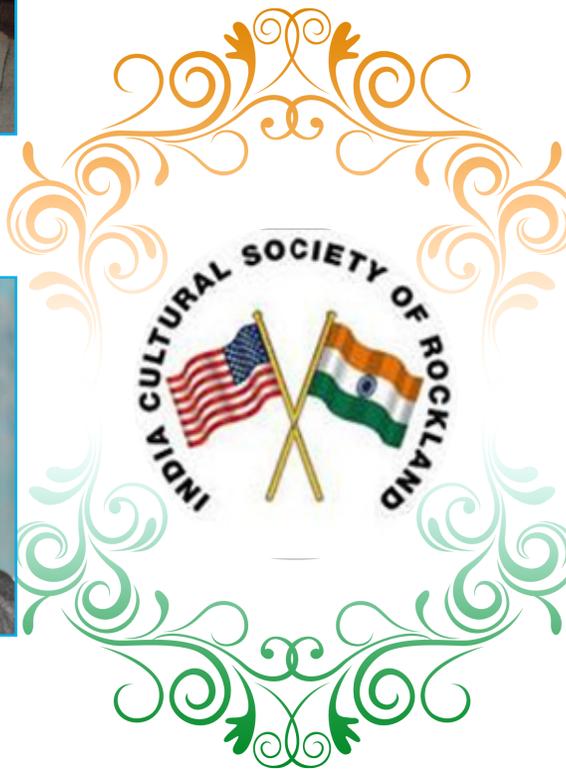
Basavaraj Balapal  
President



Rajiv Rohilla  
President Elect



Abhineet Jha  
Secretary



Suresh Iyer  
Joint Secretary



Krishna Nagineni  
Treasurer



Ravi Dubba  
Joint Treasurer



Nikitha Krishnan  
Public Relations Officer



# DIRECTORS



Anil Mandapaka  
Past President



Poonam Mohan



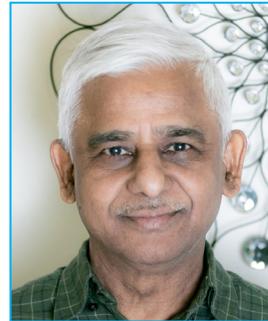
Satish Shreedhar



Ajayveer Chapotkat



Sankaran Krishnan



Rajan Baranwal



Alka Shah



Heena Mehta



Ramesh Bonam



Reena Kanduja



Pradeep Asok



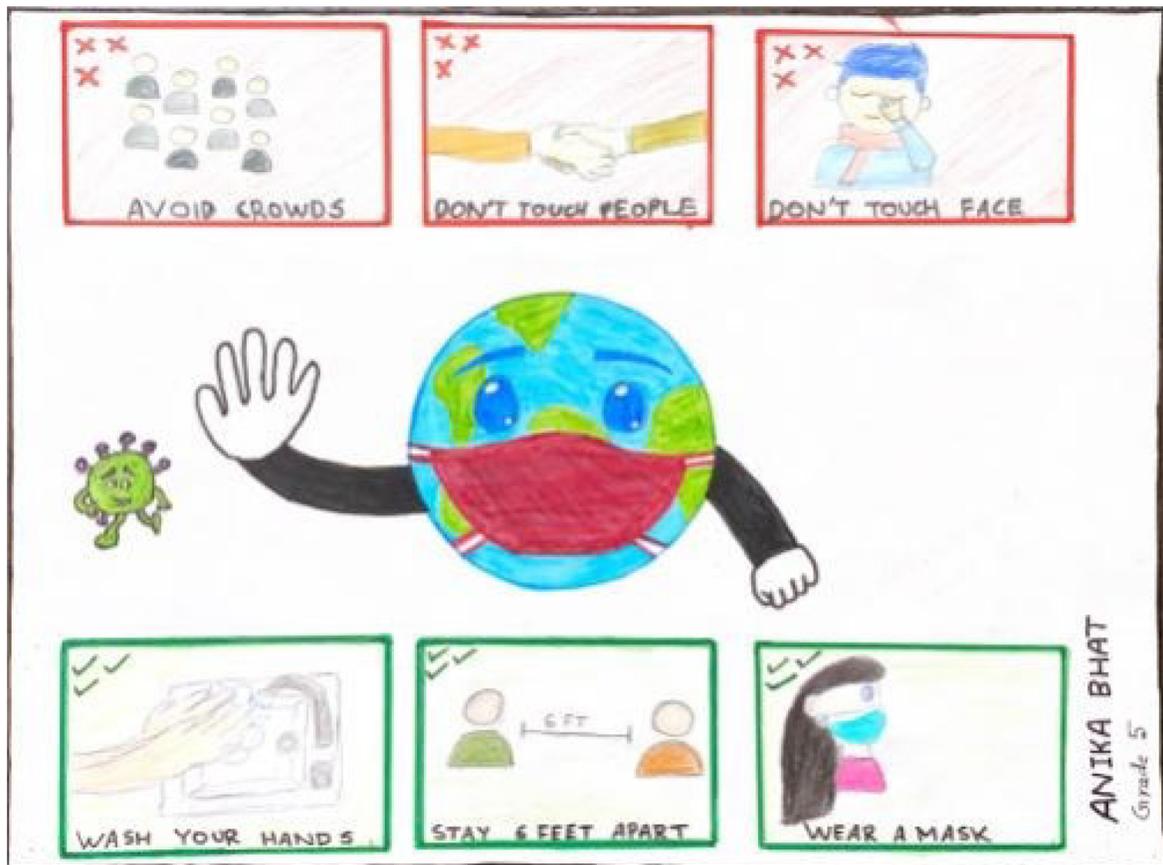
Youth Wing 2020





-----Mansi Pundkare

## COVID-19 Rules!!!!



-----Anika Bhat



*Wishing You and Your Families a Very Happy  
Diwali and a Prosperous New Year!!*



***ROCKTEN TEAM 2019***

Sankaran Krishnan (*Captain*)

Gerrad Augustine

Ritesh Bansal

Subhasis Bhadra

Len Charles

Francis Clement

Stephen Dantu

Apurva Dave

Subbarao Gadi

Jeetu Gupte

Preet Hooda

Kapil Khanduja

Sanjeev Krishan

Manish Krishnan

Paryush Lakhtaria

Parag Mehta

Saurabh Mehta



Milan Pathak

Suresh Ramaswamy

Rajiv Rohilla

Sunil Sah

Amit Sareen

Bipin Shah

VipulShah

Sam Shankar

Arun Sharma

Viral Sheth

Satish Shreedhar

Vineet Sikka

Jasjit Singh

Sarabjit Singh

Vijay Soni

Bangalore Sridhara

Viny Srinivasan

# INDIA CULTURAL SOCIETY OF ROCKLAND - SINCE 1971

## FOUNDING HISTORY

The India Cultural Society of Rockland has been passionately keeping the torch of Indian culture alive in the tri-state area since 1971. ICSR is a non-profit organization representing over 500 families of Indian origin in the county of Rockland, Orange, Westchester, and parts of New Jersey. ICSR is instrumental in promoting Indian culture, arts, music, and heritage to the local mainstream community through various events organized throughout the year.

In 1971 a group of well-meaning, passionate individuals from the Indian Community in Rockland got together to start an informal group that later morphed into an organizational concept by Late Dr. Rajavaidya, M.D.

### Past Presidents

1971/72 - Informal Group, Organizational Concept Started by the Late Rajavaidya, M.D.	1995 - Atul Desai
1973 - Satinder Ahuja, Ph.D.	1996 - Shashikant A. Shah
1974 - G.R. Padmanabhan, Ph.D.	1997 - Manju Jariwala
1975 - Ramesh Amin, M.D.	1998 - Ratnaswamy Shankar
1976 - Chandrakant Katira, Uma Wakil	1999 - Vaibhavi Pradhan, Dds
1977 - Atul Laddu, M.D.	2000 - Madhu Mehta
1978 - Dhun Patel, Ph.D.	2001 - Rao Tatapudy, Ph.D.
1979 - Anjan Bhattacharya, Ph.D.	2002 - Daksha Patel
1980 - Prakash Mehta, Ph.D.	2003 - Keshav Shah
1981 - Shela Bajaj	2004 - Bharati Hodarkar
1982 - Mahesh Kinkhabwala, M.D.	2005 - Ajayveer Chapotkat
1983 - Behroz Dutia	2006 - Inder Chaudhary, Ph.D.
1984 - Vinod Shah	2007 - Panna Parikh
1985 - Maruti Kendale	2008 - Jugal Agarwal
1986 - Usha Patel	2009 - Vinayak Srinivasan, Ph.D
1987 - Anil Parikh	2010 - Sankaran Krishnan,MD
1988 - Bipin M. Shah	2011- Bindu Mehta
1989 - Aruna Bharati	2012- Vijay Soni, Ph.D
1990 - Chirayu Shah	2013- Smriti Sridhara
1991 - Raj Bajaj	2014-Rajan Baranwal
1992 - Kanti Gosrani	2015- Ajayveer Chapotkat
1993 - Ramesh Shah	2016- Satish Shreedhar
1994 - Bharat Patel	2017-Charu Krishan
	2018- Poonam Mohan
	2019 -Anil Mandapaka

### OBJECTIVES

Objectives of ICSR, according to its constitution, are:

- (a) To promote better understanding between the Nationals of India and those of America and other countries; and
- (b) To foster greater friendship among its members.

In order to achieve these objectives, the following means are used:

1. Provision and exchange of information about India,
2. Arrangement of literary activities and discussions,
3. Holding special programs for the promotion of art and culture,
4. Any other activities that promote these objectives (free community service in the form of health fairs, soup kitchens, clothing drives, etc.)

### WEAVING THE CULTURAL FABRIC

ICSR organizes mostly free programs throughout the year to promote cultural enrichment. **All are welcome to attend without any discrimination whatsoever.**

- ❖ The year begins with *Vasant Utsav*, where we celebrate the onset of spring through music, dance, an art show, and a sumptuous dinner.
- ❖ In April, we celebrate *Holi*, the festival of colors that includes color play, and traditional Indian snacks are served.
- ❖ *Navratri Raas & Garba* is the most awaited night of the year in October! Traditional costumes are displayed, and dances are performed.
- ❖ The festival of Lights- *Diwali* to celebrate the victory of good over evil, light over darkness is celebrated around November. We get together in song and dance and break bread together.

### GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

- ❖ A *Food and Clothing Drive* for the needy is organized around Thanksgiving. The collected items are donated to People to People of Rockland for further distribution.
- ❖ ICSR continues its time-honored tradition of performing cultural dances for the patients, their families, and the staff at Helen Hayes Hospital. In May, choreographers and students from the ICSR community put up a talent show for the *Recreational Therapy event at Helen Hayes Hospital* in Haverstraw. Patients enjoy dance performances based on classical as well as popular Indian film music. Traditional Indian snacks are served at the social that follows.
- ❖ The seniors in the community look forward to the *Senior Trip* each year. They are sent on a road trip with their friends to various places of cultural and spiritual interests. Volunteers from ICSR arrange food, lodging, and tours at subsidized costs.
- ❖ The *Health Fair*, conducted in association with the *AAPI of Rockland*, is always a huge success both in terms of the number of free medical services provided and the number of people who attend. Physicians offer services such as blood work, eye screening, lungs check, blood pressure checks, dental care, nutrition advice, and free flu shots.
- ❖ ICSR organizes *Fundraisers* to support relief work after a natural disaster. The survivors of Tsunami in India in 2005, the Nepal Earthquake, and COVID-19 have benefited from this effort.

### PROMOTING TALENT & CAMARADERIE

- ❖ The *Annual Cultural Show* in May is the most popular and widely attended event of the year that showcases our younger generation's talent. Over 200 students from ages 4 to 18 participate in traditional Classical and Bollywood dances. We recognize the graduating high school seniors from member families. Several public elected officials of Rockland County are honored at this program for their continued support.

- ❖ *Picnic* is the most awaited summer event. Committee members and volunteers get together outdoors by the lakeside to cook and serve food and organize various activities throughout the day, including kite flying, football, badminton, volleyball, and cricket.
- ❖ *India Day Parade* brings a little bit of India to the neighborhood by celebrating India's Independence in a colorful and vibrant manner. People march in traditional colorful costumes, and the parade is followed by India festival that includes flag hoisting, patriotic performances,
- ❖ *Father's Day Masala Cruise* was a new event introduced in 2017 to provide an informal social platform for families to mingle and while enjoying the scenic beauty for the Hudson Valley along with traditional Indian cuisine.

### SUPPORT AND SPONSORS

ICSR is proud to be recognized by the **Rockland County Legislature**. Over 30 **Grand, Annual & Event sponsors**, including local businesses and individuals, make generous donations and sponsor events that allow ICSR to bring quality programs to the community.

### MEMBERSHIP

Any person interested in fostering the ICSR objectives may apply for membership in the Society. Membership is open to all without discrimination.

### COMMITTEE

The ICSR committee runs on the advice, time, and energy provided by volunteers within the community. This committee is the governing body and consists of 19 officers who serve a term of one year. They are 7 Executive Committee members: President, President-Elect, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, Joint Treasurer, Public Relations Officer, and 12 Directors. **The 2020 committee** consists of hardworking volunteers from various fields, including business, medicine, management, IT, and sciences.

#### Executive Committee

**President:** Basavaraj Balapal  
**President-Elect:** Rajiv Rohilla  
**Secretary:** Abhineet Jha  
**Joint Secretary:** Suresh Iyer  
**PRO:** Nikita Krishnan  
**Treasurer:** Krishna Nagineni  
**Joint Treasurer:** Ravi Dubba

#### Directors:

Anil Mandapaka (**Past President**),  
 Satish Shreedhar, Ajayveer Chapotkat,  
 Rajan Baranwal, Sankaran Krishnan, Alka Shah,  
 Ramesh Bonam, Poonam Mohan, Heena Mehta,  
 Reena Kanduja, Pradeep Asok

### REACHING OUT

Periodic updates about various upcoming events, past event photos, community news, are disseminated via 3 newsletters, emails, website, and social media.

- [www.icsronline.com](http://www.icsronline.com)
- [www.facebook.com/pages/India-Cultural-Society-Of-Rockland/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/India-Cultural-Society-Of-Rockland/)
- Email: [icsrinfo@gmail.com](mailto:icsrinfo@gmail.com)
- Phone- 1-347-688-7440

#### **Mailing address (subject to change annually)**

ICSR 9 Pacific Ave., Nanuet, NY 10954

# Youth Wing Activities

We are impressed by the interest and dedication shown by 24 super bright and very passionate 8-12 Grade ICSR Youth Wing Volunteers 2020!!

Abhinav Khanduja

Aishwarya Rajendran

Shashwat Patel

Spurthi Setty

Aayush Sharma

Ashok Sathiyamoorthy

Nathan Yaragudri

Pari Patel

Shaan Patel

Srilakshmi Babu

Sri Kurup

Amulya Mandapaka

Neha Krishnan

Suchita Sridhara

Swaneet Jha

Aayan Krishan

Alekhya Mandapaka

Gopesh Shreedhar

Nidhi Avasatthi

Isha Patel

Nayana Sujith

Praket

Ryka Rohilla

Sonia Santos

Suhani Patel

Mansi Pundukare

Vishnupriya Gupta

Diya Sharma

Praket Nigam

Namrata Kumar

Sravanth Malla

Ria Sah

Vasundara Kurup

Kamya Ramakrishnan

Nina Kumar

Rahul Raja

Shravan Ranganathan

Akhil Bonam

Siya Balapal

Visakhi Miriyapalli

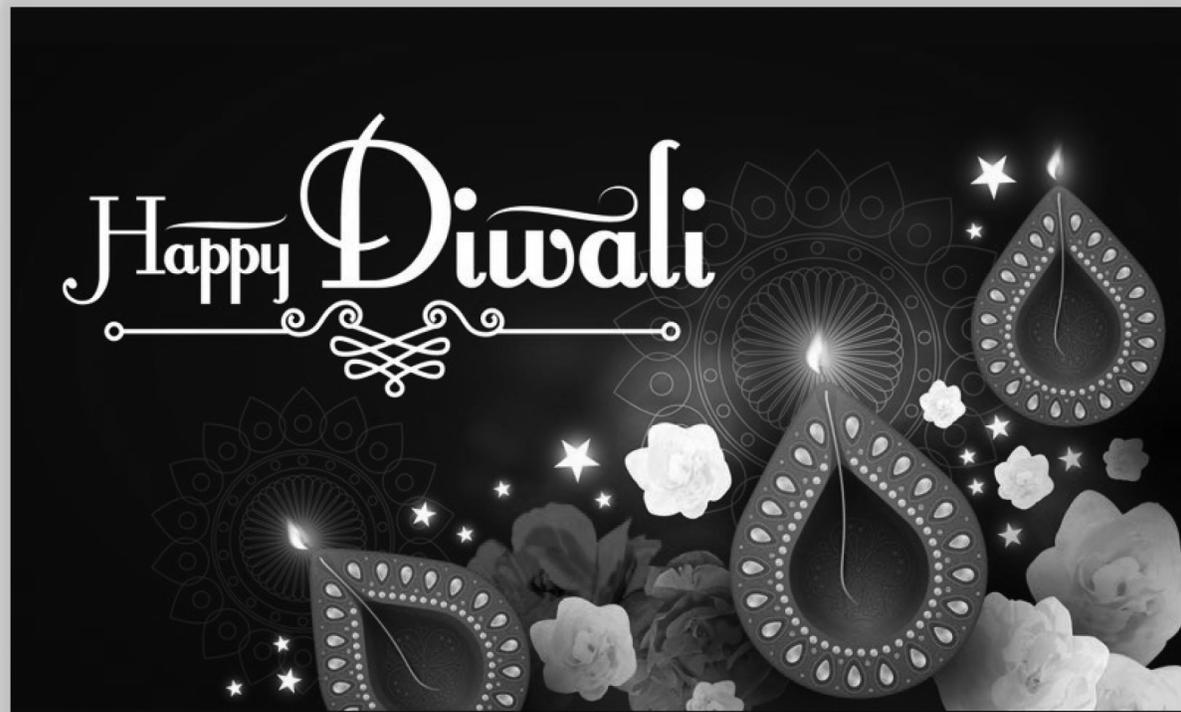
**Four professionals will mentor these volunteers through the course of the year in the following areas:**

Abhineet Jha & Ramesh Bonam: Development of Skills in Event Photography: After capturing ICSR events for past few years, it's time to share the tips and tricks of photography with our young talented volunteers. As a collaborative team, the photography wing of ICSR's Youth Program will get hands on experience from learning camera basics to capturing memorable moments at ICSR events. They will learn to work as a team, develop interpersonal and leadership skills while engaging with members of the community.

Rajiv Rohilla: Publicity and Membership drives: Committed to connecting our community to its culture and the values it creates for our members of all ages and ultimately to increase our membership. Develop interpersonal skills, acquire more knowledge, confidence and develop an all-round personality of our youth which will help us secure a better future.

Suresh Iyer: Developing alumni network: Alumni had contributed immensely when they were younger, and we are thankful to them. ICSR is what it is due to all their enthusiasm and spirit. The objective of forming ICSR Alumni group is to foster the spirit of giving in the form of sharing experiences and information that they have gained to the new kids at the cusp of starting college and their parents. Additionally, this will strengthen the ties between alumni and ICSR community as well as help in growing the ICSR family.

VOLUNTEERS  
do VOLUNTEERS  
don't necessarily  
have the time;  
they just have  
the heart!



**BEST WISHES TO ICSR  
FROM**

**EASTCHESTER SERVICE CENTER INC.**

**381 WHITE PLAINS RD  
EASTCHESTER, NY 10709**

# Season's Greetings

&



FROM

**People's United  
Bank**<sup>®</sup>

Member FDIC

**CONTACT**

Ruby Kaur, Branch Manager

253 N. Main Street  
Spring Valley, NY 10977  
(845) 352-1828

[gurvinder.kaur@peoples.com](mailto:gurvinder.kaur@peoples.com)

Customer Service Phone: 1 (800) 894-0300

# The New Normal

-----By Keertana Sujith

Dear Diary,

March 13, 2020

Today, we had a locker cleanout. I don't understand how people can have so much trash in their lockers, but that is not my main point. Today might be our last day at school, probably not, though. Since there are cases of this virus called Covid-19 in schools close to us, we have a few days off for the people to clean the school, which is fine with me. Also, I really hope the play is not canceled. I am really looking forward to it.

Dear Diary,

March 15, 2020

The play is canceled. I'm also bored. Ugh.

Dear Diary,

March 21, 2020

I am really mad the play is canceled! I worked really hard on it. I was going to wear costumes and everything. Also, now school is canceled for a whole other WEEK.

Dear Diary,

March 30, 2020

I never thought there would be a day where I am doing school from home. I am literally sitting at my desk, AT MY HOUSE doing classwork. I only get to see my teachers like once a week. I thought this coronavirus thing would just blow over, but that is definitely not the case.

PS: Sorry I haven't been writing as much, I haven't got used to this whole online school thing so it's messing up my schedule.

PPS: School ends on June 16 not June 24!

PPPS: I just looked it up, and PS comes from the latin word "Post Scriptum", the more you know.

Dear Diary,

April 16, 2020

Everything is canceled!! My dance performance, singing performance, band performance, my birthday, 4th of July, award ceremony, art show, field trips, soccer, and girl scouts. I was looking forward to all of this but my dreams were crushed like a wrecking ball hitting a building. The only thing they talk about on the news is Covid 19 that, and Coronavirus this. On a happy note me and Nayana (my sister) painted the basement. We did this really cool geometric pattern. We also made a garden.( Hopefully it doesn't fail like the last time.) Also, we got a swimming pool! It's great yet it can be really cold sometimes.

Dear Diary,

April 30, 2020

Today I had my first contact with the outside world in a very long time. Me and my family just drove around, but when you're practicing social distancing just a car ride is a very big gift. It is so annoying; now when I go anywhere outside 3 feet of my house I have to wear a mask. Also having to put on hand sanitizer all the time has made my hands REA:LLY dry. Speaking of hand sanitizer it is like \$80 a piece now. I never thought there would be a time that hand sanitizer was such a highly sought after product and I will never take toilet paper for granted again. Seriously, it's nowhere.

Dear Diary,

September 7, 2020

It is September. The last time I wrote in this was April. I am sorry, I lost this book on the couch, and I just found it, but there are more pressing matters at hand right now. My room is a mess, my desk is everything but clean, and the first day of school is TOMORROW.

Online school. I am having an online school. I will be sitting in front of the screen at my house, looking at my teachers through pixels. I really thought by now everyone would be in school. I can't say I would be surprised if "Online School" was a word in the dictionary by now. And if you haven't figured it out by now this coronavirus thing is not over. Sure next week they will start hybrid learning where you go in for two days and then work at home for two days; but no that does not mean Covid 19 is over. I also don't think I have expressed how uncomfortable it is to wear a mask and how sad it is to only see your friends and family through screens.

PS. When I pulled this book out of the coach, it came with a concerning amount of cheerios, five candy wrappers, 6 pens, 1 paper clip and 3 broken crayons. And don't even get me started on dust bunnies.

Dear Diary,

September 25, 2020

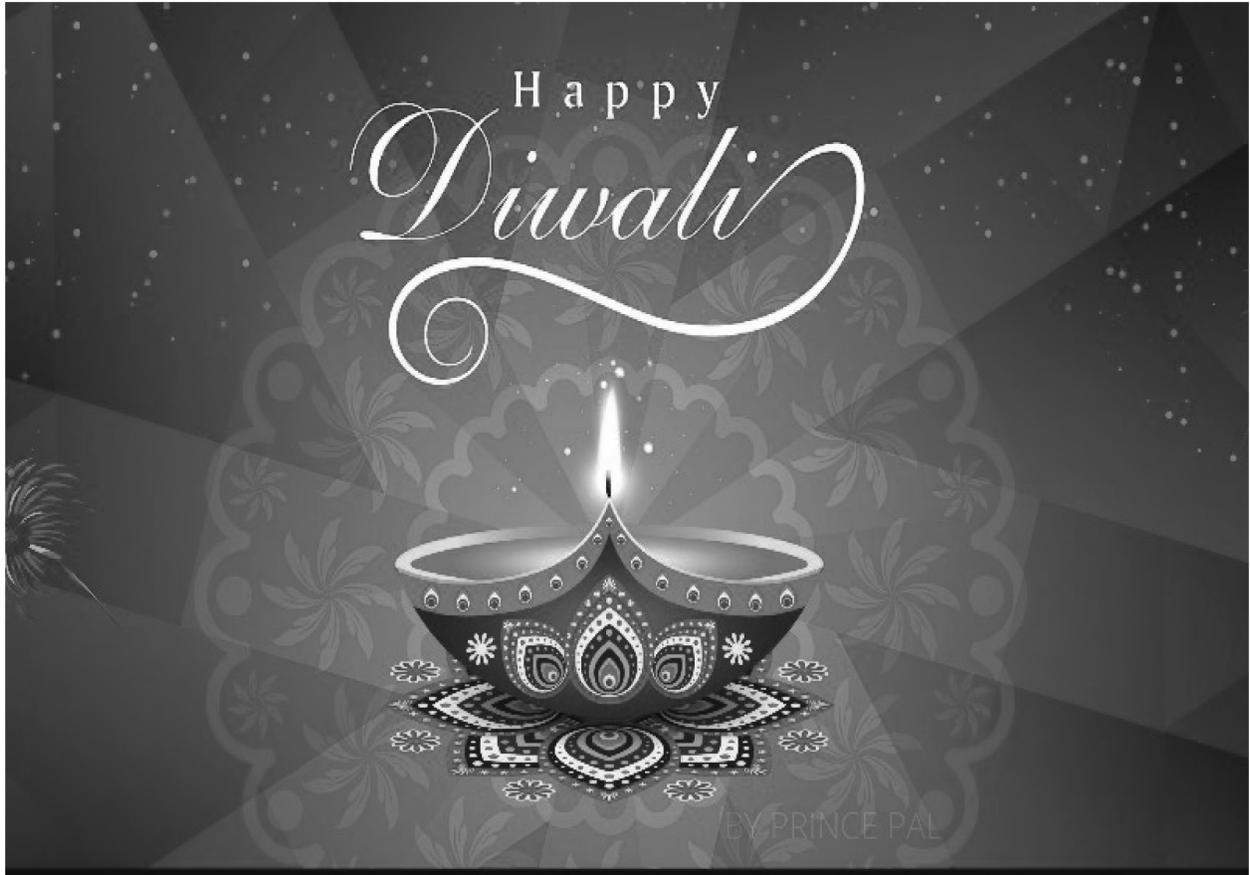
Three weeks of school have passed. Things are starting to sort of, somewhat, kind of settle in. There are less cases of covid (but believe I know it is long from gone) and school is okay yet I would love to be in school for real. Also know when we go shopping we don't have to wear those humongous masks; that is a big bonus. But we still have to use hand sanitizers so my hands are still as dry as the Sahara Desert. Yeah we are all getting through this, were all going to try and take another swing at this new normal.



# NO NEED TO WORRY

Poem by Saanvi Pundikare  
Grade 3

Even though there is Covid,  
there is no need to worry,  
Because you couldn't do many things  
when you were in a hurry!  
Even though there are bad things  
there are good ones too,  
Like bonding with your family  
and reading books that are new!  
The cars go in the garage  
out comes the bike  
You can go for a ride,  
or even take a hike.  
Look out the window,  
at the beautiful nature  
And maybe sometimes,  
you will see an interesting creature!



SEASONS GREETINGS

&

BEST WISHES

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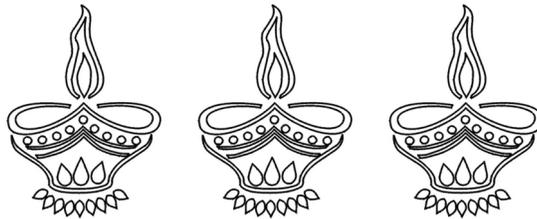
*Warmest Wishes to  
My Wonderful Friends ICSR  
on your Diwali  
Festival of Lights Celebration  
2020*



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# NAVRATRI THEN AND NOW...

*as seen through my eyes:*



On a chilly October night this year, right as the world was getting ready to start celebrating Navratri, a sacred festival in Hindu religion that lasts for nine nights (Navratri), worshipped by over a billion across the globe, passionately celebrating various divine forms of Maa Amba, also known as Maa

Durga, the female creative principle, the epitome of power and to seek her blessings to heal the world and be granted the desired, I fell asleep under the covers of my blanket, and I had a dream...

My dining room was full of boxes and boxes of bright and artsy decorations, colorful bandhani sarees, fresh flower garlands, Diyas', lights, paper goods, dry fruits, beautifully decorated Aarti Thalies' and so on.

I got up early in the morning on the first day of Navratri, finished my puja, and started preparing Sheera (sweet semolina porridge) for the divine Maa Amba. By 5 that evening, I am ready in my best Navratri outfit, a nice silk chaniya choli, along with my family, who has also dressed up for this festive occasion. We load up our cars with the supplies and reach the Navratri venue. Along with my ICSR friends and family, we are adorning Maa Amba with fresh flower decorations, garlands, colorful chunni's , and then we light Ghee Diyas' all near Mataji.

We offer a wide array of beautiful incarnations and Bhog (various offerings), which after Maa Durga offers her blessings becomes Prasad and is thoroughly enjoyed by all that are present. The enthusiastic music group and a live band is playing Dhamakedar(upbeat) Garba (traditional Navratri dance) songs. This is so nostalgic and brings immeasurable joy to my heart (I being the chairperson hosting and arranging for Navratri for ICSR for the past many years) seeing more than 500 people gather under one roof. Many of them are joyously doing the traditional "Garba" dance in large circles around Amba Maa, while emoting and showing their well-learned dance moves in their own unique way. It doesn't matter whether you are a toddler tagging along or a teenager dancing the night away or a senior just catching up with friends while enjoying watching others play Garba, Navratri brings a feeling of inner joy and divinity to all. This was a truly magical night which brought people of all ages and all walks of life together to enjoy Dandiya (stick dance), Raas (Rhythmic foot movements with hand Taali) and Sanedo (which has dance movements to couplets of four musical lines and rhythms).

Then, we are all gathered in the center near Amba Maa, we close our eyes and seek Maa's blessings while singing the Aarti (devotional song) after which we will all have the Prasad that was offered to Maa. We end the Aarti with this Shloka:

**"Sarva Mangal Mangaliye, Shive Sarvartha Sadhike  
Sharanye Trambake Gauri, Narayani Namoh-stute"**

which means.....to the auspicious of all auspiciousness, to the good and to the accomplisher of all objectives, to the source of Refuge, to the mother of the three worlds, I bow to you Narayani(one

who belongs to Narayan or Lord Vishnu and is omnipresent) again and again.

It is 7 am the next day on Oct.17th.... and I wake up only to realize that I was dreaming about the Navratri that "could have been".... if we were not in the midst of this COVID-19 pandemic. My dining room was empty, and no major decorations around my house, but my heart had not lost hope that soon things will get better, and this suffering will end. I realized that these were unusually dire and difficult times, but I had a firm belief that we would emerge.

We got together with just our immediate family members. I made Sheera to offer Maa Amba, adorned her with roses from my garden, we said our prayers and asked for Maa Amba to bless us and keep all beings in this world safe and give all of us the strength to get through this together.

After our prayers, we put on some upbeat Garba music and do a Garba dance with just our family during this pandemic. One has to enlighten the inner light within their soul and stay connected and not let all of this doom and gloom bring you down.

I got many phone calls and texts from family and friends that they are missing all the Garba fun this year. I urge all of you to continue social distancing, wearing masks in public, and do your part, so we can all be safe and healthy. I promise you that we will be having Navratri Garba night with all the pomp and show again when things resume normalcy and in happier times.

Alka Shah



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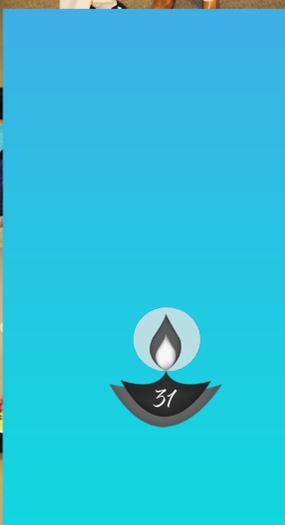
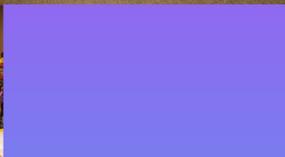
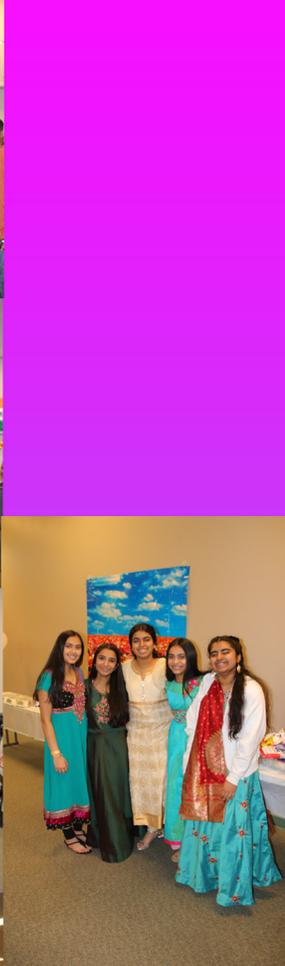
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# Garba

Past year events...

# Vasant Utsav





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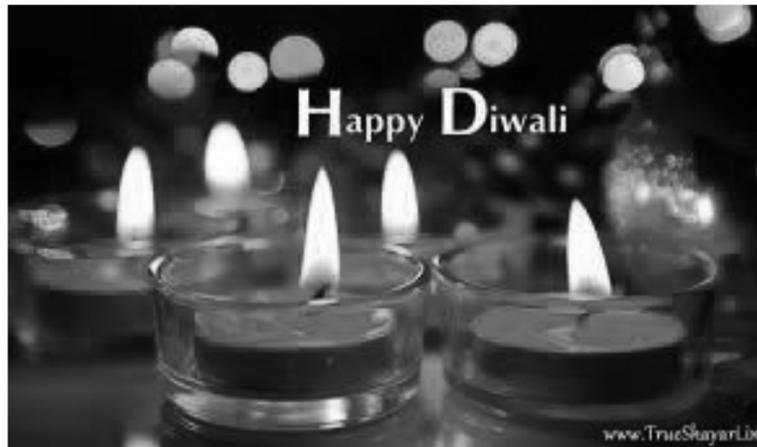
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# ICSR 2020 EVENTS REVIEW

## VASANT UTSAV

Vasant Utsav, or "the celebration of spring," is celebrated in India every year. In efforts to continue the legacy of our cultural heritage here in New York, the ICSR started the year 2020 by embracing the spirit of new beginnings. On March 7, 2020, ICSR arranged a fun-filled musical evening for people of Rockland and adjoining counties. The musical evening by "MUSIC Speaks" kicked off with a harmonious collection of famous Bollywood songs. It def hit the right chords with the audience as it also encouraged them to groove to these songs. The evening continued with 'jeopardy' on India and ended with a warm dinner. Children from the county were encouraged to display their artwork to provide a platform for these young budding artists.

Another highlight of the evening was the presence of some elected officials from the county who took out time from their hectic schedule to grace this occasion and share their message of togetherness. Thanks to all the committee members' efforts, the evening truly portrayed the spirit of Indian fiesta.



# Father's Day

## -A Virtual event

This year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ICSR could not organize its regular events in a normal fashion. With a view to continue to serve its community, we decided to put together a virtual concert on Father's Day Sunday June 21 which was broadcasted live on Facebook and YouTube and have had over 2000 views worldwide.

Seven very talented and emerging singers/musicians (Siddhanth Agarwal, Alankar Mahtolia, Sri Vivaan Iyer, Imran Khan Niazi, Aishwarya Thapliyal, Rahul Sharma and Shinjini Ghosh) brought to us a wonderful assortment of different Indian musical genres to entertain our community. The performances ranged from classic to contemporary Bollywood music, Ghazals, Semi-classical Thumris, Qawwalis and Sufi music. All the performers were very much complimented and appreciated by our viewers. The whole program was very entertaining indeed.

The welcome speech was given by Mrs. Alka Shah, followed by our President Dr. Basavaraj Balapal's remarks. The program was anchored by Mrs. Heena Mehta, Mr. Rajiv Rohilla and Dr. Nikita Krishnan. The highlight of the program was the interaction with the artists from across the globe who shared their insight about their dedication to their musical journey. The Vote of Thanks was presented by Dr. Sankaran Krishnan. The curator of the program Mr. Ajayveer Chapotkat made the closing remarks.



Lots of credit goes to our Tech Team who worked behind the scenes to put together ICSR's first ever virtual concert which went flawless. The entire committee actively participated very enthusiastically in making this program a huge success.

## ICSR FOOD DRIVE INITIATIVE

The impact of the COVID-19 has led to record-breaking unemployment, economic disruption, and Food insecurity. Furthermore, putting Food on the table for their families became a more prominent concern for many individuals, which was never an issue in the past. For those already facing food insecurity with a global pandemic, the situation is even direr. During this unprecedented pandemic situation, ICSR reached out to our community to donate towards the ICSR food drive to serve families in need of essentials. Our community's response was excellent. People donated not only necessary food items such as pasta, beans, vegetables, and soups but also helped with absolute other essentials such as toothpaste, soaps, shampoos, and hygiene stuff. It was a collaboration with the Proyecto Faro project that made it possible for us to reach out to so many people in need. It was a very humbling experience for all the team of ICSR to initiate and carry out this task during the critical time of COVID, and the community much appreciated it. ICSR team would like to extend its thanks to all of you incredible Indian community in Rockland county for your energy, support, and generous contributions.



# INDEPENDENCE DAY - FLAG HOSTING

On August 15, ICSR celebrated India's Independence Day by hoisting the Indian tricolor flag at New City courthouse grounds. Given the current pandemic conditions & to comply with NY State laws, ICSR celebrated this event on a very small scale. The Indian flag was hoisted by our ICSR president Dr. Basavaraj Balpal. Two of our youth kids sang American and Indian National anthem. Few local and state political leaders and regional organizations such as Jeevan Jyoti, FOKANA, and IACR attended the flag hoisting ceremony, by following social distancing guidelines.



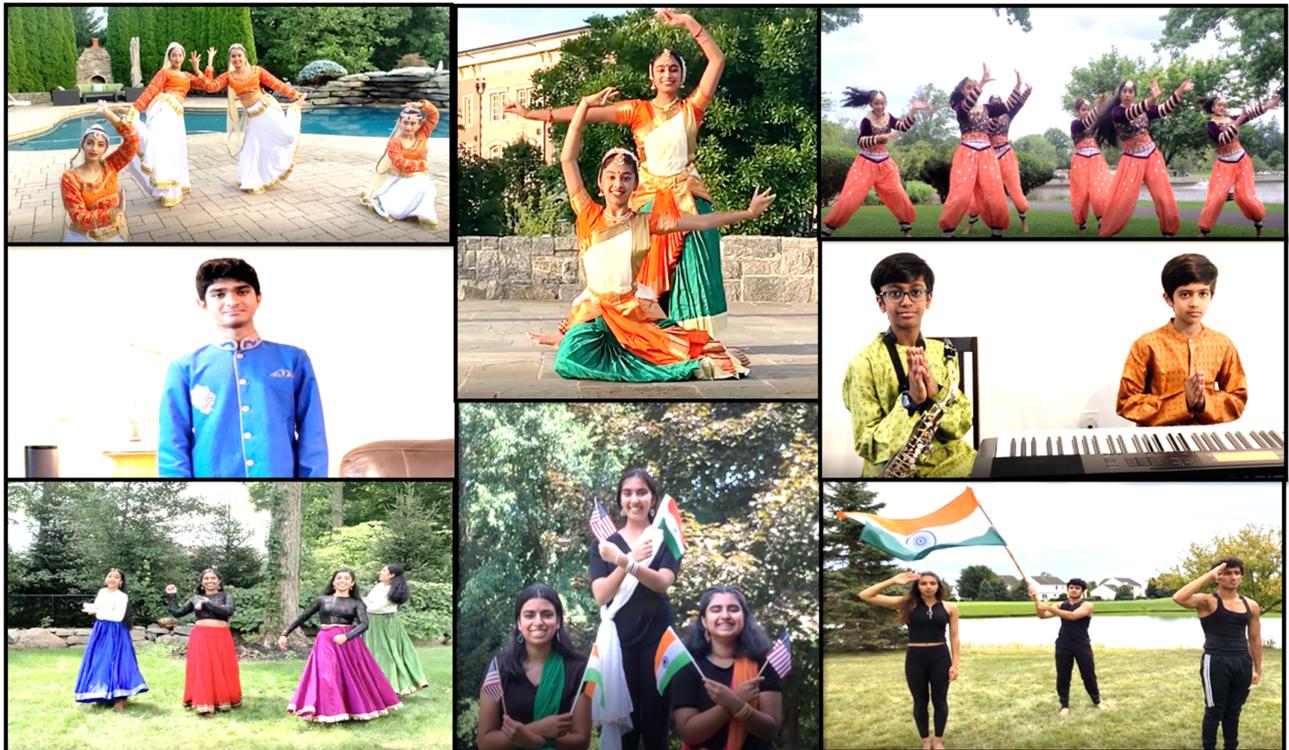
# A Virtual Cultural Event

## The show must go on: virtual India day Festival amid pandemic

Year 2020 has been unique in many ways and so was our India Independence Day Cultural show. On August 15, ICSR celebrated India's Independence in a vibrant and innovative manner. While in-person performances will not ensue, ICSR committee reached out to community to participate in Virtual Cultural show. And result of that was an incredible array of performances with dances in the Bharatanatyam, semi-classical and Bollywood style. Show also had participation from talented singer and instrument players.

All performances were exhibiting proper guidelines of social distancing and showcased patriotism in selection of songs and costumes.

As part of the Cultural program, ICSR announced winners of Vijay Pradhan Foundation Scholarships.



# DIWALI GREETINGS

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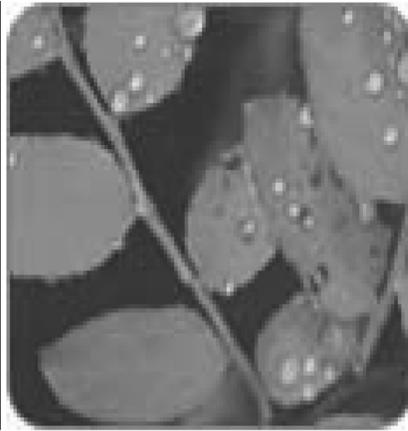
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*Chair, Committee on Children and Families*



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# ANNUAL PICNIC



Past year events...

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**Best wishes to the India  
Cultural Society of  
Rockland in Celebrating  
the Diwali Festival!**

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*From*

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# INDIA DAY PARADE



Past year events...

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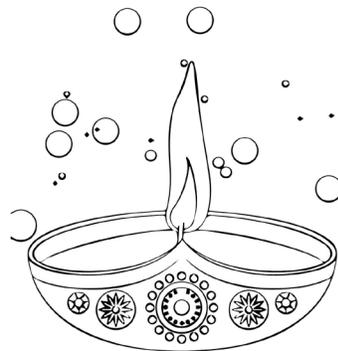
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& A Prosperous New Year*



**HAPPY  
DIWALI**

*Mahesh & Bhavna Patel  
Akta, Avni And Deev*



# HOLI

Past year events

India Cultural Society  
of Rockland  
Festival of Holi

India Cultural Society  
of Rockland  
Festival of Holi

India Cultural Society  
of Rockland  
Festival of Holi



दीपावली की शुभे रात्रये

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balagokulam  
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*Wishing all a  
Happy Diwali and  
a Prosperous New Year*



## **THE KRISHNAN FAMILY**

(SANKARAN, USHA, SHEILA and AMIT)

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Happy Diwali and a  
Prosperous New Year!!

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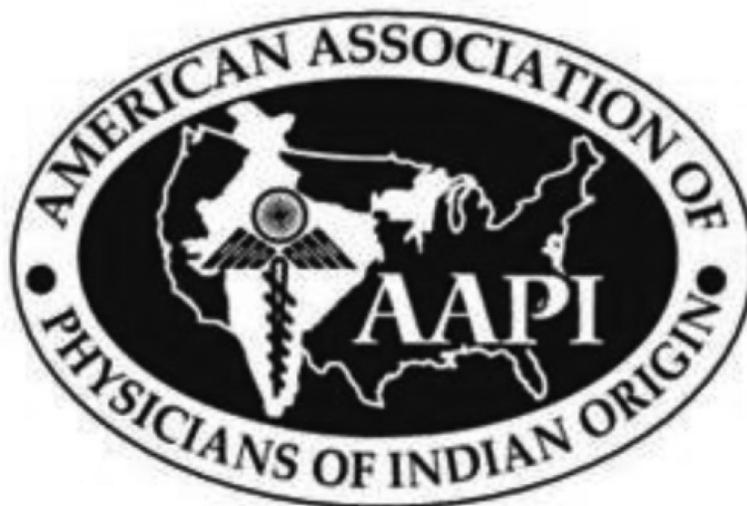
HAPPY DIWALI



*From*

**AAPI OF ROCKLAND**

American Association of Physicians of Indian  
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*Happy Diwali! I share in your joy again this year as we celebrate the Festival of Lights!*

\*\*\*\*\*

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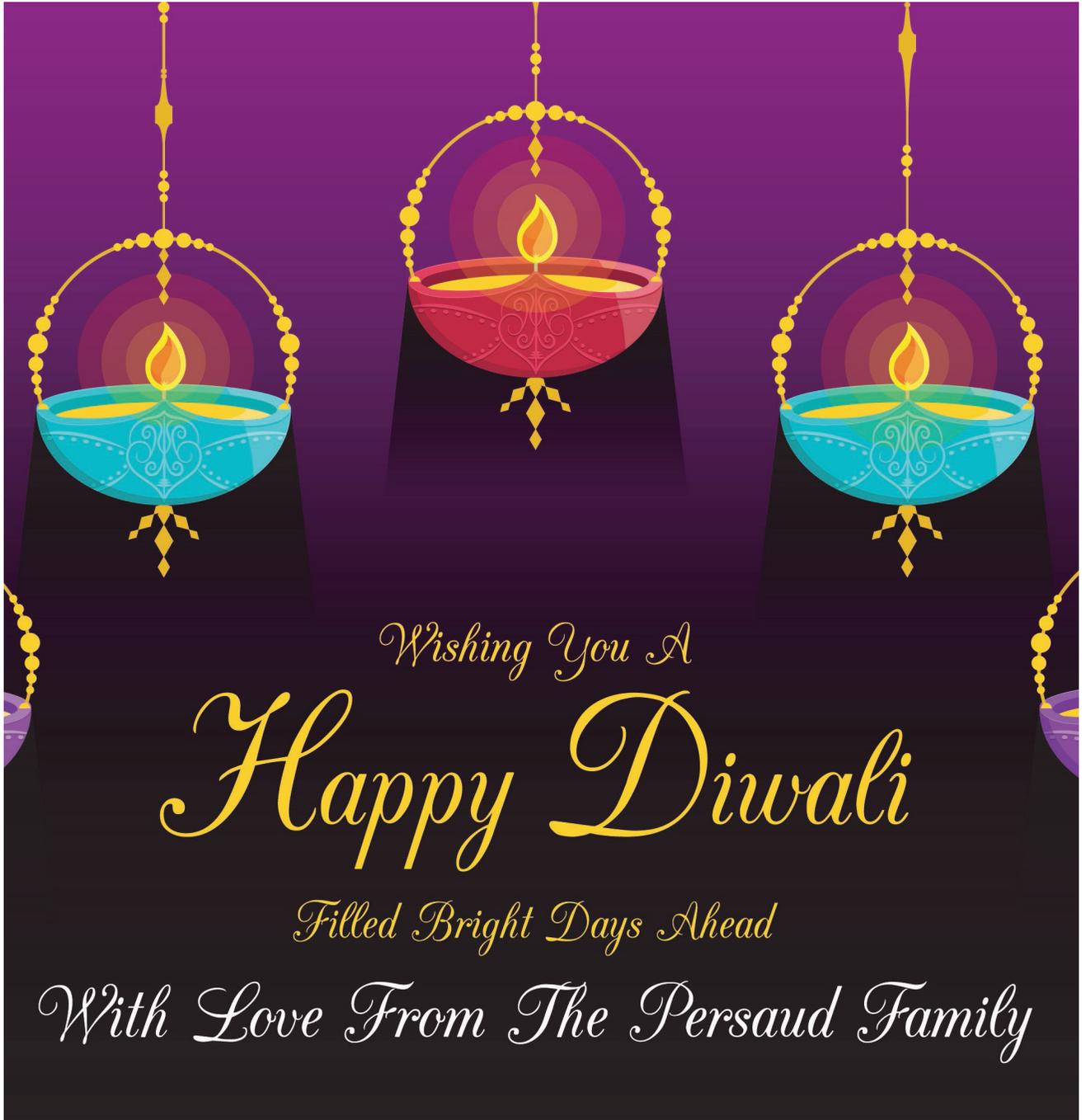
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