



**ASIAN INDIANS OF HAMPTON ROADS
PRESENTS**

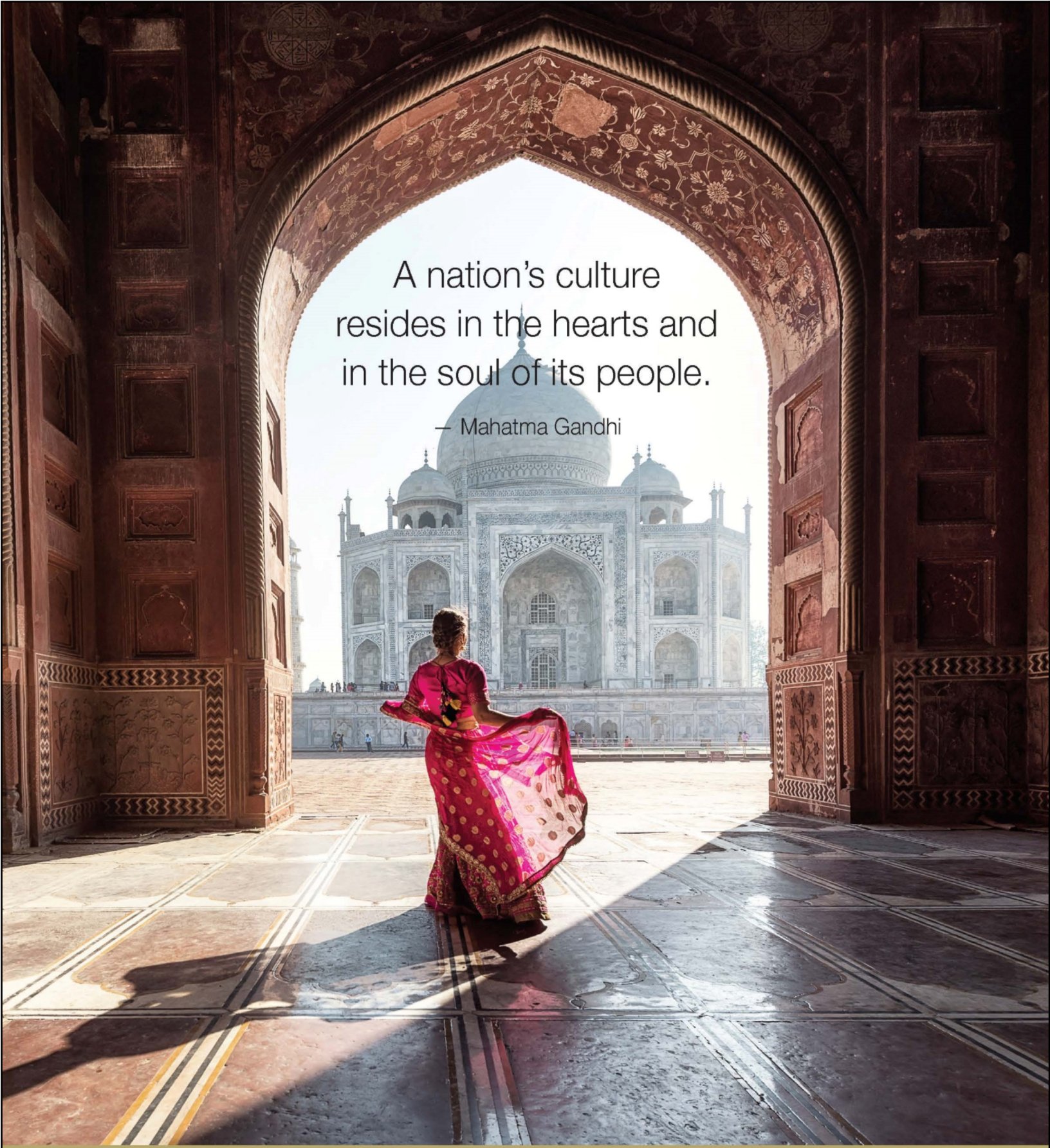


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INDIA FEST

2022





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Message from the Chairperson



Dear friends!

Namaste! Welcome to India Fest 25th anniversary hosted by the Asian Indians of Hampton Roads (AIHR). It gives me great pleasure to invite you to this celebration of India. The 25th celebration of India Fest, at the Virginia Beach Convention Center, promises to be a feast for the senses. We welcome you to explore and enjoy the vibrant tradition and culture of one of the world's oldest civilizations.

Savor the delicate intricacies of Indian spices from the best local Indian restaurants, be mesmerized by India's music and dance, and enjoy the educational activities with your children. Add bling to your wardrobe, and update your style with many exotic vendors from near and far. We have tried to create the overarching majesty and diversity of India, with nonstop cultural performances that capture the essence of Indian culture. We hope that India Fest is not only an enjoyable experience for you, but also fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of India.

The Asian Indians of Hampton Roads group proactively supports the Hampton Roads community. Read more about us at www.aihr.org. One of our focal missions is to promote education locally. Towards that goal, we have introduced youth-oriented competitions at India Fest. Art, badminton, chess, essay, poetry, math, poetry, ping pong, public speaking, and tennis competitions create an environment of learning and fun. We also had a fun filled panipuri eating competition that contestants and spectators enjoyed equally. Ladies came out and showed off their talent by participating in henna, cake decorating and aarti thali decorating competitions. Our goal is to recognize talent and encourage children to compete and shine!

NETCON provides festive and relaxed environment for people from corporations, banks, restaurants, health professional, political dignitaries and sponsors to mingle. NETCON has been instrumental in providing business connections for attendees and our proud sponsors.

AIHR is grateful to our community for their massive support and encouragement to this Mega India Fest. An event of this magnitude is only possible with dedication, meticulous planning, and the labor of love. We extend our sincere gratitude to our sponsors! Our vendors, who come from far and near, are the jewels of India Fest. Finally, AIHR is indebted to the service of our innumerable performers, choreographers, committee members, and volunteers. Thank you for championing the success of our India Fest!

Best wishes for peace and harmony amongst us!

Bhranti Patel

Chairperson, India Fest



Advancing, understanding, friendship, and cooperation among the people of Norfolk, Virginia, and its international sister cities.

Congratulations AIHR for 25th Anniversary of India Fest



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MARK R. WARNER
VIRGINIA



UNITED STATES SENATE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

September 10, 2022

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to extend warm greetings to all who are gathered for the 25th India Fest at the Virginia Beach Convention Center.

After a two year hiatus caused by the pandemic, I am excited to see this special festival return for its 25th anniversary. I know attendees will once again enjoy experiencing your culture through traditional cuisine, performances, and crafts. I commend the Asian Indians of Hampton Roads for organizing this tremendous festival year-after-year.

Virginia is proud to be the home to one of the largest populations of the more than 4 million Indian-Americans nationwide. The richness and diversity of this community is a strength to us all—Indian-Americans are successful entrepreneurs, doctors, academics, and more, building companies, creating jobs, and enriching our communities.

I am honored to serve as Co-Chair of the bipartisan Senate India Caucus, which is one of the largest country caucuses in the United States Senate. Our aim is deepening the United States-India partnership, including by increasing two-way trade and enhancing our strategic partnership across a range of domains—everything from technology, global health, and research, to clean energy, defense cooperation, and counterterrorism. We have worked hard to find opportunities for further collaboration between our two countries, including through increasing United States defense sales, supporting reforms in India to ease business for United States companies, and finding ways to increase academic exchanges.

As the world continues to respond and build back from the pandemic, we have seen the challenges and devastation that have impacted people around the world, necessitating coordinated response and international collaboration. I have pushed the past and current administrations to expand cooperative public health efforts with India. Efforts that we have seen related to vaccines, supplies and equipment, and public health coordination have all demonstrated the strength and possibility of a bilateral and multilateral United States-India partnership.

I remain optimistic about the United States-India relationship, and I continue to believe we can further our great strides together. Events like India Fest, where customs and ideas can be exchanged, further this goal. Enjoy the festival!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark R. Warner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MARK R. WARNER
United States Senator



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September 10, 2022

WELCOME! 25TH Mega India Fest

Dear Friends:

Welcome back to Virginia Beach. It is indeed a pleasure for me to extend a most warm welcome on behalf of the City of Virginia Beach. We are delighted you have selected the Virginia Beach as the site of the 25th Mega India Fest. September is a lovely time in our city and the Virginia Beach Convention Center is the perfect place to host your event.

The Mega India Fest has become a tradition over the years in our community providing an opportunity for all citizens in the Hampton Roads area to experience the culture and heritage of India. It is a strong and respected tradition. Thank you for organizing this festival to share your culture with others through traditional cuisine, performance, and crafts.

Year after year, your group has taken on many noble causes, and the work you do is admirable. Please accept my deepest gratitude and appreciation for leading efforts in our city, region, and the Commonwealth of Virginia. I give you my best wishes and you have my continued support in the years to come.

On behalf of the Virginia Beach City Council, I send our best wishes for a fun-filled time in one of the finest cities in the nation.

Sincerely,

Robert M. "Bobby" Dyer
Mayor



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Kenneth Cooper Alexander, Ph.D.
Mayor



CITY of NORFOLK

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TO ALL ATTENDING THE
ASIAN INDIANS OF HAMPTON ROADS 25TH MEGA INDIA FEST
VIRGINIA BEACH CONVENTION CENTER
SATURDAY, September 10, 2022

Greetings!

On behalf of the City of Norfolk, it gives me great pleasure to extend my warmest welcome to all those attending the Asian Indians of Hampton Roads 25th Mega India Fest in our neighboring city of Virginia Beach. I commend Asian Indians of Hampton Roads for bringing awareness to Asian Indian culture and recognize the many contributions made by Asian Americans of Indian origin.

Hampton Roads is inspired by this annual display of Asian Indian heritage and culture, through traditional cuisine, performances from the Indian subcontinent, and crafts. The Asian Indians of Hampton Roads with a population – close to 7000 people, is comprised of successful entrepreneurs, physicians, academics, engineers, IT professionals, business owners and more – building companies, creating jobs, and enriching our communities, while actively promoting Diversity and Inclusion.

Congratulations to the Asian Indians of Hampton Roads for organizing this tremendous festival as you celebrate twenty-five years of sharing your culture with others.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Cooper Alexander, Ph.D.
Mayor



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As a non-profit organization, tuition and fees are used to fulfill HRCA's mission of bringing the life benefits of chess to Hampton Roads!



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HRCA has specific programs to reach girls/women, at-risk youth, veterans/military, seniors, scouting units, and more!



WHAT WE DO

We host chess classes and clubs throughout schools and in the community for adults and kids ages 4+. Our clubs promote the life benefits of chess through sportsmanship and competition.

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Anniversary Thoughts...

1. Sometimes you win, sometimes you learn. – *John Maxwell*
2. When you Get, Give. When you Learn, Teach. – *Maya Angelou*
3. All truly great thoughts are conceived by walking. – *Friedrich Nietzsche*
4. The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. – *Mahatma Gandhi*
5. We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. – *Winston Churchill*
6. Never regret a day in your life: good days give happiness, bad days give experience, worst days give lessons, and best days give memories. – *Unknown*

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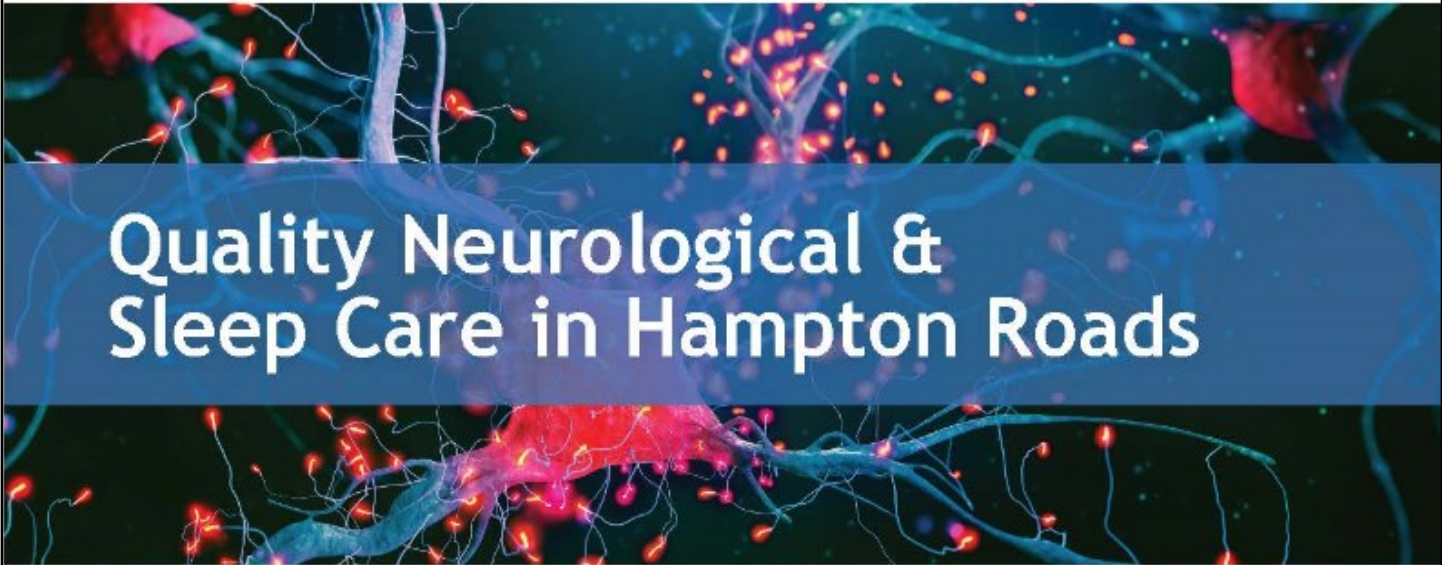


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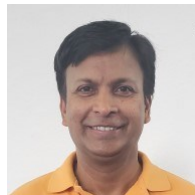
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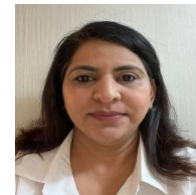
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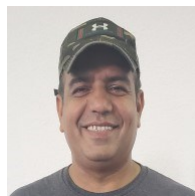
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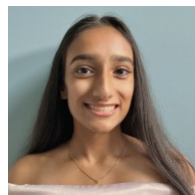
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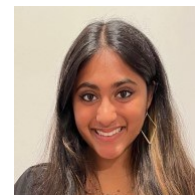
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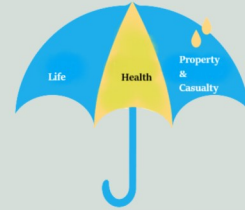
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“Bhashika” The Tradition of Language and Dance

By Malini Srirama



Welcome to the Silver Jubilee celebration of India Fest 2022. This year’s theme is “**Bhashika**”, languages, which are important for the development of civilization.

India has 22 major languages and several hundred dialects. The Indian Constitution, in Article 343 (1), recognizes that “the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script.” The business of Indian Parliament can be transacted in Hindi or English, whereas different State assemblies transact business in their own official State language, along with English. Hindi has the most speakers in India, followed by Bengali, Marathi, and so on.

Sanskrit, like Greek or Latin, emerged as the ancient classical language. It was a proto-Indo-European language, used for classical and religious texts. Tamil also emerged simultaneously as a proto-Dravidian language in South India.

When I was a student in Bangalore, India, I was made to learn Kannada (State language), English, Sanskrit, and a little bit of Hindi. At home, we spoke Tamil, my mother tongue. It is common when growing up in India to converse, read, and write in several languages as each person is often exposed to many.

Languages help humans to communicate and develop relationships. Since languages and culture are co-dependent on each other, the performing arts blossomed in various hues in different regions of India.

Today, you will see many dances from the Indian movie industry. Bollywood dance is an energetic and popular style featured in many Hindi movies, produced in Mumbai.

This year’s India Fest highlight is a dance segment called “Bhashika,” produced by Vidhi Sharma and Dharti Patel, and showcases the dance styles, costumes, and languages of different Indian states. The languages include Marathi from the state of Maharashtra, Hindi from the northern region, Bengali from west Bengal, Bihu from Assam, Gujarati from Gujarat, Punjabi from Punjab, and several more.

Hope you will watch and enjoy this year’s colorful production.

Malini Srirama is an accomplished dancer who has performed throughout India, Canada, Europe, Australia, and the United States. Hailing from a family deeply involved in the classical arts, she began studying dance from a young age. Throughout the years Malini, has continued to study dance and choreography under the tutelage of eminent gurus in India. She is a dancer, teacher, and choreographer of classical Indian dance, currently based in Norfolk, Virginia.



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A brief history of AIHR and India Fest



Dr. Alok Verma

The humble beginnings of Asian Indians of Hampton Roads dated to the early seventy's when the organization was formed to serve the Indian families moving to the tidewater region of Virginia and Indian students arriving at Old Dominion University. In those days, the organization was known as Asian Indians of Tidewater (AIT). The organization was created to serve the social and cultural needs of the growing South Asian Community and included families from Pakistan and Bangladesh. Mohapatra, a faculty member in the political science department, was one of the first presidents of the organization. Other active members in the organization included Sudhir Mehrotra, Amarjit Singh, Geetha Raman, and Ram Gowda.

This brief history is based on my recollection as a student at Old Dominion University, a graduate student in the Aerospace Engineering Department who arrived in Tidewater in 1979. In those days, the Indian Students Association (ISA) was active on the campus of ODU and collaborated with AIT in organizing events like the screening of Bollywood movies at ODU during weekends and assisting AIT in planning annual picnics. At that time, there were approximately seventy students from the Indian sub-continent in ISA and around 150 families in Tidewater. My first recollection of participation in AIT activities includes a meeting at the home of Mohapatra, which included Sudhir Mehrotra for planning an annual picnic.

In 1980, I became President of the ISA and an active member of the AIT. After Mohapatra left ODU, several individuals served as president of the organization, including Sudhir Mehrotra, Amarjit Singh, and Kumar Singh. During the tenure of Kumar Singh, I joined the AIT team as Vice President, and we started participating in the International Jubilee at ODU. The International Student's office organized this event at ODU to highlight the culture and music of all international communities in the tidewater region. India Fest was born out of this engagement, and the first independent India Fest was held at the university Webb Center in the late eighties.

In 1983, the business and civic leaders lobbied successfully to have the US Post Office change the postmark from "Tidewater" to "Hampton Roads." Subsequently, the organization's name was changed to Asian Indians of Hampton Roads (AIHR) to reflect the region's new name in the early nineties. AIT was revived as AIHR during a meeting of community members like P. Murthy, Ram Gowda, Kadaba Raman, Amarjit Singh, Bidhu Mohanty, and myself.

AIHR was formed as a non-religious and secular organization welcoming families from the entire Indian Subcontinent and others who were interested in the culture of south Asian countries. One of the main objectives of the AIHR is "To facilitate the involvement of the people of the Asian- Indian origin living in the Hampton roads area in the mainstream of American social fabric." Over the years, AIHR has organized events to increase political awareness, promote culture and music, educational programs, fundraise for disaster relief, serve food to the homeless, volunteer at food banks, organize medical and visa camps, donate money to various charities, and provided scholarships to needy students. AIHR has collaborated with multiple non-profit organizations such as Norfolk Sister City, Asian Pacific American Heritage Organization, World Affairs Council, Old Dominion University, Sentara Hospital, Sangeet Sargam, Guru Nanak Foundation of Hampton Roads, and many more.

During the later part of the 20th century, several individuals served in leadership positions and provided direction to the organization's activities. During this period, AIHR and India Fest were sustained by the arduous work of leaders like Amarjit Singh, Papaiah Murthy, Ram Gowda, Alok Verma, Hiroo Daryanani, Kadaba Raman, Geetha Raman, Bidhu Mohanty, and Kamlesh Kapoor.

During the early part of the 21st century, AIHR saw the India Fest develop into a significant cultural event with attendance exceeding 10,000. This was possible due to the dedicated work of younger leaders like Mohit Gour, Himangshu Dey, Naveen Kumar, Govindarajan Ramesh, Janak Patel, Ankur Khullar, Karamjit Rajpal, Pradip Patel, Bhranti Patel, Umang Aggarwal, R.K Renukunta and not to mention the many more volunteers.

For more than half a century, AIHR has not only served the local community in Hampton Roads but touched thousands of needy individuals through its charity work and donations for various natural disasters. We hope this work will continue with new leadership and volunteers.

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Contest	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
Tennis	Satish Chekuri & Milind Chokshi	Alok Neopane & Suroj Gurung	N/A
Badminton	Anupam Chakraborti & Nisaraj Dharmarajan	Jainam Parikh & Dhruv Parikh	N/A
Ping Pong Junior	Mruthyunjai Jawahhar	Rohan Galda	N/A
Ping Pong Senior	Nimish Nookala	Namish Shah	N/A
Ping Pong Adults	Vijay Sheth	Venkat Rama Raju	N/A
Instruments	Archita Basnet	N/A	N/A
Singing Junior	Pratiti Mohan	Aaradhya patil	N/A
Public speaking Junior	Soham Pattnaik	Pranav Mohan	N/A
Public Speaking Senior	Anuradha Basnet	N/A	N/A
Poetry Junior	Amira Arif & Pratiti Mohan	Tharani Nivas	N/A
Poetry Intermediate	Devika Padiri & Hardik Baviskar	Soham Pattnaik	N/A
Essay Junior	Shrihan Pattnaik	Amira Arif	N/A
Essay Senior	Soham Pattnaik	Prasanna Chokkalingam	N/A
Art Junior	Amira Arif	Aarya Patil	N/A
Art Intermediate	Shrihan Pattnaik	Samit Katkar & Vani Nainval	N/A
Art Senior	Soham Pattnaik	Neelakshi Swain	N/A
Aarti Thali Decorating	Mayuri Patil	Hemangini patel	N/A
Cake Decorating	Tanvi Patel	Rekha Padiri	N/A
Henna Competition	Dimpi Desai	Rekha Padiri & Twinkle Chauhan	N/A
Pani Puri	Sanjeev Mudumba	Preeti Zemse	N/A
Singing Senior	Anuradha Basnet	N/A	N/A
Chess Elite	Lenny Buelmann-Prok	Aaradhya Patil	Shrihan Pattnaik
Chess Novice	Mruthyunjai Jawahhar	Bisaj Shrestha	Devika Padiri
Chess Senior Rookie	Nicholas Milan	Evin Deepak	Jatin Tiwari
Chess Junior Rookie	Aadarsh Shrestha	Mrithun Balaji Arunvijay	Samit Katkar
Math Senior	Aidan Viar	N/A	N/A
Math Intermediate	Soham Pattnaik	Smit Kothari	Varsha Padmanabhah
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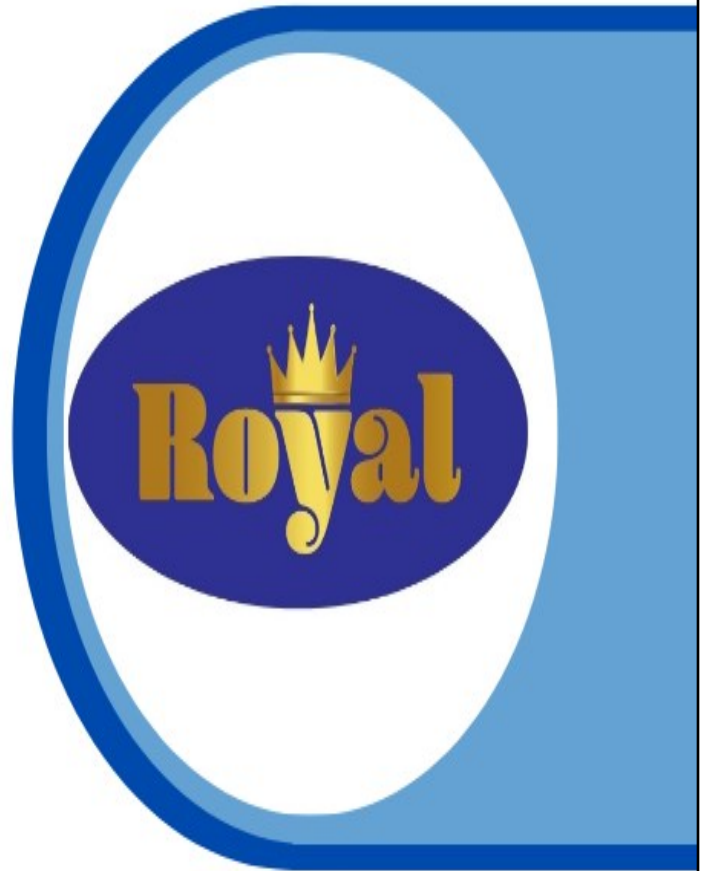
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Lord please pick a bunch for me
Place them in my mother's arms
And tell her they are from us.
Tell her I love her and miss her
And when she turns to smile
Place a kiss upon her cheek
And tell her that kiss is from me.*



*Mom as I was child you held my hands for a while
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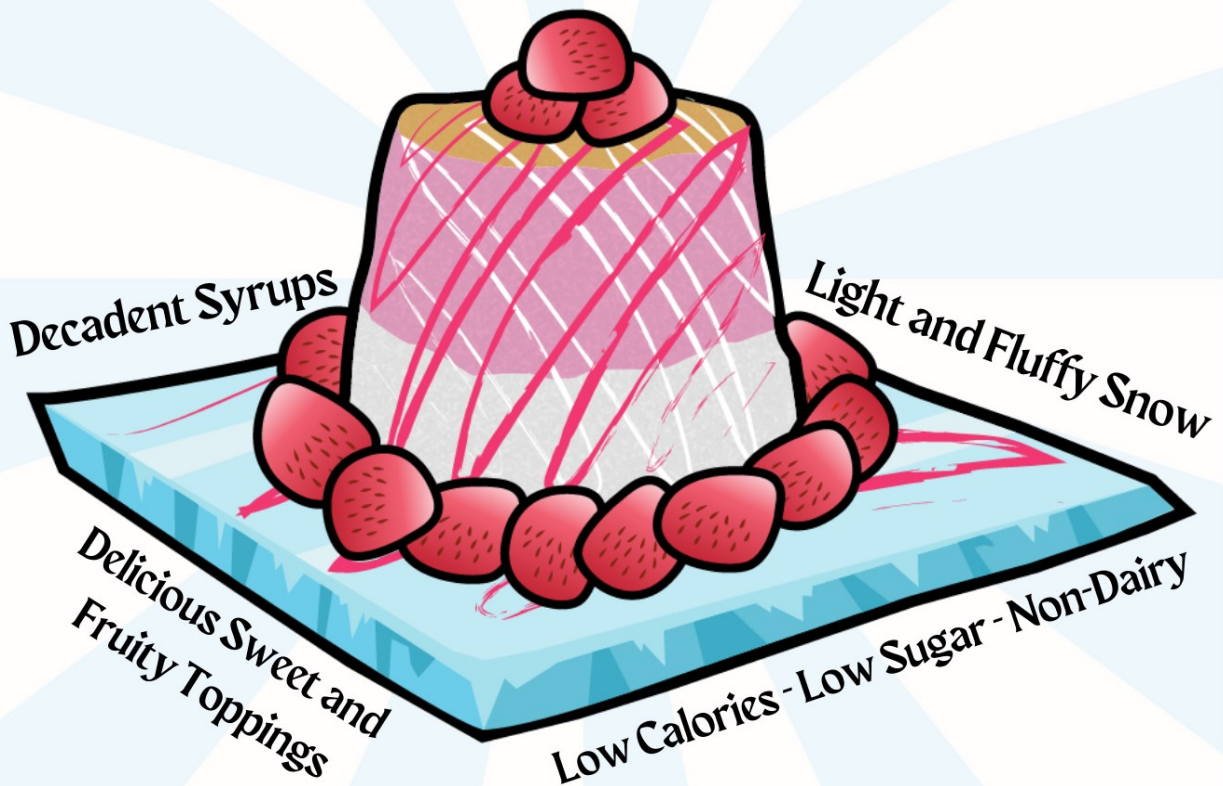
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