

## ***2017-2018 Indian Americans of Lexington (IAL) Accomplishments***

### ***Library Committee***

*Cary Memorial Library Foundation and IAL partnered to bring Library after Dark--Bollywood Beats! on Saturday, May 5th, 2018. The audience was treated to a lineup of dance performances from different regions of India, from folk dance to hip hop to fusion. In the finale, the audience joined the choreographer, Bina Morparia, and students of her dance school- Dance Spirit, to the beats of Bollywood music. Other attractions included "henna station" and "saree draping". Cash bar and Indian snacks were offered.*

*IAL participated in the fourth Fairy Tale Ball event conducted by Cary Library on Friday, April 6th, 2018. The clever rabbit, the thirsty crow, and the greedy crocodile, the well-read characters from Panchatantra tales came to life at the annual Fairy Tale Ball event. Thanks to Jayshree Rajamani and her daughter Mayari for their story telling through Bharathanatyam dance form.*

### ***Town Liaison Committee***

#### *Historical Society*

*IAL and the Lexington Historical Society co-hosted a program for young children called "Stories From Near and Far" on Sunday, February 11, 2018. Traditional folk tales from both the Indian and European traditions were retold in the form of dance and dramatic narration. Shireen Kumar graciously taught the children dance steps to go along with the story. Snacks were served, and children went home with animal's masks that they created. The program was well received by both the children and guardians.*

*On October 4, 2018, IAL hosted a talk organized by the Historical Society on Indian involvement in World War 1 by Professor Michele Louro. This event was very well attended and many interesting stories were shared.*

#### *Patriot's Day Parade*

*Since 2014 IAL has been participating in the afternoon Patriot's Day parade held on the third Monday in April which coincides with spring break. Around 35 to 40 volunteers comprising of children and adults represent the Indian community during the Patriot's day celebrations. Join us in the 2019 Patriot's Day Parade as we walk and dance to a variety of music along Mass Avenue.*

## **School Committee**

*College and Career Fair: IAL hosted our annual college and career workshop, entitled "Multiple Pathways to Success: Tools for Self-Empowerment" on Saturday, June 9th at Diamond Middle School. Through working collaboratively with Lexington High School counselors, CAAL, Kalex, LYFS, IAL focused on providing students and parents with "upstream" tools to better plan a roadmap to success. This plan is based on students' interests and passions, so everyone can create her/his own path, balancing goals and well-being. Parents learned how they can help their children explore interests, have more meaningful discussions about such issues and clearly communicate expectations and support.*

*The workshop was again a success and a major idea that came out of it was a desire from the community to provide our students with more opportunities to explore different career paths through a shadowing program that will help them realize their interests and passions.*

## **IAL Youth**

*IAL is proud and excited to announce newly formed Youth Committee. This committee primarily consists of High School Kids. Dr. Parul Kumar is leading the IAL club which allows the committee members to meet every Friday from 2:30-3:00 in Rm 402 at Lexington High School. This committee's mission is to create a stronger sense of identity within Indian youth in Lexington, and to serve the Lexington community at large. IAL Youth held their first social Bollywood dance evening on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018. It was a small event but kids had a wonderful time with DJ, music, lights and food. IAL youth is busy supporting IAL Diwali team in October and is looking forward to another social event before the end of the year. If you are in middle or high school, and would like to join the youth committee, please send an email to [IALyouthcmte123@gmail.com](mailto:IALyouthcmte123@gmail.com).*

## **Lexington Community Coalition**

*IAL actively partners in the "Lexington Community Coalition" by way of participating and sponsoring the "Community Welcome for New families". This welcome coffee is scheduled twice every month on the same day with a morning and an afternoon/ evening session. This group with help of experts also discusses other key issues such as substance/ alcohol abuse and mental health.*

## ***Adhoc Culture Committee***

*Each year IAL is proud to bring Lexington community a mega Diwali event. It take many months to prepare for this event – from getting a space, contacting sponsors, deciding on food, decorations, inviting choreographers, managing budget (as tickets pay for the event), inviting town leaders, getting emcees, etc. Culture committee Coffee is an adhoc committee. It is established for the duration of the event. This year’s Diwali event has been led by Suman Murali, Seema Sinha and Aneesha Karody. But it takes a village to run an event of this scale. The three leads are supported by around 30 adult volunteers and 25 youth volunteers. IAL board is thankful to all of them and to the all the chorographers, kids and adults who spend many hours preparing for the program. Good luck to everyone.*

## ***Technology Committee***

*One of the core missions of IAL is to keep our community informed and connected. Technology team manages the email list which is used for all important community news and information. They also manage the IAL facebook page allowing community to share what is important to them. The team has worked hard to revamp the website: [IndianAmericanssofLexington.org](http://IndianAmericanssofLexington.org). Please bookmark the site and visit us for regular updates*

## ***OTHER***

*IAL members represent IAL community at many of the town’s committees and task force. IAL members are part of Lexington Human Rights Committee and Diversity Task Force.*

*If you would like to be part of this wonderful and giving group of volunteers, please contact us and sign up on volunteer box. You can give 1 hour to 100 – it is totally up to you. Your engagement is important as it helps create an identity, respect and voice for our community.*

## **IAL-GIG**

*Starting soon after Diwali Mela 2017, GIG hosted a Civic Engagement Seminar for the community in December. The keynote speaker at this session was the Chair of the Lexington Board of Selectmen, Ms. Suzie Barry. This was a well-attended informative seminar about Lexington's government and included a Q&A session with several Town Meeting Members from the Indian American community.*

*Based on the seminar and recruitment drives, several new volunteers expressed interest in running for elections in 2018. GIG organized multiple information sessions and helped in their campaign efforts. This has now resulted in 18 elected members from our community being part of Town Meeting - an important voting block that has begun voicing their opinion on issues pertinent to Indian Americans in Lexington. In addition, Ms. Deepika Sawhney was elected to the School Committee - an important body that makes decisions about educational policies and priorities for our town. Many of our members have also been appointed to several financial and civic committees that further enhance the ability for community specific issues to be addressed.*

*In August 2018, GIG hosted a Candidate Forum inviting the five Lexington residents, contesting in the primary elections for State Representative for the 15th Middlesex District. This structured Q&A session was very valuable to both the attendees and candidates as they were able to connect with each other and understand issues facing the town and state. We are hoping to have similar sessions in the future as opportunities arise.*

*The success of GIG's efforts has been recognized by several news media including NPR, Lexington Minuteman and India New England. To stay informed of IAL-GIG activities or join the team, please send an email to [IALGIG.MA@gmail.com](mailto:IALGIG.MA@gmail.com)*