

Summer

2012



# Sandesh

“The Message”

A Newsletter from IndUS of Fox Valley

## From Editors' Desk

Margret Mead, the celebrated American anthropologist made the following astute observation: “Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” This issue of *Sandesh* is dedicated to celebrating volunteerism.

This issue features articles from Mr. Bob Pederson, the Chief Visionary and Story Teller of Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin, and Mr. Curt Detjen, President/CEO Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region. The spirit of giving is embodied in these two organizations. Goodwill has marshaled the talents and the resources of thousands of citizens to bring about transformations in the lives of the countless. Starting with a small donation of \$5000, the Community Foundation has supported volunteers through millions of

dollars in grants to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Fox Valley region. The two authors command our deep admiration and credibility as they share their perspectives on volunteerism.

Forty years ago, in the sleepy village of Tilonia, Rajasthan, Bunker Roy and his dreamy-eyed idealist friends embarked upon a social experiment. The Barefoot College besides empowering the rural dispossessed in several states of India has reached out to over a dozen African countries, quietly bringing about a social revolution. Sandhya Sridhar pens an account of this amazing volunteer from India and this band of volunteers who have touched lives of thousands, across two continents.

Our volunteers are our most valued assets. Whatever IndUS has been able to achieve is entirely due to the selfless giving of our nearly 200 volunteers. We sincerely thank

them and celebrate them. An article by B. S. Sridhar captures the scope and depth of volunteer involvement and dedication.

Hope you like this issue and be inspired to volunteer or continue to volunteer. Each one of us has a role and we can help match your talents, needs and values with any of the fine volunteer efforts in the Valley. We earnestly hope that you would be inspired by the ageless wisdom from an ancient *Subhashita* (good word) in Sanskrit:

*parOpa kArAya Palanti vrkShAha  
parOpa kArAya vahanti nadyaha  
parOpa kArAya duhanti gAvaha  
parOpa kArAya idam sharIram*

Just as the trees bear fruit, and the rivers flow,  
Cows yield milk, for the benefit of others.  
Recognize! The true purpose of one's life  
Is but to serve others.

Sandesh

An IndUS of Fox Valley  
Publication

### Editors

Dr. Badri Varma  
Mr. Terry Dawson  
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*The views expressed in  
the articles are not  
necessarily those of the  
Editors or IndUS of  
Fox Valley*

## Reflections on Volunteerism

By Bob Pedersen

Years ago while working for CARF, The Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, I was interviewing a CEO of a not-for-profit organization in Colorado. Part of the survey required us to determine the extent to which the facility utilized volunteers and if they indeed utilized volunteers, how they managed the volunteer program.

The CEO was an older gentleman who had been in his position for 40 years and was nearing retirement. He had become hardened and cynical. When I asked him if his organization had a volunteer program, he paused and said, “we don't use volunteers, as far as we are concerned they are worth what you pay them.”

I was taken aback. My experience was that

volunteers bring a vitality and energy to an organization. They are driven by their passion to return value to the community that made their life pleasant and fulfilled. As he spoke I reflected on the enormous contributions made by the volunteers in our community.

Volunteers bring so many talents and perspectives that support and contribute to the life of the organization where they contribute their time, talent and treasury. In this day and age most non-profit organizations do not have the resources to fully serve their clients. Volunteers often fill the gaps left by a lack of funding and talent gaps created by limited budgets.

At Goodwill we annually use thousands of volunteers in virtually every corner of our

collection work. Volunteers work in the Miracle League as buddies to kids with disabilities allowing the kid's parents to sit and marvel as they play baseball. Our annual 'Sack it' to Goodwill donation in the valley utilizes hundreds of volunteers to harvest and move hundreds of thousands of pounds of donations from the curb to the warehouse. Volunteers help folks with tax preparation. That pool of volunteer tax preparers placed almost \$600,000 dollars of Earned Income Tax Credits in the pockets of people who desperately needed the extra income.

Whenever I hear volunteers talk about the experience, to a person they relate that they gained more from the experience than they believe they contributed by their efforts. It is clear that volunteers gain the opportunity to give back in ways that touch their hearts and souls.

There is a school of management thinking that elevates the concept of servant leadership as one of the highest forms of management and leadership expression. Volunteering is one of the greatest opportunities to demonstrate and practice servant leadership. The old adage, "a gift is not a gift unless it is

freely given" applies to volunteering. Volunteerism is the fullest expression of that.

When I remember back on that experience I had as a young professional surveyor I cannot help but believe that the old fellow was missing an important opportunity to give meaning to the lives of the people he served, and an opportunity to volunteers to engage in one of the most important life experiences we can have. The opportunity to give unselfishly to the people and the community where we live, learn, work and raise our families is a precious opportunity.

Business people can contribute their skills to non-profit endeavors and learn from the lessons presented in every non-profit and the non-profit experience can teach business leaders lessons that they can take back to their business that will make the businesses more humane and moral.

I have now come to believe that there is no greater opportunity in life than the opportunity to volunteer. It is the gift that goes on giving, adding value to the life touched as well as the life of the volunteer.

Non-profits are struggling in the new economy with needs becoming greater and the resources becoming diminished. Volunteerism can bridge that gap and increase the mission capability of non-profit organizations at a time when every ounce of talent, time and treasury are needed to meet the ever increasing human need in our community.

Look for your passion, study the opportunities to volunteer and reach out tomorrow to an organization that best aligns with your passion. You will not regret one minute spent in service to your community.

Don't be that cynical old executive. Prove him wrong. □

*Bob Pedersen's career spans 43 years. He worked for the Association for Retarded Citizens movement for twenty years before becoming the President and CEO at Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin in 1991. Bob has an Associate Degree from Kendall College, a Bachelors of Arts from North Park College, Post-Graduate work at UWGB and Stanford University and a Doctor of Humane Letters from the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. He is a Hesselbien Fellow of the Peter Drucker Foundation and a Fellow of the Stanford University Community Innovation Program.*

## Volunteerism embedded in the fabric of our community

*By Nancy Nelson Heykes*

*In the United States, as soon as several inhabitants have taken an opinion or an idea they wish to promote in society, they seek each other out and unite together once they have made contact. From that moment, they are no longer isolated but have become a power seen from afar whose activities serve as an example and whose words are heeded."*

*Democracy in America, Alexis de Tocqueville (1840)*

*"Be the change you wish to see in the world." - Mahatma Gandhi*

As Alexis de Tocqueville observed over a century ago, Americans have a penchant for organizing themselves into voluntary associations for a myriad of purposes. That's very true of our community. For example, a search on

the IRS database of all of the 501c3 organizations with an Appleton, WI address yields a list totaling 287!

Some of our local nonprofits are generations old, and we almost take their activity and impact for granted – they are so embedded in the fabric of the community. But many of us have also had the opportunity to observe and participate in the developmental years of several newer nonprofits that, in the spirit that de Tocqueville noted, set out to promote community change on issues of diversity awareness and inclusion: our own IndUS of the Fox Valley; the Fox Cities Rotary Multicultural Center and Casa Hispana. Each has its own story of volunteer impetus and action, and each illustrates how volunteer

action benefits both the individuals involved and the broader community.

I have long admired the formation of IndUS of the Fox Valley as an example of a positive response to public misperceptions. The way I remember the story behind IndUS is the disappointment felt by long-time community residents from India when their friends and business colleagues would express resentment of outsourcing to India and mock customer service call center experiences. Instead of remaining frustrated and resentful, the leaders who would form IndUS realized that in all the years they had it-forward community service of SEVA, to the annual IndUS showcase event and banquet, IndUS volunteers combine a

pride in sharing the rich culture of the Indian sub-continent in concert with community service involving both members of the Indian community and others.

“Grassroots” listening and the use of volunteer social science expertise were key factors in the development of the Fox Cities Rotary Multicultural Center. Dr. Bola Delano-Oriaran and other local activists noted the growing racial, ethnic and religious minorities in the community and the resulting development of small organizations offering affinity, support and services. Could these organizations become stronger and have more positive impact on the community by banding together in some way? Dr. Bola spent a year having individual conversations with leaders in minority and majority communities to gauge need and interest. Building on the interest generated, she and Dr. Sabrina Robins used their professional research skills to develop a community town hall listening process involving different stakeholder groups throughout the community. The resulting research study became the foundation used by the coalition of community leaders that proposed and launched the Multicultural Center. It was fascinating to observe how the year-long coalition process became a learning laboratory for inclusion skills for members of both majority and minority communities.

The coalition and the subsequent development of the Center involved many new faces in volunteer board service and leadership. For example, Kamlesh Varma has reminisced about her first coalition meetings as a representative of the India Association. She at first felt a bit intimidated by the presence of community leaders from large organizations like United Way and Goodwill. She did begin to participate in coalition debate and deliberation, became a Center board member and leader for IndUS, Toward Community and the Center. This is just one

example of the power of volunteer roles to nurture enriching community contributions.

Banding together to develop school and community presentations also enables volunteers with particular skills and knowledge to multiply their community impact by training other volunteers, thus growing both the quantity and quality of service the Center volunteers could provide. It has also been an outlet to learn new skills; for example, teachers, social workers and others have unlearned and relearned some habits in order to become diversity circle facilitators.

The annual Foods of All Nations event has also grown as an avenue for volunteering. Local groups donate their performances; YMCA staff donate their skills to offer children’s activities; dozens of FVTC international students spend the entire day volunteering at the event, from set up, to performance and culture-sharing, to food service, to clean-up. The volunteers’ growing sense of pride in their important role in the event and desire to have planning input is a joy to observe.

Another example of the multiplier effect among Center volunteers is the energy and passion of chair Badri Varma and the other NEW World Cinema volunteers who have pooled their love of film to choose and offer a year-round series of foreign films with engaging discussion for over six years.

Volunteers for Casa Hispana demonstrate the combination of personal and community benefit as well. It’s obvious when frequenting the Casa Hispana office that there is a personal comfort and enjoyment in the casual camaraderie of speaking one’s original language with others. This bilingual ability also serves an important community need in assisting individuals who struggle with English to deal with school, business or community issues and information. Casa Hispana volunteers leverage this community

benefit even further by hosting and facilitating the monthly Hispanic agency forum in which attracts government agency and nonprofit service providers to share information about the needs of the Hispanic community and service offerings available.

### **The future of volunteering for diverse cultural organizations**

We have a lot more to learn from each other in growing our volunteer capacity to embrace our community’s diversity. Those of us comfortable in our volunteer roles need to be alert to potential bias in involving new volunteers. If our volunteer opportunities are available only to those with ample/surplus resources of time, transportation, finances, etc., we may be excluding many in our community who have valuable perspectives to contribute and who might benefit from the leadership development, contacts, and personal satisfaction that a volunteer role could provide.

We also need to challenge our own assumptions about what is “volunteering”. Sociologists teach us that in many minority religious, ethnic or racial communities, “informal” volunteering (individual acts of caregiving) are more prevalent than “formal” volunteer roles with organizations. Thus, if our approach is only to increase the racial diversity of people filling our governing board roles, we are missing out on ways of volunteering that would enrich our life together.

*“Comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable.” - Finley Peter Dunne □*

*Nancy Nelson Heykes is currently Director of Development for Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin, Inc. She previously served as the first executive director of the Fox Cities Rotary Multicultural Center (2004 - 2007). Nancy is an attorney and also continues to use consulting and facilitation skills gained from many years of experience in nonprofit organization governance and management.*

*"Volunteers polish up the rough spots in our communities." Alice Sandstrom*

*"The ultimate expression of generosity is not in giving of what you have, but in giving of who you are."*

*- Johnnetta B. Cole*

## The Community Foundation exists to help donors share

By Curt Detjen

I often think about how special the Fox Valley is as a place to live, work and raise a family. I try to think through all of the factors that make it – and keep it – that special place.

We have all of the ingredients – good schools, strong employers, responsive government, premier entertainment venues, ample outdoor recreational opportunities, and the list goes on.

While these are key, I believe that the most important factor in the equation is quality people – and the Fox Valley does very well on that score. People here care about their neighbors and their community and they express it both through their donations to charity and through what I think is the real “X factor” in sustaining our quality of life – volunteer service.

According to an annual survey conducted by Volunteering in America, 37% of residents in the Fox Valley volunteer, a full 10 percentage points higher than the national average and a couple of percentage points above the state average. The sense of community ownership and the high value placed on volunteerism are longstanding expectations in this region.

Volunteers working through IndUS are a perfect example of what I mean. Through the dedication of time and sharing of talent, their volunteerism builds a more effective organization and a stronger, more caring community. The work pays dividends not only in the tasks accomplished, but also in the relationships that are established.

Of course, charitable organizations need not just time, but money from their supporters. For 26 years, the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region has been assisting those who want to provide that financial support.

National statistics show Fox Valley residents are generous with their treasure as well as their time. The national Columbus Survey of giving to community foundations found people in

our region give at a level about 60% higher than the state average and more than twice the national average. That giving through the Community Foundation demonstrates how dedicated people here are to giving back to do long-term good for the community.

We help people who want to support IndUS financially by administering and prudently investing the *IndUS of the Fox Valley Fund*, a perpetual endowment established by IndUS to provide a stable, long-term source of support. The fund generates investment returns over time for the organization to use to support its charitable interests in the Fox Valley and across the globe. The IndUS fund awards grants that reflect the shared interests of its membership and advance the values important to IndUS.

The *IndUS of the Fox Valley Fund* will continue to be an important vehicle for doing good for many generations into the future. Its grants will follow the evolving interests of the membership and will continue to be responsive to our changing community and world.

Families, individuals, businesses and other organizations have established more than 1,100 charitable funds within the Community Foundation. They make tax-deductible gifts of cash, stock, real estate or other assets to their charitable funds when they can and then award grants to nonprofit organizations as the need or the donors’ interests dictate.

Last year, more than 800 charitable organizations received \$13 million in grants from charitable funds within the Community Foundation. The Foundation exists to connect people with the charitable causes important to them. Our tagline sums up what we do in three words: “Helping Donors Share.”

The Community Foundation makes it easier for people to make charitable gifts now and – through a variety of types of planned gifts – can serve as a trusted steward to assure a donor’s charitable intentions continue to be addressed long after his or her lifetime.

Increasingly, our staff is helping people find the charitable projects or organizations that fit their charitable goals. Their preferences may be for nonprofits addressing basic human needs or the arts, their church or their alma mater or charitable efforts that just strike them as being good for the community. The Fox Cities LIFE Study ([www.foxcitieslifestudy.org](http://www.foxcitieslifestudy.org)) is a valuable tool for identifying where the community’s strengths and needs lie. We can help people address charitable needs by giving locally, or around the world.

This financial support can serve as a catalyst for a nonprofit organization, allowing it to accomplish what its volunteers are seeking to do, but in a more efficient and effective manner. We are at the center of a partnership between charitable people and organizations addressing charitable needs in a way that preserves the quality of life that we all find so special here.

We are pleased and honored that IndUS has entrusted us with its endowment and look forward to continuing a relationship in which our insights into the Fox Valley’s nonprofit community and your growing membership of talented and dedicated volunteers can continue to nurture a very special place here in the Fox Valley. □

Author’s Note: You can learn more about the Community Foundation on our website at [www.cffoxvalley.org](http://www.cffoxvalley.org) or connect with us through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. You can support the *IndUS of Fox Valley Fund* by giving online at [www.cffoxvalley.org/indus](http://www.cffoxvalley.org/indus).

*Curt Detjen has been President/CEO of the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region since 2003. He is a graduate of St. Norbert College in De Pere, earned an MBA at the University of Notre Dame and has worked as a business analyst and in community development. He lives in Appleton with his wife, Jean, and two sons.*

## *An Exceptional Concept: Bunker Roy's Barefoot College*

*By Sandhya Sridhar*

Bunker Roy has changed lives of millions of people, both in India and beyond, many more than he would have, had he followed the traditional path his parents expected him to do. His journey is truly remarkable, from starting his first Barefoot College in Tilonia, in Western state of Rajasthan to many more in 13 other states of India and beyond. These are solar powered schools that teach illiterate women to become nurses, doctors, solar engineers, architects and more.

With his privileged family background and elitist schooling, Bunker Roy was groomed for a career in civil or diplomatic service, very unlikely beginning for someone who would follow a mission to spend his life among rural poor. Like Siddhartha, he came in contact with misery, starvation, disease and death when, at a tender age of twenty, he visited famine stricken Bihar in mid-1960s. He went out of curiosity, but the suffering he saw affected him deeply. Influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and Mao Zedong, he believed in native intelligence of illiterate poor in rural areas, and their ability to solve their own problems. The title Barefoot College was selected as a symbol of respect for knowledge that poor people have. Millions of people in villages in India live and work barefoot.

The College takes men, women and children who are illiterate and semi-literate from the lowest castes, and from the most remote and inaccessible villages in India. It trains them at their own pace to become "barefoot" water and solar engineers, architects, teachers, pathologists, midwives, IT workers, accountants, and managers. Once trained, these villagers work within their own communities, thus making them less dependent on "outside" skills. There

are no contracts for faculty, no certifications for students and no graduation ceremonies. Reading and writing are not seen as essential. Traditional knowledge, village skills and practical wisdom are respected more than academic qualifications. He redefined competence. Most of the rural children cannot attend school during the day because they have to tend to animals. They come to school at night. Essential belief is that they know what is important to them and how to solve their problems.

The results are miraculous. Built by illiterate people, these colleges are run



on solar power. If you go to one of these colleges, you sit on the floor, eat on the floor and even sleep on the floor. A grandmother trained to become a dentist. Many solar power engineers "electrified" their villages. Children elected their own "prime-minister" to help run their school. Women from remote villages in Afghanistan went to India to learn solar power technology. They did not even have a common language. Using universal sign language, they learned the basics. In six months they were back in their villages training other women.

The College's achievements are mind-blowing. Its barefoot engineers have provided solar powered lighting to over

136 virtually inaccessible Himalayan villages; over 15,000 children have been educated at Barefoot College night schools; and thirteen villages and thousands of people now benefit from community piped water supply systems, designed, planned and implemented entirely by the locals.

Barefoot College is now recognized as a non-profit, non-governmental organization. It is registered as a social work and research center. Bunker Roy was honored as one of Time 100, the 100 most influential personalities in the world by TIME Magazine in 2010. In 2002 he was selected for Geneva-based Schwab Foundation's award. One of Roy's his greatest heroes is his wife, Aruna Roy, a political and social activist in her own right.

For the skeptics, the barefoot approach clearly works. There are now 20 such colleges in 13 states in India. Furthermore, the college is now involved in training villages from other countries, including Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Bhutan, Senegal and Sierra Leone. But the real achievement, says Roy, is the process rather than the result – the fact that a community can do this on their own, by sharing their own knowledge and skills. He likes to quote Mahatma Gandhi, "Don't look for solutions outside. Listen to the people. They have all the solutions."

Bunker Roy's story is truly inspirational. You can hear him speak at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qqVwM6bMM> □

*Sandhya Sridhar grew up on the campus of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, a premier institution of higher education, known for social services in Bombay India. She now lives in Appleton, USA. She is involved in many social service activities through IndUS*

*"A civilization flourishes when people plant trees under which they will never sit." - Greek Proverb*

*"A bit of fragrance always clings to the hand that gives the rose." - Chinese Proverb*

*"A different world cannot be built by indifferent people." - Nelson Mandela*

## IndUS volunteers embody the American spirit of giving

B. S. Sridhar

The spirit of volunteerism is most profoundly pervades the common people in the US. Gallup's World Poll annual survey offers a unique view of national attitudes toward charitable giving, volunteering and helping strangers in need. Over 60% of the respondents had given money to charities and 43% has volunteered time, and a whopping 73% of the people had helped a stranger in some fashion. It is no surprise then that this survey of over 150,000 people in 153 countries puts the USA at the very top of the heap! It is this spirit of giving that IndUS volunteers bring to our organization.

### The Beginnings

The origin of IndUS dates back to the Summer of 1999, before it was formalized into an independent organization two years later. During this period, IndUS has gained reputation as a vibrant organization. A few years ago, a Post Crescent reporter described the organization as "the indefatigable IndUS", a description that stands testimony for countless individuals who have given so much of their time, talent and energy.

It is my fortune to be associated with a group of volunteers that makes us all proud. Often we receive accolades and the IndUS leadership is always eager to explain: the credit belongs to our volunteers. It is scores of volunteers who made what IndUS is today.

### Seva

IndUS of Fox Valley is dedicated to promoting Indo-American friendship and goodwill by serving the community through social, cultural, educational and charitable activities.

Measured in terms of frequency, impact and reach the most heartwarming program of IndUS goes by the name Seva. In Sanskrit, Seva means service.

The program was conceived and started in 1993, by the author and his dear friend, Nasreen Majid. Each Saturday, a group of volunteers have been serving

lunch to the needy at Salvation Army, Appleton. Local restaurants, cafeterias, hospitals, and pantries donate the food. Our volunteers prepare the food, serve and clean up thereafter. A few years ago, the Seva program merged with IndUS. Currently, we have over fifty volunteers taking turns to serve. Approximately, 6000 meals are served each year. At the end of service, invariably our volunteers comment: "It feels so good to be involved."

### The Educational Outreach

The educational aspect of the IndUS mission is manifested in its outreach activities. Each year, the IndUS volunteers visit area schools to share Indian art, culture, dance and music to promote better friendships and mutual understanding. Three notable achievements in this category are: the Neenah Diversity Fair and Lunch & Learn, and India Heritage Day for Midwest iChild.

IndUS has been participating in the annual diversity fair organized by the Neenah High School since its inception. The henna painting has attracted thousands of students over the years. Our volunteers have raised hundreds of dollars at the fair and donated them to buy books and backpacks for school children in the Fox Valley and in India.

Lunch and Learn was a program launched by IndUS. IndUS volunteers met with educators in various area schools. Over Indian lunch, our volunteers sensitized the teachers to the values, beliefs and cultural framework of Indian-American students and their families. The objective was to promote better understanding, integration, and to foster more productive learning environment. The program has now been adopted by the Fox Cities Rotary Multicultural Center.

iChild is an organization of American parents from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin that have adopted children from India. Each summer, some 75 children and

their parents camp out for a weekend, in Green Lake, Wisconsin. IndUS volunteers and their families join in organizing the India Heritage day. The campers play Indian outdoor and indoor games such as cricket, *kabaddi*, *langadi*, and *lagori*. The cooking demonstrations attract the young and the old alike. Afternoons are devoted to indoor games of *chaduranga* (chess), *parchese*, *kavdya*, and carom. Story-telling, presentations, henna painting, beads work are the other attractions. Holi, the festival of spraying colors has become a popular activity. Our volunteers are their creative, youthful, zestful best throughout the day of fun and frolic.

### The Annual IndUS Banquet

IndUS volunteers have helped organize many a cultural programs over the years. Musicians of the caliber of Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt (Grammy winner), Ustad Shahid Parvez, Richard Zukerman have performed for IndUS. IndUS has hosted dance companies from Madison, Minneapolis, Chicago and New Jersey introducing the Fox Valley to glorious heritage of India classical dances of Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kathakali, and Odissi. Each of these events require careful planning, and efficient execution. Our volunteers make such miracles happen.

The proudest record of our volunteers is undoubtedly the organization of the annual banquet. In this signature annual event, our volunteers seek to achieve all four goals of IndUS, namely, the educational, social, cultural and charitable programming that promotes Indo-American friendship and goodwill. Our volunteers democratically choose the themes. The theme is then translated into three components: the exhibition, the banquet and the cultural program. A Steering Committee is formed in July, each year that provides direction to dozens of volunteers that form teams that plan and execute: exhibition, banquet, cultural program, publicity, tickets, fund raising, silent auction, reception, decorations, and guest

testimony to the creativity, enthusiasm and dedication of dozens of volunteers, their families and friends.

It is such closely coordinated collective action that results in significant amount of charitable giving. Investing in Children is an ongoing commitment of IndUS. Thousands of dollars have been donated over the years to meet the needs of children, and the students enrolled in the schools and colleges in the Fox valley area and in remote villages of India. In addition IndUS volunteers have directed their dollars to the local United

Ways, shelters for women and other worthy causes.

In addition to raising thousands of dollars through the usual social and cultural events, IndUS volunteers have unfailingly risen to meet the needs of the unfortunate whenever calamities have struck their fellow human beings in distant parts of the world. They have helped the earthquake victims in India and Pakistan, and the brave firefighters of New York who rescued the victims of 9/11 attacks. They help build schools in Haiti. Close to \$250,000 were raised to

help the people of Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and India whose lives were dislocated by tsunami of 2005.

IndUS volunteers thus reflect the quintessential American spirit of giving. By giving selflessly, our volunteers demonstrate their love for the community they call home.

*Sridhar was President of IndUS from 2001 to 2008, and currently functions as coordinator of cultural programming. He is on the management faculty at University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.*



## News

### A Change of Guard!

The biennial elections saw changes in leadership. Mr. Tim Higgins retired as the Chair of IndUS Board after providing outstanding leadership for 7 years. Tim while guiding the organization with his keen foresight and “the big picture” issues such as leadership transition, was equally adept and enthusiastic at getting his hands “dirty” or wearing grease paint for an IndUS play! His positive attitude was truly inspiring and motivating. We thank Tim for his dedicated service. Tim has been recently appointed to the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents in recognition of his yeoman service to his alma mater, and we extend to him our very best wishes.

Ms. Nancy Heykes, currently, Director of Development at Goodwill Industries, has succeeded as the Chair of the IndUS Board. Nancy has served the



community in various capacities and brings with her a tremendous amount of energy, ideas and experience. Her past roles

include: Executive director of Fox

Cities Rotary Multi-Cultural Center, A Principal at Meyer-Heykes Nonprofit Partnership, Green Bay, Officer at Aid Association of Lutherans (now, Thrivent), Appleton. Nancy has been a strong supporter of IndUS and has served as a Board Member and a volunteer in many capacities and roles during the past decade. Welcome, Nancy, into your new role!

The biennial elections also inducted the new Executive team and the reconstituted board the details of which appear elsewhere in this issue of Sandesh.

### Volunteer Recognition Dinner

Many volunteers with their families gathered at UW-Fox Valley on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012 to enjoy an evening

of good food, good company, games and entertainment arranged by Tim and



Jonna Higgins. This is also a time when they get to select a theme for the annual banquet. Badri Varma had a slide show on IndUS activities of year 2011 running in the background. After an hour of socializing over hors d’oeuvres and drinks, Ritu and Dilip Tannan took charge of the evening as emcees. Tim and Jonna Higgins had people involved in playing some fun games. Dr. B. S. Sridhar led them in selection of the theme. “Mysterious World of Indian Mythology”, was the final winner for a theme for IndUS 2012. We encourage you to get involved and join one of the teams as we start planning for the next banquet: IndUS 2012.

### Fun With Cultures: Children's Day Camp

On April 21, 2012, Goodwill Center in Menasha buzzed with activities as children were exposed to cultures of

visited various countries. The afternoon was spent learning Rajasthani dance



in a reception to savor an array of foods from Ethiopia, Ghana, India and Norway. High point of the day came when the kids beat their parents in a



contest in general knowledge about the countries covered during the day. That was a testament to how much they had learned in a fun-filled way. The kids received certificates for participating in the camp and being good citizens of the world.

### Diversity Fair at Neenah High School: May 4, 2012

Ethiopia, Ghana, India and Norway. This was our seventh Day Camp. The children registered in the morning to get their "passports" and other materials to visit the world. They were assigned to Red, Blue or Green team and were given color-coded nametags and folders to carry their mementos.

steps taught by a dance teacher, Sarswathy Ramchandran, decorating



Presence of IndUS volunteers has become an integral part of the annual Diversity Fair at Neenah High School, ever since its inception eleven years ago. The teenage students stand in long lines

Our guest presenters, Dr. Alem Asares (Ethiopia), Mawuenam Aseye Mensah (Ghana) and Sharon Bowen (Norway) had planned many wonderful activities to broaden the horizons of young campers. They saw pictures, learned phrases in foreign languages, counted numbers, wrote their names in different scripts, played with musical instruments, wore fashions, made little tulip-shaped bags, tasted food, sang songs and danced. They made notes in their little passports and got them stamped as they



tote bags with their names written in Hindi and playing Indian games.

At the end of the day, the parents joined



### The Board of Directors

Ms. Nancy Heykes  
*Chairman*

Ms. Sridevi Buddi

Mr. Terry Dawson

Dr. Mahendra Doshi

Dr. Sonja Downing

Mr. Tim Higgins

Ms. Ruth Mansukhani

Dr. B. S. Sridhar

Dr. Sandhya Sridhar (*ex-officio*)

Dr. Badri Varma

Ms. Chitra Pandya

(India Association NEW: *ex-officio*)

The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer of IndUS Exe. Committee are *ex-officio* members of the board.

### The Executive Team

Ms. Kamlesh Varma  
*President*

Mr. Yogesh Maheshwari  
*Vice President*

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(*Education & Outreach*)

Mr. Rajeev Dugal  
(*Fund Raising*)

Mr. Terry Dawson  
(*Publicity & Communication*)

Dr. Badri Varma  
(*Publicity & Chief Editor Sandesh*)

Dr. Gaurav Bansal  
(*Webmaster & Database*)

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local campaign of providing backpacks to needy students in the area. Our booth also had free food samples, and clothes and bindis to wear. Jody Harrell, one of the founders thanked our volunteers and wrote that, “your gentle spirits and your openness and willingness to share; supports the kids in their search to be better and kinder.” It, indeed, is so rewarding to hear that we are making a difference.

### Let's Share

Let's Share is a forum where friends of IndUS come together, share, learn, discuss and grow. A session of Let's Share ‘How to take good pictures’ was held on Sunday, June 17, 2012, at Goodwill Industries Capmus,



Menasha. Ms. Che Correa of Che Correa Photography, Green Bay and Mr. Shiva Arva of Morning Sun Photography, Appleton were the guest speakers. The audience learned about different techniques and got some useful tips to know one's camera and also how to shoot good pictures.

### Upcoming Events

#### South Asian Writers Conference

We are very pleased to announce that IndUS of Fox Valley and University of Wisconsin Fox Valley are organizing a two-day conference ‘*Finding One's Voice: South Asian Writers Conference*’ on September 21-22, 2012 at the Communication Art Center, UW Fox Valley, Menasha. Some of the highlights of the program are: Two workshops, one on Memoir Writing and the other on Poetry Writing on Friday, September 21 from 2:00-4:00 PM followed by a reception and one of its kind of event ‘*Sharing our Poetic Heritage: Regional poems from India.*’ Famous poems of renowned poets of different regional languages of India along with their English translations will be recited. Friday session will end with a cultural program.

The first session on Saturday, June 22 starts at 8:00 AM a forum ‘*Finding One's Voice*’. During this session the invited writers will share their struggle and challenges they faced in finding their voices. In the second session they will read excerpts from their work. There will be a Q&A session in the afternoon.

This conference is open to public and the admission is free. However, one has to register for it. On Saturday boxed lunches will be available at a reasonable price. One should book it at the time of registration.

This conference provides a unique opportunity to appreciate India's rich and prolific literature. Save the date.

*We are interested in getting your feedback. Please send your comments and suggestions to Badri Varma at [bvarma@uwc.edu](mailto:bvarma@uwc.edu)*

## So Long, Volunteers

By Erma Bombeck

I had a dream the other night that every volunteer in this land had set sail for another country. I stood smiling on the pier, shouting, "Good-bye, phone committees. Good-bye disease-of-the-month. No more getting out the vote. No more playground duty, bake sales, rummage sales, thrift shops, and three-hour meetings."

As the boat got smaller, I reflected; "serves them right, that bunch of yes people. All they had to do was to put their tongues firmly against the roofs of their mouths and make an "O" sound--no. It would certainly have spared them a lot of grief. Oh, well, who needs them?"

The hospital was quiet as I passed it. The reception desk was vacant. Rooms were devoid of books, flowers, and voices. The children's wing held no clowns, no laughter. The home for the aged was like a tomb. The blind listened for a voice that never came. The infirmed were imprisoned in wheelchairs that never moved. Food grew cold on trays that would never reach the hungry.

The social agencies had closed their doors--unable to implement their programs of scouting, recreation, drug control; unable to help the retarded, handicapped, lonely and abandoned. Health agencies had signs in their windows: "Cures for cancer, birth defects, multiple sclerosis, heart diseases, etc., have been canceled because of lack of interest."

The schools were strangely quiet, with no field trips and no volunteer classroom aides. Symphony halls and the museums that had been built and stocked by volunteers were dark and would remain that way. The flowers in churches and synagogues withered and died. Children in day nurseries lifted their arms, but there was no one to hold them in love. Alcoholics cried out in despair, but no one answered. the poor had no recourse for health care or legal aid. I fought in my sleep to regain a glimpse of the ship of volunteers just one more time. It was to be my last glimpse of a decent civilization.

**IndUS Of Fox Valley**  
3600 N. Shawnee Ave.  
Appleton WI 54914

### ***Finding One's Voice*** **South Asian Writers** **Conference**

**September 21 & 22, 2012**

at

**Communication Art Center**  
**University of Wisconsin Fox**  
**Valley, Menasha**

Workshop on Poetry Writing  
Workshop on Memoir Writing  
India's Poetic Heritage:  
Regional poems from India  
Cultural program  
Finding One's Voice-A Forum  
Reading by invited writers