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# HAMPTON ROADS MALAYALEE ASSOCIATION

Fall-Winter 2023 | Issue 2

## President's Message

As we conclude the eventful year of 2023, I am honored to reflect on the remarkable journey we've shared. This year underscores the unity, dedication, and remarkable spirit within the HRMA community.

In 2023, HRMA demonstrated steadfast commitment to preserving our rich culture, fostering community bonds, and achieving significant milestones through collective efforts. Our cultural events, including Onam, HRMA Picnic, Youth Night, Snowflakes and Sparkles, showcased traditions and brought us closer together. Our Women's Forum and Youth Club initiatives deserve special mention.

Our unwavering commitment to community service is evident through contributions to charitable initiatives like Feeding the Hungry and Clean the Bay. We have also supported our local communities by participating in events organized by AIHR and Norfolk Sister Cities.

I express heartfelt gratitude to every community member and sponsor. As we enter 2024, let us carry forward the camaraderie, and purpose that define us.

Warm regards,

Aju Paul | President HRMA





HRMA Onam



The Hindu Temple of Hampton Roads in Chesapeake lit up with festive joy on August 26, 2023, as the community joined together to celebrate the Onam Festival. Amidst the traditional decorations and cultural vibrancy, Mahabali, the mythical monarch of benevolence, equanimity, and prosperity, graced the occasion, bestowing his revered presence upon the gathering. Volunteers meticulously orchestrated every detail of the celebration, ensuring a seamless blend of cultural elements, from seating arrangements to the grand stage. The festivities featured captivating performances, including traditional dances, cultural skits, and expressions of talent across various age groups.

The highlight of the event was the Onam Sadya, a gastronomic extravaganza boasting 18 delectable dishes that symbolize the richness of Malayalee tradition. The fusion of authentic Kerala cuisine with local flavors added a unique touch to the culinary experience, embodying the diverse cultural tapestry of the community.







### HRMA Women's forum

The HRMA Women's Forum, launched in May 2023, has been a dynamic force driving positive change. Our initiatives have transcended the conventional, fostering a community that thrives on holistic well-being.

#### Empowerment Through Knowledge

Emphasizing the importance of daily health, our *Fitness Club* has taken members on invigorating hikes to First Colonial State Park and Chesapeake Arboretum. This is just the beginning—anticipate a calendar filled with engaging and enjoyable activities. Our commitment to knowledge and empowerment was exemplified in the engaging *Women's Health Talk*, featuring distinguished doctors Karuna Narayanan MD., Swapna George MD., and Nasim Shajihan MD. These experts delved into key topics in women's health and well-being, providing valuable insights. The interactive Q&A session emphasized practical ways to care for ourselves and our loved ones, promoting healthy aging.



### Stitching Class Launch in 2024

Looking ahead to 2024, we're thrilled to introduce a stitching class. This exciting venture will kick off with foundational stitching lessons, fostering creativity and skills development within our community.

#### Fundraising with Culinary Delights

The Women's Forum is not just about well-being; it's about community support too. Our fundraising activities include the sale of homemade delights such as fish pickle, lemon pickle, plum cake, and more. By indulging in these delicious treats, you're not only savoring exquisite flavors but also contributing to the success of Women's Forum initiatives.

As we continue to grow and evolve, the HRMA Women's Forum remains dedicated to enhancing the lives of women through meaningful activities, knowledge-sharing, and a sense of unity. Stay tuned for more exciting updates and events that promise to uplift and empower our community.







## Triumphs and Talents: Celebrating the Achievements of HRMA Members

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Vishakh Cherian, a distinguished member of the Hampton Roads Malayalee association, on his appointment as the **National Treasurer for the India Press Club of North America (IPCNA)**. This prestigious role reflects his commendable dedication to unifying and representing major visual and print Indian media outlets. Additionally, we commend Mr. Cherian for receiving the *Best Talk Show Coordinator* award from the India Press of North America. His notable contributions to 24 News have been recognized on an international stage, further solidifying his impact in media. As he oversees 24 News' North American bureau as Operations Manager, we celebrate his achievements and ongoing commitment to excellence.

Congratulations to Ann Elizabeth Cherian, a bright and accomplished 10th-grade student at Grafton High School, Yorktown. Ann's remarkable success in the *Reflections* theme contest, where she competed against all Virginia state schools, is truly commendable. Her winning entry, centered around the theme 'Believe in YOU!', exemplifies her creativity and thoughtfulness. As her entry advances to compete at the National level, we applaud Ann's talent and wish her continued success in showcasing her skills on a broader platform.

HRMA takes pride in supporting and recognizing the achievements of its outstanding members. Send in your entries to [hmalluadmin@gmail.com](mailto:hmalluadmin@gmail.com)

HRMA YOUTH CLUB COMMUNITY SERVICE

## FOOD DRIVE AND ANNUAL THANKSGIVING BASKET

9:30 AM - 12:30 PM, NOVEMBER 18

1400EWELL ROAD, VIRGINIA BEACH VA 23455

WE WILL BE BAGGING NON PERISHABLE FOODS AND AIDING THE CHURCH WITH THEIR ANNUAL THANKSGIVING BASKETS. HRMA REQUESTS THAT YOU SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE! PLEASE FILL OUT THE GOOGLE FORM LINKED BELOW TO SIGN UP AS A VOLUNTEER

SIGN UP HERE:  
<https://tinyurl.com/HRMAfooddrive23>



### HRMA Youth Club's Thanksgiving

HRMA Youth Club partnered with Bayside Presbyterian Church to contribute to their annual Thanksgiving basket initiative on November 18th, 2023. The collective efforts focused on sorting and bagging an impressive 4000+ pounds of non-perishable food items.

On the same day, HRMA Youth Club organized a local food drive within the community, yielding a substantial donation of 100 pounds of non-perishable food. This generous contribution seamlessly integrated into the Thanksgiving baskets, amplifying the impact of our joint endeavors.

This demonstration of community spirit and commitment to service underscores HRMA Youth Club's dedication to making a positive impact. HRMA Youth Club expresses sincere appreciation to everyone involved, emphasizing the significance of giving and gratitude during this Thanksgiving season.







## HRMA @ IndiaFest 2023



India Fest 2023, organized by Asian Indians of Hampton Roads (AIHR; <https://www.aihr.org/>), spotlighted the theme "Indian Weddings" on September 9th.



The HRMA Community took the spotlight, highlighting the rich traditions of Kerala weddings, spanning Hindu, Christian, and Muslim ceremonies. Their representation resonated strongly with the audience, earning warm reception, appreciation, and applause. This cultural showcase, focused on the diverse facets of weddings, emerged as a noteworthy highlight of the event.







## HRMA: A RETROSPECTIVE

Nestled within the historical tapestry of Hampton Roads, encompassing major cities like Virginia Beach, Norfolk, Chesapeake, Newport News, and Hampton, the Hampton Roads Malayalee Association (HRMA) stands as a testament to the cultural richness of the region. Formerly known as Tidewater, this area holds a profound historical significance.

Founded on the dedication of pioneers, HRMA traces its roots back to 1973 when three families—Sunny and Amy, Ramesh and Sreeja Kadackal, Joy and Elizabeth Kannarkattu—initiated the earliest documented organized event by the Malayalee community in Hampton Roads. Over the years, the community flourished, transforming informal gatherings into a structured organization. In 1998, the inaugural Malayalee event 'Thiruvathira' marked a milestone at ODU.

The formal establishment of HRMA as a non-profit entity in 2016 solidified its commitment to fostering cultural and social engagement within the Asian-Indian community in the Virginia/Hampton Roads Area.

Under the leadership of Xavier (Sibychen) Konathapally, the first official committee, comprising individuals like Jikku Abraham, Joby Varghese, Nisaraj Dharmarajan, Iype Philip (Shibu), Ceril Chummar, Snitha Krishnan, and Rejith Raveendran, was formed during the registration process.

Presently, HRMA boasts a membership of over 75 families, with numbers steadily increasing each year. The association's enduring contribution lies in raising awareness about the cultural tapestry of Kerala, known as "God's Own Country." Through festivals, picnics and other events, HRMA actively preserves and promotes Indian culture, especially the vibrant heritage of Kerala.

HRMA seeks support from all individuals and encourage collective participation in activities that benefit society. In doing so, HRMA continues to be a cornerstone of cultural celebration and community engagement in Hampton Roads.

## HRMA MISSION

As a leading organization in the region, HRMA has experienced consistent growth over the past few years with a dedicated focus on enhancing social life. Its mission is to foster the exchange of ideas among Malayalees and individuals from diverse cultures. HRMA collaborates closely with other Indian cultural associations in the Hampton Roads area.

# HRMA Sponsors

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