

The Indian American Cancer Network is a 501(c) nonprofit cancer resource organization whose mission is to serve the South Asian community through education, resources, and support of those affected by cancer. The vision of IACAN is that every Indian American reduces their cancer risk by maintaining a healthy lifestyle and that no Indian American travels the cancer journey alone.

## A Message from the President

Although it has been some time since our last publication, I have always been fond of the name of our newsletter, *The Optimist*. There is no time like our present time where an optimist is needed. While the world faces the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had to adjust our lives and the ways in which we connect with each other. In this issue of *The Optimist*, you will find how IACAN has connected with the community through creative innovation. I hope that all of you and your families are staying safe and healthy. Please do keep in touch with us, we are here to help you.

*Arlene A. Thomas, President IACAN*

## Bone Marrow Drives



Bone Marrow Drives were conducted at Meenakshi Temple on January 1, 2020 and on February 12, 2020 at the UT School of Public Health. These drives were quite successful in registering over 20 potential life-saving donors. Mrs. Gayatri Kapoor is quite instrumental in organizing and conducting these drives with enthusiastic support from volunteers.

## Prostate Cancer-Scientific Details and Clinical Management Practices

Prostate cancer is among the leading cause of cancer, and accounts for second most cause of cancer deaths in men. On Sunday, February 23, 2020 Dr. Sumit Subudhi, a medical oncologist and immunologist at MD Anderson Cancer Center gave



an informative talk at the Arya Samaj. He discussed risk factors for prostate cancer which include: age (older), race (African American), family history, and diet (overweight). He described that the signs of prostate cancer may manifest as problems with urination, sexual dysfunction or continual bone pain. He also addressed the pros and cons of the PSA blood test for prostate cancer screening; which most cancer organizations recommend for beginning at the age of 50. He also discussed the role

of immunotherapy in treating cancers. The talk was followed by a vibrant question and answer session. The audience was enthusiastic and asked questions regarding cancer-related issues which specifically affect our community. For example, the question of taking turmeric supplements came up and Dr. Subudhi explained that while he strongly supports the use of turmeric in cooking, he is not a strong proponent for need to take turmeric pills or supplements for cancer patients. Other questions regarding complementary and alternative therapies such as the benefits of yoga and pranayama as supportive care for cancer patients were discussed at length during the session.



*Anjali Kanojia, Ph.D, Board Member IACAN*

## Yoga, Breathing and Meditation Sessions for Healing

Fear of the unknown and related stress is a serious concern during the COVID-19 pandemic and IACAN has come up with an innovative way to offer yoga online to stay connected and provide support and healing during this unprecedented time.



Yoga and other comparative modalities are increasingly being administered to both cancer patients and survivors to alleviate many psychosocial factors such as depression, anxiety and stress. The practice incorporates asanas (postures), pranayama (breathing) and dharana (mindfulness). The sessions are conducted every Saturday at 8:30 am via an online platform by Anjali Kanojia PhD, a certified yoga instructor and IACAN's board member. This free resource has been

very popular in the community and IACAN plans to continue providing the service in the future. Following are couple of testimonies from the participants: *"I have been participating in IACAN's Yoga sessions for the past 8 weeks and I will admit that this program was very effective in helping me improve my mental wellbeing during the lockdown."* Another participant shared, *"My husband and I have participated in the Saturday morning classes and have enjoyed them very much. The instructor was extremely clear in her directions and made it look very easy to do the exercises. This is the first time we did yoga on line and got the best of it."*

On Friday, May 8, 2020 IACAN hosted an event in which we had the privilege to hear from Dr. Abdul R.



## COVID-19 Community Awareness

Moosa, physician and COVID-19 survivor, and Mrs. Ashma Moosa, IACAN Board Member and caregiver to Dr. Moosa. They shared their experience from the onset of his symptoms to diagnosis and treatment for COVID-19. Dr. and Mrs. Moosa provided tips on how to stay healthy and supportive through the pandemic. It was a particularly timely, informative and important session. The program was followed by a lively question and answer session. The session was conducted via the on online platform.



*Vibhuti Shah, IACAN Board Member*

On Saturday, June 20, 2020 from 8PM-10PM Mrs. Mani Sastry is organizing a musical evening to salute cancer survivors and caregivers. She will be joined by her musical students and the concert will be held via zoom. Mrs. Sastry has been

## Upcoming Event: An Evening of Music

conducting this concert for us for a few years and we had scheduled to have it in March 2020 but had to postpone it due to COVID-19 and social distancing restrictions. We are grateful that she has agreed to innovate with us to provide us with this melodious evening. You don't want to miss it.