

## ASHA DHUME as President of the Pratham Houston Chapter



Pratham USA recently announced the appointment of **Asha Dhume** as President of the Pratham Houston chapter for the years 2018 & 2019, effective January 1, 2018.

Asha has been involved with Pratham Houston for the past 7 years, and has served as the Vice President for the chapter for the past two years. She has played an integral role in the chapter's growth. On her appointment, Asha said, "Education is the biggest game changer in transforming an underdeveloped country into a developed one. By giving underprivileged children access to education, Pratham provides a foundation not only for their individual success, but also for the family they are or become a part of and takes them out of the inevitable cycle of poverty, unemployment & exploitation. I am deeply honored to be elected by the Pratham Houston board as the President for 2018 & 2019. My goal is to raise awareness & funds, so we can succeed in our mission of 'Every child in school and learning well' and make the world a better place." Asha is serious about humanitarian issues and is involved with several organizations. She currently also serves on the board of The Lighthouse of Houston, a nonprofit education and service center dedicated to assisting the visually impaired. She is the past president of Club 24 Plus, an organization

whose mission is to build bridges between the Indo-American and mainstream Houston communities with the underlying principle of promoting philanthropy. She also was the vice president of HAAS (Houston Area Amchigele Association) for the years 2012 & 2013.

Asha holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from Rivier University, New Hampshire and a Master's of Commerce degree from Mumbai University. Asha is married to Pankaj Dhume, past Pratham board member and past president of Indo American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston. They have two children, Mahima, who is a first-year student of medicine at the University of North Texas & Gaurav, who recently graduated from Texas A&M with a degree in Business & Finance and who will be joining Citigroup in the summer.

Established in 1995 to provide education to children in slums in India, Pratham (which means "first" in Sanskrit) is now one of the largest and most successful non-governmental education organizations in India. Rather than build schools, Pratham develops low-cost solutions to address gaps in the education system and works in collaboration with India's governments, communities, educators and industry to improve learning outcomes and influence education policy.

Pratham focuses on four key areas:

- 1. LITERACY AND LEARNING INTERVENTIONS:** engages children ages 3-14 in order to improve their basic reading, writing and math skills.
- 2. VOCATIONAL TRAINING** promotes economic self-sufficiency for young adults through training and job placement.
- 3. GIRLS' EDUCATION PROGRAM** assists female dropouts over the age of 14 in completing their secondary school education and earning their 10th Standard diploma.
- 4. RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY EFFORTS** measure and provide reliable data on children's learning.

Since its inception, Pratham has transformed the lives of more than **50 million underserved children and youth across India**. In addition, Pratham has also equipped **75,000 youth with relevant job skills and supported 1000 entrepreneurs** in building their own micro-enterprises. Pratham reaches millions of children and youth in India each year through operations in 24 cities, 20 states and three union territories. In addition, the ASER (Annual Status of Education Report) survey has inspired a network of citizen-led assessments of children's learning in 14 countries on three continents. Pratham has achieved the unparalleled feat of providing education for only **\$25 per child**. Good governance and fiscal responsibility is at the heart of Pratham's business model. **Over 92% of funds raised go directly to support our programs in India**. In addition, Pratham USA has received a **four-star rating (the highest possible) from Charity Navigator** for seven consecutive years, placing us in the **top 3% of American charities**.

**Pratham was recognized as one of the 'Top 10 charities' in Houston for 2017 by Houston chronicle for its transparency, accountability & efficient execution of its programs.**

To learn more about Pratham please visit us at [www.prathamusa.org](http://www.prathamusa.org).

## SHANTHI JAYAKUMAR gets honored

The Asian American Resource Center (AARC) and South Asian Austin Mom's is curating an exhibit from the Smithsonian. The exhibit opened on January 29 2018 and will be at the AARC until April 8 2018. According to Austin Parks and Recreation Museums and Cultural programs, the exhibit "explores the heritage, daily experience and numerous, diverse contributions that Indian immigrants and Indian Americans have made in shaping the United states". Here is a link to see the exhibit online (<http://smithsonianapa.org/beyondbollywood/>).

Additionally, the South Asian Austin Mom's group has an exhibit showcasing local Asian Americans who have contributed in unique ways to the Central Texas region. **SHANTHI JAYAKUMAR** of Austin, TX was honored as the First South Asian woman to serve on a Central Texas City Council. The glass showcase of her picture and the plaque and desk nameplate from the City of Rollingwood. This special recognition is a direct result of the citizens of Rollingwood electing her to the City Council in 2008 and again in 2010.

You can visit the AARC to view the Smithsonian exhibit. The AARC is located at 8401 Cameron Road, Austin Texas 78754 ( [austintexas.gov/aarc](http://austintexas.gov/aarc) and 512-974-1700).

## Families in Food: Southern Comfort

In business for 78 years, Madras Cafe was established in 1940 by Gopal Kamath, Devavrat's grandfather, in partnership with a Tamil friend.



Smells like home: Madras Cafe initially catered to south Indian migrants. (Source: Prashant Nadkar)

Written by Pooja Pillai | Published: February 18, 2018 12:00 am (The Indian Express)  
<http://indianexpress.com/article/express-sunday-eye/families-in-food-southern-comfort-5067905/>

The adjective “lazy” can never be applied to a Sunday morning at Matunga’s Cafe Madras in Mumbai. Uniformed waiters dash across the marble floor, up and down the small wooden staircase, carrying trays loaded with idlis, vadas and dosas to hungry customers seated at the formica-topped tables. Outside, a long line of people awaits their turn to be seated inside the small eatery. At the cash counter, one of the Kamath brothers — Jaiprakash or Devavrat — or their father, Jagdish, will be seated, tallying all the bills or taking orders for parcels to go.

For many years, in fact, Cafe Madras has been this busy — not for nothing is it a fixture on nearly every list of the city’s must-visit eateries. “Many of our customers have been coming to us for a long time. For them, it’s as much about the memory as it is about the food,” says Devavrat, as he pours his filter coffee from the tumbler into its accompanying

davara. “But every day, we have a few new customers who have just heard or read about us. We’re proud that we can still win over new customers.”

In business for 78 years, Madras Cafe was established in 1940 by Gopal Kamath, Devavrat’s grandfather, in partnership with a Tamil friend. At the time, the Kamath family already had a restaurant called Gopal Krishna which was set up in 1936, in Malad. “My grandfather had moved to the city in search of work when he was very young. He first began working as a cook, since our community (Goud Saraswat Brahmins from Udupi) is well known for its cooking skills,” says Devavrat. Gopal was a self-made man and when his partner at Cafe Madras offered to sell him the whole business within a few years of opening, Gopal was more than prepared to meet the challenge of running two restaurants. At the time, Matunga was populated mostly by south Indians who had moved to Mumbai to fill clerical positions that had opened up in a rapidly expanding city. Much like the khanawals of Byculla-Parel that catered to those who laboured in Mumbai’s mills, there were a number of “lunch homes” and hotels in the Dadar-Matunga-Sion stretch which provided sustenance and comfort to the South Indian migrants, many of them young bachelors.

Decades passed, many of the old establishments and boarding houses wound up, and the demographics changed. While most of Cafe Madras’s earliest customers were South Indian, many are now local Gujaratis. For the eatery, a key challenge is to remain true to its roots, while keeping pace with the demands of time. Fried snacks like banana fritters are off the menu and new items like the nutritious ragi dosa have been included. Indulgent items like the idli butter podi — invented a decade ago by slathering hot idlis with fresh white butter and molga podi — remain popular, but the biggest draws continue to be dishes like rasam vada, sambar vada and filter coffee (brewed from their in-house blend made in Vakola).

For some time now, the Kamaths have been considering an expansion to other parts of the city. Right now, they sell preservative-free packaged snacks, coffee powder, papads, pickles and the much loved molga podi; and, nine months ago, they opened a grocery store called Cornucopia next door to the cafe, which stocks gourmet and artisanal products. They don’t want to rush into anything, though, says Devavrat. “We have to be very careful about how we take the business forward. We don’t want to dilute the quality that we are known for.”

## THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

by **Nirmala S. Bangalore** (with input from family)

Every human being has his or her own unique journey of life. We are born, live our lives and then, inevitably, make that last “return trip” out of the physical world. It is simply the circle of life. The end of life is hard to deal with, but it happens to everybody sooner or later. It is advisable to be prepared as best one can.

The loss of a loved one becomes overwhelming. Not only do the survivors should deal with grief, but need to attend to many tasks. I lost my dear husband, **Shrikar**, a year ago. Even though not prepared, I managed to cope with the aid of my family. My spouse died in a hospital in Wisconsin. What follows is not a “one size fits all” undertaking; rather, it is a modest effort to lessen the stress of losing a family member. It may also help in pre- planning. This is a snapshot in time framed by my own personal experience. Rules vary from one state to another and change often. In no way is this meant to be medical, legal or financial advice. Please consult professionals in each area to tailor steps for your own situation.

Ideally, everybody of sound mind and over 18 years of age should have a will. Passports, birth and marriage certificates should be accessible. Updated passwords should be noted for possible future use. Have an end of life conversation with your family about your wishes for:

- Intubation
- CPR
- Life support
- Long term Care
- Feeding tube
- Hospice

Advance medical and financial directives should be on file. A living will (e.g. “Five wishes”) is a Declaration to Physicians allowing you to select the kind of life-sustaining care you would want if injury or illness leaves you in a terminal condition (dying) or a persistent vegetative state with no hope of recovery. A health care power of attorney allows you to appoint someone to be your “agent” to make all health care decisions – not just those involving life support

– for you if you lose the ability to make decisions for yourself. A financial power of attorney allows you to appoint someone to be your “agent” to act on your behalf for personal, business and financial matters if you lose the ability to make decisions for yourself.

Ideally you should let your family know if you would like to have a memorial (small, limited to immediate family or inclusive; eulogies, memory book, prayers, bhajans, etc.)

Some matters should be tackled immediately after death happens:

1. Contact a funeral home (if not already pre-planned) Rules vary from state to state regarding burial or cremation (e.g., Wisconsin mandates a minimum of 48 hours before the body can be interred or cremated) Ask whether a religious ceremony or puja can be performed indoors (e.g. in a chapel in the funeral home) For use during cremation, provide clean, plain white (or light colored) cotton clothes with the name of the deceased clearly noted.

2. If the deceased was an organ donor, contact the agency.

3. Get several official death certificates because most banks and other institutions will not accept photocopies.

4. Contact your lawyer. He or she can guide you on legal matters and estate probate. Wisconsin requires that the original will of the deceased must be filed with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of [Ozaukee] County within 30 days.

5. Arrange for obituaries in local and regional newspapers and ethnic newsletters; organize a memorial as applicable. Set up a telephone tree.

6. Contact a priest for the cremation rites and 12th/13th day puja. For the puja have a photo of the deceased framed. (Our own Raghuchandra Bhat-Maam lives in the Milwaukee metropolitan area and ably conducted all rites. See Website at <http://puja123.com/>) Note: Bhat-Maam has given permission to reference his Website. If you are in other locations, try contacting your local temple for referral to priests. In some cases, families may not have direct male descendants (usually sons), but rather daughters or nieces; in the old days, only males could perform the final rites, but times have changed.

In the days and weeks following a death, many issues need to be tackled. I found it useful to have a spreadsheet with dates, institutions, contact information, and action taken, noted down as I proceeded.

1. Notify Social Security. You may need to go to your local office or may call (1-800-772-1213) 7 am to 7 pm (EST) Review for spousal benefits if applicable. (Note: The funeral home notified Social Security, but I had to follow up) Usually a one-time death benefit applies (currently \$255.00)

2. Notify banks that hold your accounts and make changes, if needed. Also, if your safety deposit box was in the name of the deceased, make needed changes.

3. Notify employers of the deceased so payment can be adjusted. Inquire about pension and other possible benefits for the spouse or heirs.

4. Jointly held residence: For homeowners: if applicable, notify the mortgage company and ensure ongoing payments; for renters, notify the realty company or landlord.

5. Notify savings and investment companies. If the deceased had brokerage accounts or annuities, notify the institutions and make needed changes (e.g. IRAs only in the name of the deceased may need to be transferred to the spouse or heir) Any Certificates of Deposit held by the deceased will need changes.

6. If the deceased had a life insurance policy, contact the company and put in a claim.

7. Homeowners or renter’s insurance may need changes.

8. Automobile insurance may need changes.

9. Cars jointly owned with the deceased will have to be retitled via the Department of Motor Vehicles.

10. Cancel individually held credit cards in the name of the deceased and shred them after ensuring that there are no outstanding balances.

11. Keep track of medical bills.

12. Tackle health insurance. If the deceased was the holder, request a change, for example, holder to be the surviving spouse. Ensure that all medical bills relating to the deceased will be covered until they clear.

13. If there are left over medications used by the deceased, dispose them properly.

14. Stop auto shipment or auto refills of medications for the deceased.

15. Make necessary changes for utility companies: Telephone, both land-line and cell: cancel individually held phones by the deceased; TV, Cable, Internet Service Provider, Electricity, Gas, Water, etc. may need changes.

16. If the deceased had 529 college savings accounts in his or her name, notify the company and request necessary changes (e.g. change to spouse’s name)

17. Contact Credit Card Bureaus and report the death to shut down credit in the name of the deceased to prevent identity theft. Request a credit report for the deceased

18. Tackle any special requests of the deceased (e.g. a bonus for care givers)

19. Write thank-you notes to relatives, friends, colleagues, neighbors and other well-wishers who may have visited, sent cards, E mailed, telephoned and helped in many ways.

Follow-up by survivors:

A painful task that should be done is tackling the clothes, medical equipment (if applicable) and other possessions no longer needed. This is best handled speedily with the help of family and friends.

“Durable medical equipment” (wheel-chair, walker, canes, etc.) can be donated to the Veterans Administration.

For cold weather states: Sweaters, jackets, comforters, blankets etc. can be cleaned and given to the homeless via a local charity (“Bob under the bridge” is a local charity for us)

The Lions Club has donation boxes for prescription glasses, sunglasses and glasses holders. Usually these boxes are located by grocery store parking lots.

Usable clothing (e.g. men’s pants, shirts, vests, etc.) can be washed and donated to thrift stores.

The Salvation Army accepts and reuses scrubbed computers and accessories.

It takes time to recover from the trauma of loss. Our religion is a great solace. Reading printed religious material or listening to spiritual discourses via the Internet brings a sense of calmness and peace. Relatives, neighbors and friends can provide a shoulder to cry on, a friendly ear to listen and to give help as and when necessary. Keeping oneself busy can ease the burden. Hobbies take one’s mind off the troubles at this difficult time. Pictures of the deceased remind survivors of their loved one and young children lighten the load of devastation and grief. May all our loved one’s rest in peace and may survivors find strength to move on!

I hope this short guide helps our Konkani community, especially since we are a relatively recent immigrant group in the U.S. Dev baren koro / May God bless!

Information has been excerpted from various sources including:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov> ; <https://www.ssa.gov/> ; <http://puja123.com/>

## “Anthu” raises expectations of Konkani Cine goers

By: - Jaideep Shenoy, as appeared in [TNN] June 24, 2017

MANGALURU: A good six-years after release of *Uzwaadu*, adjudged Karnataka state best regional film, discerning Konkani cine-lovers are awaiting release of Anthu. While there has been a steady stream of Konkani films in the interim, Anthu will be only the fifth such film shot entirely in Gowd Saraswath Brahmin (GSB) Konkani dialect. The other films in this dialect are Tapaswini (1980), Janamana (1981), Uzwaadu (2011) and children's film Aa Vai Ja Sa (2017).



Upbeat about prospects of the film is aspiring director-producer Karopady Akshay Nayak. Having cut his teeth in the industry as a still photographer for Kannada serial Radha Kalyana, Akshay who picked up tricks of the trade, ventured into next step with Anthu. An offering of Sri Mahammayi Cine Creation, Akshay, aged 25, has written the story/screenplay, handled the cinematography and its editing. State film awardee MK Matha Uppinangady has penned Kannada dialogues translated into Konkani by Venkatesh Baliga Mavinkurve.

Describing Anthu as a 'tale from our livelihood', Akshay told STOI that the film is unique with one of its kind storyline. It revolves around a family, the problems that arises, the way it spreads out its branches. Revolving around the central character, Ananthu, a differently-abled person, played by Mysurean Sujay Shanbhag, the film tells story of

how society around reacts to travails of his sister, who gives up her personal life to take care of him, the stoic support given by his uncle and the jibes and pinpricks of those around her. “This is a situation that any one of us may find ourselves in and the ability to overcome these challenges,” says Karopady Akshay Nayak, producer-writer-director. Entire movie has been made by GSB Konkani community. "It is one of its kind movies in Konkani genres," he avers. Matured actors like Mrs. Poornima Suresh, Mr. Chidananda Kamath Kasargod, Mr. Dinesh Prabhu, Mr. Mangesh Bhat, Mrs. Sabitha Kamath have performed extremely well in this movie. This movie is a token of respect for senior stage artist of Kannada, Konkani & Tulu genre Mr. Chidananda Kamath, who had an untimely demise recently. Viewers should relate to the 135-minute film which the censor board has rated “U”, he said, adding the board has also appreciated the efforts of subject for the film.

Featuring more than 45-members of GSB community from Konkani speaking areas of Kasaragod, Mysuru, Vittal, Karkala, Bengaluru, Bantwal and Puttur, Mangaluru included in the star cast, the film has been shot with a modest budget. "We are aware of our various limitations and can come up with better product if the right kind of funding is available," he says adding this could reflect in the next venture under the banner, a romantic love story that is in the making.

Anthu presently is rousing people's expectations with teasers on YouTube that drew 15,000 hits in 24-hours of its posting. "It was the 35th trending video on YouTube as on Friday," Akshay said adding the news portal of a prominent media house in the region is helping in taking the message of Anthu to its lakhs of subscribers. "We have received queries from places such as Chennai, Mumbai inquiring about the release date and 'am looking forward to it," he said.

### **Less Luggage, Happy Journey**

Life is like a train journey; young children have a long way to go, but elders have to alight from the train pretty soon. You must learn to make your journey comfortable and happy. Do not carry heavy, unwanted luggage with you that will make the journey miserable. Do not indulge in fault finding and picking quarrels with others. Do not desire to have the best things for yourselves only. Share with others around you the good things you are given. Anger, hatred, envy and jealousy are the heavy luggage that I ask you to avoid taking with you on the journey. - Baba