



# namaste austin

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India Community Center of Austin

## Message from the 2011 ICC Board

Namaste, Austin!

Celebrations are in the air! Cricket enthusiasts in particular have had much reason to rejoice. Earlier this month, India lifted the cricket World Cup after a gap of 28 years with a six-wicket victory over Sri Lanka. Go, Team India!

With the onset of Spring, the clocks have leapt forward, bringing extended light and warmth into our days. Summer is around the corner! For anyone who has ties to India, Spring heralds a whole gamut of festivals and new year celebrations—Holi, Vasant Navratri, Easter, Gudi Padwa, Ugadi, Vishu, Navroze—and many more. Let the merrymaking begin!

No matter what you're celebrating this spring, all of us at ICC extend our warmest greetings to you and your family. May the spirit of festivity last all year long!

Do write to us, share your ideas and and showcase your talent (art, poetry, prose—everything is welcome!). We'd love to hear from you.

- **Abdul, Harshita, Mary, Radhika, Raga, Ruhi, Salil, Sohail, and Sridhar**

### WHAT I LOVE ABOUT SPRING



Rhea Mucherla, 8, sent us a picture of a "happy spring day" full of birds and ponds in a park.

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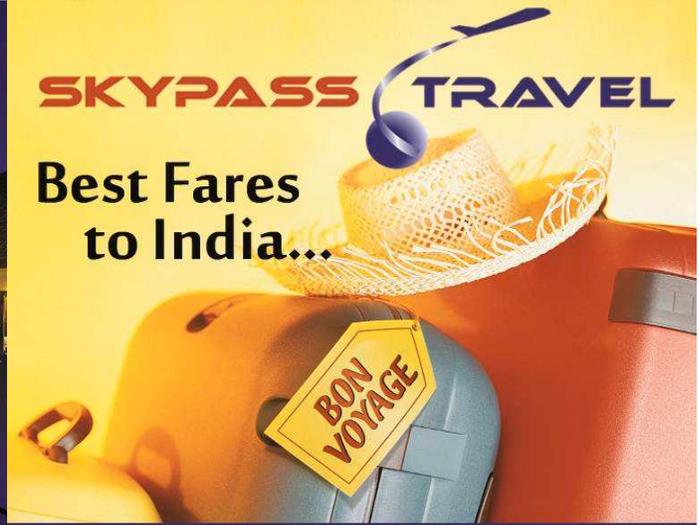


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## Young Austin Comes Together for Japan

The earthquake and the tsunami that crashed into Japan on March 11 have caused heart-wrenching devastation. International relief organizations have been working relentlessly to assist in the aftermath of the disaster.

Closer home, some young Austinites have stepped up to support Japan. Last month, a group of 4-and-a-half-year-olds got their moms to bake cupcakes and quinoa bars to sell at a local park to raise money to send to Japan. "If everyone in the whole world brings a little money, then it will become a lot for Japan," said Anika Sejpal, one of the young fundraisers at the cupcake stall. At last count, they had raised \$100.

You can help, too. These organizations are accepting donations to help the victims in Japan:

[www.savethechildren.org](http://www.savethechildren.org)

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

[www.americares.org](http://www.americares.org)



Anika Sejpal, Sophia Triche, and Corbin White at their cupcake stall on March 18.

*Please share your views and articles at [iccaustin@gmail.com](mailto:iccaustin@gmail.com) .*

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CHAI-N-CHAAT

Come and help promote indian culture with the Austin community by volunteering for the Chai.N.Chaat event, to be held on June 25.

For more information please contact Raga Chandra at [raga@weflap.org](mailto:raga@weflap.org). Please RSVP by April 30th.

[www.chai-n-chaat.com](http://www.chai-n-chaat.com)

# PARICHAY

## INTRODUCTION

*Parichay* turns the spotlight on Indian organizations and non-profits that enrich Austin with their presence. In this edition, Sonia Kotecha (outgoing president) and Anita Shrimali (incoming president) introduce us to NetIP.

### **Network of Indian Professionals (NetIP)**

The Network of Indian Professionals (NetIP) Austin chapter is a nonprofit organization that recognizes and promotes the overall advancements and achievements of South Asian professionals in Central Texas. Our mission is to serve as the unequivocal voice for the South Asian diaspora by developing and engaging a cohesive network of professionals to benefit the community. NetIP Austin is part of a network of 23 chapters across North America. Within one year as a revived chapter, NetIP Austin was recognized as Best Small Chapter and Best President in 2010. NetIP Austin has established a presence as a very professional, family-friendly, cultural, and service-oriented organization. NetIP Austin has developed a network of more than 700 South Asian professionals. The organization's programming focuses specifically on four pillars – Professional Development, Cultural Awareness, Political Awareness and Community Service.

NetIP Austin appreciates the importance and impact of culture and has acknowledged various ways to celebrate South Asian culture while also promoting local artists of diverse backgrounds. Through Bollywood Trivia Nights and Diwali parties, NetIP Austin has put efforts forward in bringing our Eastern culture home to Austin. In the spring of 2011, NetIP Austin will co-host book readings introducing new talents to the literary scene including fellow Austinite Nina Godiwalla, author of "Suits: A Woman on Wallstreet," and Supriya Bhatnagar, author of "And Then There Were Three..A Memoir."

NetIP Austin has been very diligent in providing political awareness activities for our members in order to foster a spirit of civic engagement. We've hosted a number of events that nurtured discussions around current political issues including health care, Asian American voting trends and the significance of mid-term elections. In the spring of 2009, NetIP Austin organized for a group of members to attend the City of Austin's Asian American Town Hall meeting with the Mayor. NetIP Austin also coordinated a Political House Party with Kal Penn to hear about the state of Asian Americans from a national perspective. Last fall, NetIP Austin hosted the first Asian American Judge in Austin, Ramey Ko, and a mid-term election watching party.

NetIP Austin has been at the forefront in ensuring that its members have opportunities to give back to the local community and international avenues through volunteerism and participation in activities such as MLK Day of Service, organizing aide for Goodwill, assisting local nonprofits with fundraising events, helping to restore a portion of the local environment by planting trees, and quickly corralling efforts in response to the tragedies such as those in Haiti and Japan. NetIP Austin, in its third year, took the lead on coordinating Be the Change National Day of Service engaging more than 500 volunteers in service at more than 15 community service sites across Central Texas. As a result of NetIP Austin's leadership, SAALT (South Asian Americans Leading Together) the national coordinator for Be the Change, recognized Austin as a national site for Be the Change in 2010. Austin made history by organizing the largest Be the Change event across the country, and will aim to do the same on October 1st of this year.

NetIP Austin successfully delivers a variety of professional networking opportunities through monthly dinner circles and small to large scale networking mixers held at various homegrown Austin establishments. Please visit us at [www.netipaustrin.org](http://www.netipaustrin.org) to see our upcoming events. Meet our board, and join us in our efforts to professionally permeate our South Asian backgrounds into the warm and inclusive Austin culture.

*Would you like Parichay to feature your organization in the next edition?  
Please contact us at [iccaustin@gmail.com](mailto:iccaustin@gmail.com) .*

# Basant UTSAV

SPRING FESTIVALS and CELEBRATIONS

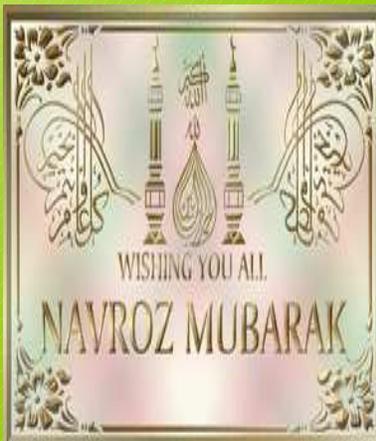


## Holi

Holi is celebrated on the day after the full moon in early March every year. Originally a festival to celebrate harvest and fertility, Holi is now a symbolic commemoration of a legend from Hindu mythology. Bonfires are lit the on the eve of the festival, also known as Holika Dahan. The main day, Holi, also known as Dhuli Vandana in Sanskrit, is celebrated in a riot of color with people throwing "gulaal" and colored water in each other. This festival has been immortalized in many Bollywood films .

## Ugadi or Gudi Padwa

Ugadi or Gudi Padwa marks the beginning of the New Year in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and parts of Karnataka. This festival is known as Gudi Padwa in Maharashtra and Ugadi in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. It is believed that Lord Brahma, created the world on this day. It is also considered one of the four most auspicious days in the year for people to start new ventures. Over the years, it has become customary to hold Kavi Sammelans (Poetry recitals) on this day.



## Navroze

Jamshed-E-Navroz is the first day of the first month of the Zoroastrian year. The Parsi New Year was named after the legendary King of Persia, Jamshed who started the Parsi Calendar. According to Parsi mythology, the universe is recreated on this day and life with all its glory is cherished. Navroz means spring. Parsis celebrate the day with prayer, celebration and plenty of feasting. The Parsi community celebrates Navroze every year on March 21.

**iFEST 2011 – August 14 - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

**ICC Austin's signature annual event, iFest 2011—celebrating India's Independence Day, is just four months away!** This year's event will be held on Sunday, August 14. Get ready to immerse yourself in the sights, sounds, and tastes of India! Look out for more details on our Web site soon and on posters around town.