



Canadian Federation of Fiji Organizations

2021

COMMUNITY AWARDS GALA





Welcome to Canadian Federation of Fiji Organizations (CFOFO) first ever Community Awards Gala, where we celebrate the meritorious services and achievements of our Fiji-Canadian community members.

This year, we have the pleasure of presenting the following categories of awards:

- Community Leader
- Organization Leader
- Youth Volunteer Service Awards
- Youth Post-Secondary Scholarship Awards
- 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary Awards

The CFOFO Executive Committee would like to congratulate all nominees and award recipients! Your contributions and achievements to your respective communities are invaluable. Our Executive Committee would also like to thank all of those attending our gala function to join us in celebrating our awards recipients and our volunteers for helping out with the event.

A special thank you to our event sponsors and donors:

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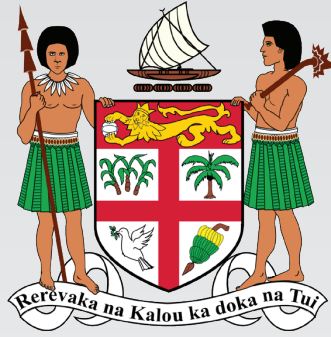
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Daisy's Flower Boutique: Daisy Goundar, Fiji Island Supermarket: Kiran Patel, Four Olives Restaurant, Ganesh Murti, Maya Palad, MMS Maintenance Ltd., Photographer: Arish K. Chaudhary, Renuka Naidu, Vidya Sharma





AUGUST 13, 2021

On behalf of the Consulate's office and the Fijian community in British Columbia I would like to congratulate the past and present officers and members of the Canadian Federation of Fiji Organizations. I have followed the success of this organization from its inception in January 2004. At its core, their objective has remained the same and that is to promote youth initiatives. CFOFO has assisted many youths from our Fijian community to pursue their dreams. They have coordinated Educational Seminars, Career Workshops and offered Scholarships.

In recent years, CFOFO has been very active in raising funds for the several natural disasters that have befallen our beloved Fiji. They have rallied the Fijian and non-Fijian communities in their fund-raising endeavour and in turn have received acknowledgement from the highest levels of the Fijian Government.

The four awards that are now being considered are of the highest importance in the evolution of an individual's growth and development. I think that each have equal merit and I want to congratulate not only the recipients of these various awards but those who were part of the selection.



*Bobby Naicker*  
Fijian Honourary Consul

# CITY OF SURREY

## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



DOUG  
McCALLUM  
MAYOR

604 591 4126

MAYOR@SURREY.CA

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October 6, 2021

On behalf of Surrey City Council, it is my distinct pleasure to send greetings to the Fijian Canadians being recognized at the 2021 Community Awards Gala hosted by the Canadian Federation of Fiji Organizations (CFOFO).

CFOFO celebrates the dedication and meritorious service by Fiji-Canadian individuals, businesses and organizations that promote culture and community in Canada. In addition, CFOFO also recognizes the Fiji-Canadian businesses that innovative and lead in their sector.

I am delighted that this event is being held in Surrey, because not only does Surrey have a large and vibrant Fijian community, but we are a city that takes great pride in our diversity. As a city that thrives on multiculturalism, Surrey sets a positive example for communities across Canada.

On behalf of Council, I would like to congratulate all the nominees and award winners. Thank you for going above and beyond in serving our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read 'Doug McCallum'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Doug McCallum  
Mayor  
City of Surrey



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Sukh Dhaliwal*

Member of Parliament  
Surrey—Newton

October, 2021

### **Greeting Message**

As the Member of Parliament for Surrey-Newton, it is my great pleasure to offer my warmest greetings to all volunteers, organizers, and award recipients of the 2021 Community Awards Gala hosted by the Canadian Federation of Fiji Organizations (CFOFO).

CFOFO is an organization dedicated to advancing education by offering scholarships to post-secondary students, in order to encourage and support them on their quest for educational excellence. This event is a wonderful opportunity to honour Fijian Canadians for the hard work that they do in our communities, each and every day.

I commend CFOFO for their tireless efforts to support the Fijian community in Canada, and I wish them continued success in the years to come.

Please accept my best wishes for a very successful event.

Yours sincerely,

Sukh Dhaliwal, MP  
Surrey-Newton

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# CFOFO's Background

With several political and natural disasters occurring in Fiji around the late 1990s to early 2000s, the Fiji-Canadian community in Greater Vancouver wanted to take action and send their aid to those back in Fiji.

As several Fiji-Canadian organizations were independently attempting to help the citizens of Fiji, it was quickly realized that governments and other organizations were more responsive to united community representation. It became clear that a unified approach was needed, not only to strengthen the community but to also gain greater credibility to its causes.

On July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2000, various Fiji-Canadian community leaders came together and participated in a historic community meeting at Fiji Canada Multicultural Centre in Burnaby

BC, where the representatives of the Greater Vancouver's Fiji-Canadian organizations, including Religious, Social-Cultural, Sporting, Businesses, Trades and Professionals, where they unanimously agreed to form an umbrella body organization. Thus, prompting the existence of the Canadian Federation of Fiji Organizations (CFOFO).

CFOFO had officially been registered as per the provisions of the BC Society Act with the Registrar of Companies in BC, on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

Although CFOFO was initially formed in response to the crises in Fiji, it later gained a broader mandate to address issues affecting the Fiji-Canadian community and society at large.



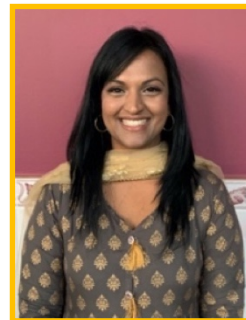
# CFOFO Executive Committee



Chairperson  
Shannon Permal



Vice-Chairperson  
Vidya Sharma



Secretary  
Aarthi Naidu



Treasurer  
Samar Jit



Assistant Treasurer  
Shivangni Naicker



Executive Member  
Dinesh Khanna



Executive Member  
Teresa Rehman



Trustee  
Wasu Naidu



Trustee  
Edward Palad

*Are you interested in joining our CFOFO Executive Team? If so, please send us an e-mail at [info.cfofo@gmail.com](mailto:info.cfofo@gmail.com)!*



# CFOFO Chairperson's Address

On behalf of the Executive Committee of Canadian Federation of Fiji Organizations (CFOFO), I take great pleasure in welcoming you to our first Community Awards Gala. After such unprecedented times, it is truly delightful to be able to safely gather and celebrate with the community once again.

Today, we hope to amplify the true essence of community; the ability to feel a sense of fellowship amongst others. As an umbrella body organization, CFOFO is designed to bring together Fijian Canadians from various sectors: Religious & Cultural, Social & Sporting, Businesses, Trades, Professionals & Independents. Our organization has continued to thrive since its formation in 2004 due, in no small part, to the work of our Committee Members who are diligent in fulfilling the aims and objectives specified in our Constitution. Working together and putting our hearts into our projects gives us the opportunity to appreciate each other's ideas and efforts and to work as a team. Therein lies the success of an organization.

In our service to the community, our Executives have produced and carried out some very innovative programs over the years that educate our community, recognize the accomplishments of various age groups, and foster mutual respect and admiration amongst one another. Moreover, CFOFO is committed

to creating a greater sense of community through hosting this very special event.

Today, we are gathered to celebrate the local and international contributions and achievements of our Fiji-Canadian community members. In recognizing those who have started their volunteer services either back in Fiji or in Canada, we hope you all will feel more connected, engaged and inspired by others in our community. As a youth myself, I admire the nominees for their services to the community and am inspired by them. Congratulations and thanks to you all!

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to all our sponsors, volunteers, nominators and the CFOFO Executive Committee: all of you have contributed greatly to make this a successful event. Finally, I thank you our audience for joining us at this event!

-- Shannon S. Permal



**COMING TOGETHER IS JUST THE BEGINNING.  
KEEPING TOGETHER IS PROGRESS.  
WORKING TOGETHER IS SUCCESS.**

- Henry Ford -





# 2021 Community Awards Gala Program

Cash Bar Opens & Appetizers Served

Program Commencement

Opening Remarks by Emcees

50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary Awards

Youth Scholarship Awards

Keynote Speaker

Youth Volunteer Service Awards

Lunch Break

Community Leader Awards

Organization Leader Awards

Group Pictures

Closing Remarks

# 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary Celebrations

## Satya and Premila Gopal



Satya was working in Laucala Bay and driving a white car S866, which was admired by all, including Premila. She also admired the driver as well. In Fiji, they knew each other, but the communication started when Premila went to England and Satya used to phone her and they started writing to each other. It seems that by an act of God, Satya received a scholarship to study engineering in England. After Premila qualified as a registered nurse and Satya as an engineer, they got married in November of 1966 in London. Satya and Premila migrated to Canada in 1973, and are blessed with four children and eight grandchildren. Satya and Premila are still very much in love after some 55 years of marriage.

## Samar and Premila Jit



Their love story began when Samar, a civil service cadet, initially from Nasinu, was visiting Nausori with a bunch of friends when he happened to spot Premila, who was waiting at the bus stop to go to work. He was so captivated by her beauty that he had to pick a rose for her from across the street to give to her. He later admitted to following her around to find out more about her, such as where she worked, etc. Samar was later transferred to Levuka where he worked as a court clerk. While in Levuka, he thought of Premila and decided to write her a letter declaring his intentions. And well, the rest is history! Samar and Premila got married in 1968 and welcomed three children before migrating to Canada in 1997. They have now been blessed with four grandchildren.

## Kamal and Angila Kishore



Kamal and Angila had an arranged marriage in Fiji in 1970. Three years after their marriage, they decided to make Canada their home in May of 1973. Kamal accepted a job at INCO Mines in Thompson, Manitoba. A month later, they moved to Vancouver, BC. Kamal and Angila did very well in their fifty years of married life – they have two children, sponsored numerous family members to migrate to Canada, joined organizations, such as Sanatan Dharm Cultural Society (Shiv Mandir) and Fiji Canada Association. They served well in these organizations, while still currently serving on the Board of Shiv Mandir. They celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 2020.



# 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary Celebrations

## Gangaiya and Radha Mani Naidu



On May 22<sup>nd</sup> of 1971, two families came together to celebrate the marriage of this young couple. In 2021, the couple will complete 50 years of their marriage and continue to celebrate togetherness with their 5 children and 8 grandchildren. The couple have persevered through many struggles throughout the years of their marriage. Gangaiya was the sole breadwinner, working to feed a family of 7 people. However, with the support of his loving wife, they both managed to successfully raise their children. In 1996, Gangaiya and Radha took another adventure and migrated to Canada. Soon after, their family continued to expand and they now enjoy their time with their 6 grandchildren in Canada. Despite having an arranged marriage, both husband and wife have learnt to love, care and respect each other always.

## Derek and Vidya Sharma



Derek and Vidya were married in December, 1969 in Vancouver, BC. They celebrated their 50 years of marriage in 2019, and sadly in November, 2020, Derek passed away peacefully in his sleep. Derek has lived a wonderful life and left a legacy of community service and initiatives. They have both been involved in the service of Sanatan Dharm Cultural Society (Shiv Mandir), Fiji Canada Association and Canadian Federation of Fiji Organizations. Their decades of dedicated and meritorious service and commitment have been widely recognized in the community. Both Derek and Vidya come from a large family background, and had three children born in Canada and have been blessed with three loving grandchildren.

## Sam and Suzie Sidal



Suzie grew up as a very shy young girl from an all-girls home. When she entered her co-ed high school, she caught the eye of Sam. He was persistent in sending her notes and asking the local girls to send her his messages. In fact, he told some of his friends that he was so determined to marry Suzie someday. Fate and determination led to Sam tutoring Suzie in math and after six months or trying to convince her, he finally succeeded. Sam and Suzie were married in 1961. They both thank God for giving them these years of marriage bliss, and blessed them with 4 children; 12 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.



# 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary Celebrations



## **Pratap and Anila Devi Singh**

In 1968, at the young age of 22 years, Pratap migrated to Canada. In January of 1971, he returned to Fiji and met the love of his life, Anila Devi. They both believe they were destined to meet. Anila had just had her future read by a local palmist lady, who foretold her that she will get married to someone from overseas, and that is exactly what did happen! Pratap and Devi met and were married in February of 1971. Anila Devi migrated to Canada later to join Pratap and expand their family. They both were blessed with 2 children and 4 grandchildren. In 1989, they formed their own business company, Premier Cabinet Enterprises Limited, which has prospered for the past 31 years! Pratap and Anila Devi both thank God for the blessings upon them with 50 years of married life together.



## **Gyanendra and Prem Sundar**

Gyanendra and Prem were both born in Fiji. Guy and Prem, a love match, were married in July 1966. In May of 1970, Guy and Prem with their six-month old son Sanjay migrated to Canada and made their home in Vancouver, BC. In North Vancouver, they owned and operated a gas service station with an automobile mechanical shop. In 1978, the family decided to enter the restaurant business and opened their very own, Sanjay's Curry Hut. Guy and Prem have 3 children and 3 grandchildren, and they both enjoy spending quality time with them. Their passion to travel took them to many places around the world. Guy and Prem celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 2016 and are enjoying 55 years of married life together! They thank God for His blessing.



# CFOFO's Youth Programs



## Youth Talent Show & Awards Night

Launched in 2004, CFOFO held its first ever Fiji-Canadian Youth Talent Show (YTS). This event invited youth across Greater Vancouver to take the stage and showcase a range of talents such as dancing, singing, devotional items, motivational speeches and more! After gaining immense popularity and demand, CFOFO has continued to work with its member organizations along with youth volunteers to make YTS an annual family friendly event where all generations of a family can come together and enjoy entertainment brought to you by youth. After running for a consecutive 16 years, growing from Bonsor Community Centre to Khanna Banquet Hall, the event has been postponed due to provincial health and safety guidelines for the past year and a half. However, we anticipate a successful return of our 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Talent Show in May 2022.





# CFOFO's Youth Programs



## Summer Barbeque Event

CFOFO held its first annual Summer Barbeque event at Richmond Karting & Rentals in 2014. Over the years, the Summer BBQ has also been held at Bear Creek Park and Sapperton Seniors Home. The event itself helps fundraise for CFOFO's post-secondary scholarship awards program. Alongside CFOFO, the current year's scholarship award recipients play a key role in planning and organizing this event as well. Their efforts create a system of paying-it-forward to the following year's scholarship recipients.



## Youth Committee

CFOFO welcomes all youth to join our Youth Volunteer Committee! This youth led group actively comes together to assist in various CFOFO projects and events along with supporting one another in their own goals and projects. Youth within this committee gain a network of positive role models and friends, lots of internal and external opportunities, opportunities to gain various leadership roles, skill development, and professional references.





# CFOFO's Youth Programs

## Youth Volunteer Service Awards

Following the discontinuation of the Canadian federal government's Canada Day Award Program, CFOFO initiated our own Volunteer Service Award program in April of 2011. CFOFO's Volunteer Service Award is designed to recognize and reinforce the positive contributions of youth to their respective communities and, by extension, for the betterment of Canada. Any youth who has dedicated a minimum of 100 hours towards community service is eligible to apply and receive the award.



## Post-Secondary Educational Scholarship Awards

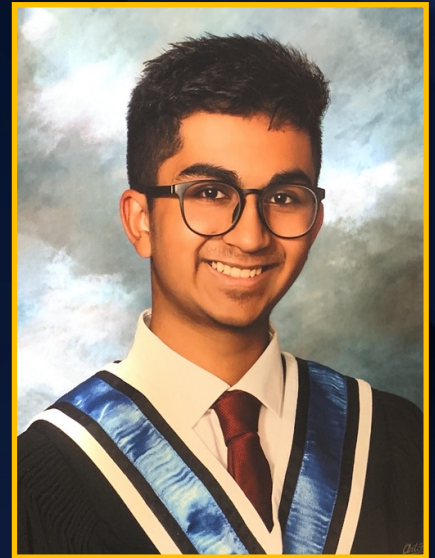
CFOFO established its post-secondary educational scholarship program in 2004 with the goal of motivating youth to pursue higher education. To-date, CFOFO has awarded 45 scholarships, totalling over \$26,000.



# 2021 Post-Secondary Education Scholarship Award Recipients

## **Abdu Abdulaziz**

Abdu is a second year Kinesiology student at the University of British Columbia. He is working his way towards his goal of becoming a physiotherapist. Outside of school, Abdu has dedicated his time towards volunteering for the Muslim Food Bank, where he helps pre-package food hampers and fundraise for their food drives. He also spends his time with seniors with Parkinson's, dementia and other health conditions at the Richmond's Lion's Manor. He has also volunteered as an emcee for Fiji-Canadian community events—including CFOFO's Youth Talent Show.



## **Jolene Prasad**

Jolene is a third-year student attending Simon Fraser University. After attaining her Bachelor of Arts with a major in Psychology, she intends to apply for law school. In the future, she wishes to become a lawyer. Outside of her academic endeavours, Jolene has volunteered for the Honeybee Centre festival, Cloverdale rodeo and Guildford Mall's book charity event. This past summer, she volunteered as an online Social Studies and English tutor for elementary schoolchildren.





# Youth Volunteer Service Award Recipients



## Lokesh Gaunder

16-year-old Lokesh Gaunder is a young and vibrant volunteer at Subramaniya Swamy Temple in Richmond, and eventually a future spiritual leader like his father. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Lokesh has made it a point to serve his community by assisting the poor and needy while taking the appropriate safety precautions in carrying out his volunteer work. In addition to this, Lokesh is vastly involved in and helps out with religious activities at the Temple.



## Shivangni Naicker

Based on her personal experience, 19-year-old Shivangni Naicker believes that volunteering has the ability to help young individuals overcome their fears of social settings and build their self-confidence. Shivangni volunteers regularly at TISI Sangam Society during their religious functions and events and has been an avid volunteer for CFOFO over the last 2 years. In her graduation year of high school, she was awarded the top student in her Leadership class.



## Rochelle Prasad

22-year old Rochelle Prasad is the founder of SPARK Foundation; a non-profit organization that offers educational workshops, camps and community programs to youth in Canada. Her commitment to volunteerism has gained her accolades such as the Princess Diana Award, Canada 150 Award in Leadership, and Surrey Board of Trade's Top 25 Under 25 Award, to name a few. She is a United Nations Sustainable Development Goal advocate and sits as the youngest member on the City of Surrey's committee of Community Service.

# Community Leader Award Recipients



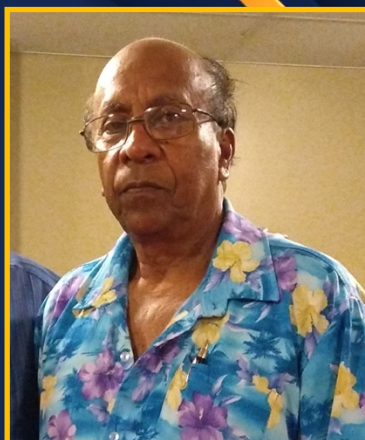
## Latchmamma Appalsami

Ms. Latchmamma Appalsami was one of the founders of TISI Sangam Society and served on the Board as well. She was a devoted volunteer for the society, where she helped with the cooking and cleaning for most of the society's events such as religious prayers, social club fundraising, weddings, birthdays, private functions and Terekuttu cultural dances. She served the society proudly and graciously until she retired. She is a Life Member of the organization.



## Gurukkal Guruji Sales Gaunder

For over 26 years, Guruji has been committed to provide sewa and service at Subramaniya Swamy Temple in Richmond, BC. He has and continues to mentor a number of individuals who wish to deepen their understanding and practice in the ways of Hinduism. He is a consistent and knowledgeable source of support for the Fiji-Canadian community and greater community at large. In 2014, Guruji established Sri Sadashiva Foundation with the purpose of advancing the teachings of the Shaiva Agama tradition of Hinduism and providing spiritual guidance to others..



## Ali Hussein

Since his arrival to Canada in 1975, Mr. Ali Hussein has served the large South Asian community at religious, social, and multicultural festivals as a musician and dholak master. Mr. Hussein has played dholak with almost all forty Ramayan Mandalis and most local Hindu temples in Metro Vancouver. His association with organizations such as Kabir Association, Fiji Canada Association and Shiv Mandir has earned him profound respect. His service to Fiji Canada Association earned him Life Membership.



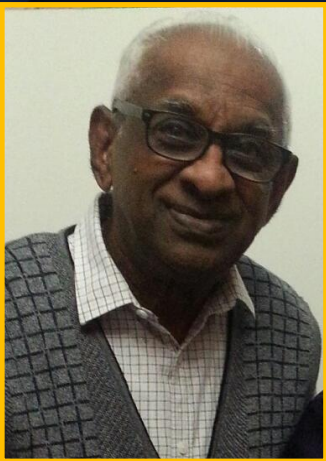
# Community Leader Award Recipients

## Visalam Johnston



Ms. Visalam Johnston has served as a pillar of strength to TISI Sangam Society since its inception in 1982. She served as a Director, Vice-President and President; and later served the women's wing of Sangam Society - Maathar Sangam Association. Thereafter, she formed a separate Maathar Sangam Society. Under her leadership, the society has donated \$35,545 to various charities such as Children's Hospital, Surrey Memorial Hospital, Canuck Place Hospice, Sangam Educational and Cultural Society, Subramaniya Temple, etc. Moreover, she has also been an ambassador for Vancouver General Hospital's Healthy Heart Club and donated \$20,000 towards this cause in 2013.

## Pt. Raj Kumaran Krishnan



Since his arrival to Canada in 1969, Pt. Raj Kumaran Krishnan was instrumental in founding the Prem Ramayan Mandali. Later on, he became best known for establishing the Maha Kali Mandir in Vancouver, BC. Over the years, he has graciously offered Fiji-Canadian citizens, who do not have the financial resources, his own Mandir space for their prayers and rituals free of charge. Apart from this, he has selflessly served as a Trustee for TISI Sangam Society.

## Kupp Swami Naicker MBE



While in Fiji, Mr. Kupp Swami Naicker became heavily involved with the Boys Scouts of Fiji and earned his way to becoming the Chief Commissioner. His contributions were so well received that he was awarded the Silver Acorn Award by the Governor General of Fiji. In 1975, he was called to Buckingham Palace to receive the Member of the Most Excellent Order from Queen Elizabeth II. After immigrating to Canada, Mr. Naicker has been involved in countless organizations such as Boys Scouts Canada, Bonsor 55+ Society, BC Cancer Society, Geeta Gyan Society, Sanatan Dharm Cultural Society, and CFOFO. He served as President and Trustee for Fiji Canada Association and TISI Sangam Society later on. Subsequently, both organizations bestowed Honorary Life Membership upon him. He also is the recipient of the Local Hero Award from the City of Burnaby. Now in his nineties, he is still active in many local community organizations.

# Community Leader Award Recipients



## **Sarda Naicker**

Ms. Sarda Naicker is a very devoted volunteer to TISI Sangam Society and served as the Treasurer for TISI Maathar Sangam Society for several years. She has helped organize and assist numerous special events, religious ceremonies and Terekuttu cultural dance functions which is performed within the Temple. Ms. Naicker continues to be an invaluable asset to the TISI Sangam Temple and constantly encourages younger generations to engage in cultural activities, and volunteer in their communities.



## **Wasu Naidu**

Mr. Wasu Naidu's community service draws back to his childhood in Nadi, Fiji, where his father who was a founding member of TISI Sangam of Fiji. Upon immigrating to Canada, Mr. Naidu played a monumental role as one of the founding members of TISI Sangam Society of British Columbia in 1982. Since then, he has served positions ranging from Secretary, President twice and Trustee. He was bestowed Honorary Life Member by TISI Sangam Society for his dedicated and meritorious service for a continuous 35 years. Wasu is currently serving as a Trustee for CFOFO, and still continues to provide help and support to various other organizations as and when requested. He has spearheaded many fundraising projects to support emergency relief for Fiji and Canadian Red Cross Society. He is also a long time avid supporter, fundraiser and donor to the Richmond Hospital Foundation, Variety Club and BC Children's Hospital.

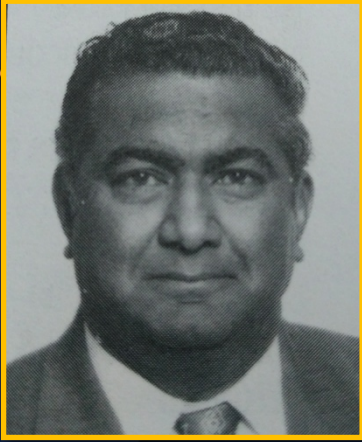


## **Maya Palad**

Ms. Maya Palad is an Extra Special Member of Fiji Canada Association, member of Sanatan Dharm Cultural Society, Fiji Canada Senior Citizens' Council and 9<sup>th</sup> Badam Powel Scout Guild. Through these organizations, she has served the community by helping prepare meals for youth and seniors, conducting local and overseas tours for Fiji-Canadians, and helping raise funds for needy international communities, senior citizens, local hospitals, the Canadian Cancer Society and Fiji Help Age Seniors' Society.



# Community Leader Award Recipients



## **Raj Gopal Pillai**

The late Mr. Raj Gopal Pillai was a former Fijian Honorary Consul of BC and Alberta, and served the Fijian community in many different ways. He was President of Fiji Canada Association from 1973-1977 and was made a Life Member of the Association. In 1982, he worked to establish TISI Sangam Society in BC and served as a Director for two years. He was made Honorary Life Member of the Society. Mr. Pillai was a very supportive individual who was respected both locally and internationally. During disasters, from 1984 to 2004, he worked tirelessly to raise funds and send supplies to Fiji. For his community service, Mr. Pillai received the Order of British Columbia from the provincial government.



## **Arvind Prasad**

Mr. Arvind Prasad is a selfless community member who has served many organizations including CFOFO and Fiji Canada Business Association. In 2015, he became the founder and CEO of Miss Fiji Canada Organization. Through this organization, he stays committed to showcasing Fijian youth and culture, and supporting charity activities such as raising funds for BC Children's Hospital, Surrey Memorial Hospital, Ronald McDonald House, hosting food and toy drives, and sending multiple shipments of in-kind items to Treasure House Orphanage in Nadi, Fiji Islands.



## **Vick Prasad**

Mr. Vick Prasad is a sports news radio announcer for Radio Fiji Mirchi, and a television show anchor for Fiji in Focus. Using his media presence, he hopes to inform and entertain as many people in the community as possible. Moreover, Mr. Prasad has been involved in charitable activities not only here in Canada but also in Fiji. He has donated essential items such as wheelchairs, clothes, hygiene products and more to Being Helping Hands of Fiji, a charitable organization. He also helps raise funds for the Fiji Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

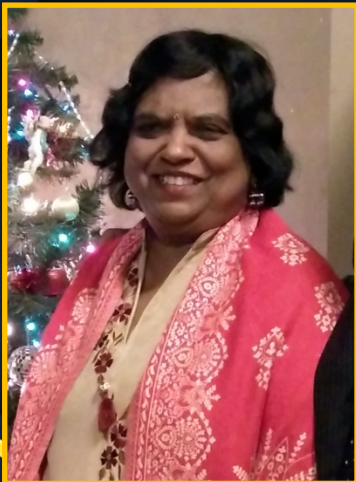


# Community Leader Award Recipients



## James Reddy

Mr. James Reddy joined TISI Sangam Society as Treasurer in 1988 and has also served as Secretary, President and Trustee. For his faithful service, he was made Honorary Life Member of TISI Sangam. During his tenure, Mr. Reddy joined CFOFO as a representative of TISI Sangam Society and helped to coordinate CFOFO's first Youth Talent Show in 2004. He has provided invaluable assistance to the community: helping to raise funds for natural disasters; assisting with Annual General Meetings and elections for local societies; mentoring community workers; and always having time to give good, solid advice to those engaged in community work.



## Suraj Sewak

Ms. Suraj Sewak has been a member of Fiji Canada Association (FCA) since 1976 and has held all official positions, including President for two years. Ms. Sewak is always ready to help whichever way she can: natural disasters and poverty worldwide; sickness and homelessness locally. During this COVID-19 pandemic, she sewed and distributed over 4,000 masks to the community. She was instrumental in forming the FCA COVID-19 Committee for Community Outreach, where she spearheaded the fundraising, grocery shopping, cooking and distribution of approximately 10,000 healthy meals to the homeless.



## Vidya Sharma

Volunteering for Ms. Vidya Sharma dates back to the early 1960s, where she helped at Sunday School and visited nursing homes. In 1986, she joined Immigrant & Visible Minority of BC to advocate for women's issues. Through her involvement with IVMWBC, she helped found the Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services in 1991-- an organization to help women and children who witness violence. Aside from her invaluable contributions to the anti-violence sectors in Greater Vancouver, she continues to serve as an active volunteer for Sanatan Dharm Cultural Society, Southside Baptist Church, Eagle Ridge Hospital and CFOFO.



# Community Leader Award Recipients



## Kamilla Singh

Ms. Kamilla Singh is a well-respected media figure who continues to bring South Asian and Fijian representation through the production of television shows including Asian Pulse TV, Kamilla Singh Show, Fiji in Focus and Viti Vibes on Shaw Multicultural Channel. Ms. Singh also selflessly serves the community through her positions as Vice-Chair of Fiji Canada Business Association, Chair of Fiji Disaster Relief Society, and Founder and past President of Fiji Canada Professional Women's Network Society. Outside of this, she is also a strong advocate for women's, Indigenous peoples' and human rights as well as anti-racism.





# Organization Award Recipients

## 3E Organization

The 3E Organization aims to engage, enable and empower youth and women through the development of life skills and participation in community programs. The organization hosts events that invite notable keynote speakers to educate and empower women and youth, host wellness day workshops and nutritional informational sessions, help raise funds towards cancer research and resources through CIBC Run for the Cure, and have provided several scholarships to youth. Moreover, they support and advocate for mental health in the Fiji-Canadian community by partnering up with other organizations to deliver an exclusive Fijian youth mental health ambassador training program.



## Bula Fiji Association of BC & Jai Fiji TV

Bula Fiji Association of BC & Jai Fiji TV, founded and spearheaded by the late Mr. Vincent Puran Prakash, both aimed to connect and showcase the Fijian community through a number of projects. For starters, the creation of Jai Fiji TV has kept the community informed and entertained for over 20 years on Shaw Multicultural Channel. In 1999, the Bula Fiji Association of BC & Jai Fiji TV held their first annual "Fiji Festival" at Bear Creek Park in Surrey, BC. Over the years, the festival was hosted at various venues across Greater Vancouver and garnered significant attention and support from the community. Eventually, "Fiji Festival" was regularly hosted at Swanguard Stadium in Burnaby, BC, and continued to engage many community members, athletes, and entertainers on their stage.

# Organization Award Recipients

## **Khanna Banquet Hall & Catering Ltd.**

Mr. Dinesh and Ms. Roselyene Khanna have over 22 years in the Hall and Catering business. Starting from humble beginnings to now opening and operating their own, Khanna Banquet Hall and Catering Ltd., for the past nine years. What sets Khanna Banquet Hall above the rest is how helpful, kind, inclusive, and giving Dinesh and Roselyene are towards the community. They have supported several organizations, such as CFOFO, Miss Fiji Canada, Fiji Rugby 7s, etc., in hosting events to raise funds for various causes both locally and internationally that range from showcasing youth talent and leadership, BC Children's Hospital, religious organizations and natural disaster relief projects, just to name a few.



## **Miss Fiji Canada Organization**

The Miss Fiji Canada (MFC) organization was founded in 2015 with an ongoing mission to encourage and empower Fijian youth to become youth ambassadors. The youth of MFC reach out to various communities, organizations, and events to volunteer, raise funds for various charities, and educate others about Fijian culture through the art of dance. Some of the notable work that this group has done includes visiting senior homes and distributing care packages, hosting Easter dinner at Ronald McDonald House and donating thousands of dollars towards BC Children's Hospital Foundation and Surrey Hospitals Foundation. Moreover, their team members have previously raised funds and shipped several boxes of in-kind items to Treasure House Orphanage in Nadi, Fiji. In August of 2018, representatives from their team had travelled to Fiji to carry out more charitable activities.



# Organization Award Recipients

## Sanjay Foods Ltd.

Formally established in 1993 by Mr. Gyanendra Sundar and Ms. Prem Lata, Sanjay's Foods Ltd. is a food manufacturing plant that is committed to producing and delivering fine Indian and Fijian cuisine, which has been enjoyed widely across British Columbia, Alberta, and parts of the United States. This business and its owners have stayed committed to giving back to the community though being involved with several civic organizations such as the Arya Samaj Society, Sanatan Dharm Cultural Society (Shiv Mandir), Fiji Canada Association, Richmond Food Bank and the food bank located in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, BC.



## Saraswati Gyan Prakash Ramayan Mandali

Established in September of 2011, the Saraswati Gyan Prakash Ramayan Mandali (SGPRM) was created to bring youth together to take pride in their Indo-Fijian culture and music. This group of youth provides cultural education and entertainment to their respective communities. They provide Ramayan katha, Bhakti kirtan, Tambura bhajan, lokgeet, qawali, ghazals, sangeet and Bollywood film songs. Over and above their musical services, SGPRM has participated in other community services, both locally and internationally. Locally, they volunteer regularly for TISI Sangam Society Temple. They also share their passion for music by hosting functions that bring together and showcase other musical groups. Beyond this, members of their group have travelled to Fiji and performed in shows and programs to raise funds that were later donated towards Cyclone Winston disaster relief aid.



# Organization Award Recipients

## Sri Sadashiva Foundation



Sri Sadashiva Foundation was founded in 2014 with the purpose of advancing the teachings of the Shaiva Agama tradition of Hinduism, as supported by the holy scriptures in the Shaiva Puranas. This mission of theirs is done through conducting prayer services, preachings, establishing places of worship, and supporting humanitarian endeavours. This charitable foundation, headquarters in Vancouver, has expanded globally to Australia, Fiji and New Zealand. Through its expansion, the foundation has been able to assist many families in Fiji during floods, cyclones, and through the ongoing pandemic. Overall, they continue to serve those in need through religious activities, food drives for the homeless and music classes for the youth.

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# 2020/2021 Highlights

## South Asian Youth Mental Health (SAYMH) Ambassador Training

CFOFO had the pleasure of partnering up with South Asian Mental Health Alliance, 3E Organization, and Empower the Future to plan a mental health training camp retreat exclusively for Fijian and Caribbean youth ages 16-25. Due to the ongoing pandemic, plans had changed and the team had gone about delivering trainings in the safest way possible. From virtual workshops to an outdoor training picnic, we had approximately 20 Fijian youth participate in mental health trainings and resources, overdose response training, cultural wellness and safety workshops and outreach.



*First SAYMH organizing team meeting on Dec 18, 2019*



*SAYMH Media & Marketing team at Radio Bula Masti*



*Fijian Mental Health Ambassadors Training via Zoom on June 18, 2020*



*CFOFO Chairperson, Shannon, presenting on Fijian Independence Day for our youth ambassadors.*



# 2020/2021 Highlights



*SAYMH youth organizers and ambassadors*

## South Asian Youth Mental Health Ambassador Picnic

In accordance with the provincial health and safety guidelines, the SAYMH organizers planned their first in-person training session held on August 22, 2020 at Sullivan Park in Surrey, BC.

The afternoon's schedule included icebreaker activities, reflection about mental health in the Fijian community, keynote speakers, overdose response and naloxone training provided by Students Overcoming Opioid Use Disorder (Team SOOUDA), and a pinata!



*Fijian Mental Health Youth Ambassadors at the picnic*



*CFOFO Chair, Shannon, leading a reflection activity.*





# 2020/2021 Highlights

## CFOFO's Natural Disaster Relief Aid Fundraiser for Fiji

In December of 2020, Fiji had experienced a violent tropical cyclone that caused major flooding, landslides, and severe damage and destruction of key infrastructure, institutions, and homes across several regions. Days after this incident, CFOFO launched its natural disaster relief aid fundraising campaign to help those affected by Cyclone Yasa. Our organization allocated \$10,000.00FJD and continued to raise a full total of \$20,096.08FJD and donated it towards TISI Sangam Society of Fiji; a reputable organization that provides meritorious service for all of Fiji's citizens across the islands, including disaster relief aid and recovery. A big thank you goes out to our community for donating towards our fundraiser!

After the fundraising campaign, CFOFO, along with other Fiji-Canadian community leaders who have worked tirelessly to raise funds for disaster relief aid were invited through Fijian Honorary Consul, Mr. Bobby Naicker, to join an online meeting with the Fijian Government's Permanent Secretary, Office to the Prime Minister, Mr. Yogesh Karan.

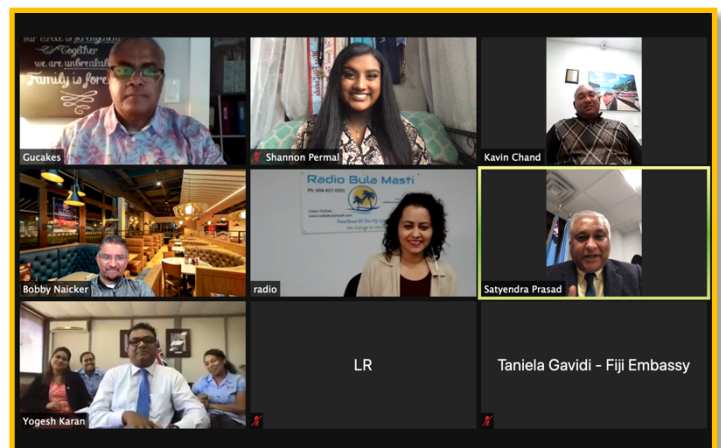
Written articles about the humanitarian assistance of the Fijian diaspora in Canada--including the acknowledgement of CFOFO's efforts-- have been featured in the Fiji Times and posted on the Fijian Government's website.



*Cheque presentation of total funds raised*



*Interview with Radio Bula Masti about fundraising campaign*



*Virtual meeting with Fiji's Permanent Secretary, the Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations, the Fijian Honorary Consul of Canada, the US-Fiji Embassy and other Fiji-Canadian community leaders.*

# 2020/2021 Highlights

## Fiji Disaster Relief Aid: Update from TISI Sangam of Fiji

Since the recent natural disasters that struck Fiji, TISI Sangam of Fiji has gone into the affected communities to assess the damages and the people who were affected. Outlined below is the assistance that has been reported by TISI Sangam Society of Fiji using CFOFO's raised funds. Earlier in June, CFOFO had the pleasure of being invited to Fiji Sangam's virtual conference to receive further updates about their activities and engage in an exchange of views.



*School supplies distribution at Sabeto Sangam School*



*Stationary and school bags distribution in Seaqaga*



*Supplies distribution at St. Francis College*



*Food rations distribution in Wainikoro, Labasa*



## NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF AID IN FIJI: UPDATE FROM TISI SANGAM OF FIJI

*Since the recent natural disasters that struck Fiji, TISI Sangam of Fiji has gone into the affected communities to assess the damages and the people who were affected. The following assistance has been reported by TISI Sangam Society of Fiji:*

Distributed **600+** food and sanitation packs in Labasa

Distributed **108** school bags and stationary packs for the Cogeloa schoolchildren

Distributed food rations to **125 families** between Dreketi to Wainikoro

Delivered stationary packages to **hundreds of children** in over 21 schools in the Ra area

Provided lunches to **all medical and security staff** at Nadi Hospital

Distributed **\$16,000** worth of school supplies and school bags across the Seaqaga cluster

**All affected schools** in Ba and Tagitagi Sangam school in Tavua to receive stationary packs in the coming week

**A big thank you to each of our donors for your generous contribution towards CFOFO's Cyclone Yasa disaster relief aid fundraiser for Fiji!**





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