



Strategic Community Alliance, Inc.

"Promoting and Empowering Communities as One"

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Grant Application to OMAC for

Strategic Community Alliance, Inc.'s Gentiva Ocala Metro India Fest 2024

Organization's Background:

Strategic Community Alliance, Inc. (SCA), a 501(c)3 charitable organization, is the only Diversity and Inclusion nonprofit organization in Marion County whose Board includes multiple members with certifications from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) wherein the perimeters and concepts of civil rights are intricate parts of the certification process. This provides the SCA Board with extensive knowledge of Diversity and Inclusion to help execute SCA's goal of partnering and collaborating with all ethnicities, races, creeds, religions, and organizations to encourage community empowerment by strengthening and celebrating minorities of color in a manner that benefits the community at large, including those who are not minorities of color.

Title of the Project:

Strategic Community Alliance, Inc.'s Gentiva Ocala Metro India Fest 2024

Purpose of the Project:

To provide an enriching and hands-on cross-cultural experience to citizens of Ocala Metro, Marion County, and surrounding communities by sharing aspects of India's arts, history, culture, and traditions.

Scope of the Project:

This cross-cultural celebration of India's arts and culture for residents of Ocala Metro, Marion County, and neighboring communities will be held on October 5, 2024, from 11:30 am to 6:00 pm at the Citizens' Circle in Downtown Ocala. This is a free event open to public. This event will include special stage shows such as Indian cultural performances (dances and music), Indian Fashion Show, Saree Experience, and Indian Trivia/Quiz. Participants of these shows will be individuals from diverse backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and age groups. During the course of the event, Indian culture performances, fashion show, saree experience and trivia quiz will occur as described below.

Indian Cultural Performances

Representatives of Strategic Community Alliance, Inc. (SCA), in collaboration with members of the community, will facilitate learning and sharing of various Indian dances with individuals and groups from diverse ethnicities and sectors

OMAC Grant Application
Strategic Community Alliance, Inc.
SCA's Gentiva Ocala Metro India Fest 2024
Page Two

of Ocala Metro and surrounding communities who will learn and present Indian folk and classical dances and music as stage shows at this event. Forty plus students from West Port High School recently attended a dance workshop with our Artist in Residence from India and learned a beautiful dance piece in Bharatnatyam style of Indian classical dance. These students will perform this Indian classical dance piece at the India Fest in October for the entire community as one of the several stage-shows and performances. This exchange of art and culture among multiple races and ethnicities is made possible as a result of SCA's Artist in Residence Program. SCA's Artist in Residence, Ms. Binal Wala, met with the administrators and students at West Port High School in April 2024, giving birth to this future performance. The power and influence of SCA's collaborative efforts continue to weave true cultural experiences for Ocala Metro residents, enriching their lives through authentic cross-cultural experience.

Indian Fashion Show

Individuals (men, women, and youth) from various ethnicities of Ocala (Indians, Filipinos, African-Americans, Caucasians, West Indians, Latinos, etc.) will participate in Indian Fashion Show. Representatives of SCA will partner with the community volunteers and clothing vendors to choreograph the show and provide traditional Indian attires on loan for the show to the participants so that the citizens of Ocala and Marion County have an enriching, first-hand, educational experience of Indian fabrics, designs, and weaves.

Saree Experience

Representatives of SCA have engaged volunteers from the Indian community who will provide and drape sarees (traditional Indian attire for women) on several women from Ocala and Marion County from diverse ethnicities to provide them an experience of wearing saree, one of the most beautiful and elegant traditional attires of India. The participants will learn about the weaves and fabrics of India and the significance of a saree in Indian culture, traditions, and folk life.

India Trivia/Quiz

SCA representatives will collaborate with the Indian community and educational organizations of Ocala to plan, design and conduct a trivia/quiz about India's history, architecture, and leaders. This quiz will celebrate India's struggles, successes, progress, and leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. SCA will also highlight some similarities between India and the USA, such as civil rights and government. Participants will learn, share and appreciate similarities in history and cultures of India and the USA by leveraging friends and neighbors familiar with India as "life-lines" during the quiz.

For individuals who may not wish to participate in formal stage shows will have opportunities to learn and practice Indian dance moves during "open dance" where individuals from Indian community will show, lead and facilitate Indian group folk dancing at different times during the event. Similarly, for those individuals wanting an experience of wearing Indian attire outside of the stage shows will be

OMAC Grant Application
Strategic Community Alliance, Inc.
SCA's Gentiva Ocala Metro India Fest 2024
Page Three

offered that opportunity through loaning of Indian attire from representatives of SCA and Indian volunteers as possible within reasonable extent.

Throughout the day, visitors can visit various vendors, taste Indian food, see Indian handicrafts and arts, and learn about various community organizations. SCA will also have free face-painting and other art activities for children during the event for children to see Indian designs.

Marketing:

This event will be marketed and promoted to residents of Ocala Metro, Marion County and surrounding communities through community meetings, newspaper, magazine, television and social media platforms. SCA will partner with organizations such as Marion Cultural Alliance, CEP, Community Foundation, India Association of Ocala, arts and cultural organizations, local businesses, nonprofits, and sponsors to share information about this event with residents of Ocala Metro and surrounding areas.

Participants:

This is a unique event where individuals of Ocala and surrounding communities from various backgrounds and ethnicities will participate, volunteer, and engage in a shared experience of artistic and cross-cultural enrichment. As a community-wide celebration of Indian culture in Ocala, this event will have a historical significance to our city and communities, attracting a large number of participants, visitors, and vendors. This event is free and open to everyone, providing access to participants regardless of their socioeconomic status, background and ethnicity.

Volunteers and Participants:

India Association of Ocala
Individuals from Filipino community of Ocala
Individuals from West Indian/Caribbean community of Ocala
Members of Indo American Club of the Villages
Members of Indian Cultural and Education Center of Gainesville
West Port High School
Asian Cultural Performers
Devotions Dance Company

SCA's Strengths and Experience:

- SCA has a successful track record of organizing a similar event in November 2023 (SCA's Ocala Diwali Celebration) at the same venue that drew approximately 2,200 visitors from as far as Miami in FL, GA, KS and NY. Approximately 100 individuals from diverse races and ethnicities participated in stage events wearing Indian attire, dancing to Indian music and competing in India Quiz. Twenty-six businesses and organizations participated in the event as vendors to sell their products, promote their businesses and share information about their services. Unlike last year's Ocala Diwali Celebration, this year, SCA has given this event the title of

"Ocala Metro India Fest" for wider inclusion and to elevate the status of Ocala to that of larger cities in Florida where such events are called India Fest.

- SCA's strengths and abilities to provide the community with an excellent and memorable experience are in the qualifications and dedication of its Board and volunteers. Our Board members have over 60 years of combined experience working with diverse individuals, communities and others to execute large scale and complex operations involving multiple parties with competing interests. SCA's volunteers successfully executed the 2023 Ocala Diwali Celebration, Community Dialogues and 2024 Artist in Residence program. The dedication of SCA's volunteers is powered, in part, by their excitement to be a part of bringing new and effective cross-cultural events to the Ocala Metro area.

Community Impact:

A. Arts and Culture

SCA's India Fest event will align with Ocala's strategic plan for Diversity and Inclusion in arts and culture. This event will present incredible opportunities for the community to engage in enriching cultural experiences.

B. Opportunities for Emerging Artists

This event will provide stage and platform for students, emerging artists, local community talent, non-professional art-enthusiasts and art-collectives to learn new culture/art, perform, share, promote, and market their talents on a large scale with the community and diverse audiences. Examples of such groups are Asian Cultural Performers, students of West Port High School, students of Devotions Dance Company, youth from India Association of Ocala, etc. Last year, an emerging artist, through the opportunity to perform classical Indian dance at SCA's Ocala Diwali Celebration 2023, was able to launch her very first entrepreneurial venture of teaching Indian classical dance to youth of Ocala. SCA's cross-cultural events have and will continue to provide new entrepreneurial opportunities for emerging artists that they do not have resources to obtain for themselves.

C. Economic Impact

This event will result in citizens visiting local vendors at the event and local shops and restaurants in Downtown Ocala during their outings. Residents outside Marion County, such as those residing in the Villages and Gainesville, have expressed great interest in visiting and participating in this event, in the same way they did in 2023. Multiple Indian vendors are traveling to Ocala to join in the India Fest and will also seek temporary accommodation, food, and other shopping experiences while in Ocala. Therefore, it can be expected that residents from the surrounding communities and beyond will travel to Ocala to participate in SCA's India Fest and visit local shops and restaurants; thereby generating an economic boost to Ocala.

D. Diversity and Inclusion

SCA's India Fest allows the arts and cultural community of Ocala to implement and showcase its values of a united and strong Ocala through Diversity and Inclusion. Historically, minorities of color, including Indians, are under-represented in arts and culture as artists and consumers of arts. This event will enhance inclusivity in this area as it will bring individuals and organizations from the Indian community in Ocala together with other groups resulting in sharing cultures beyond this event. SCA's India Fest will interest and engage all ages, ethnicity, and cultural groups, including youth, students, and the education community.

E. Celebration of Contributions and Strengths of Minority Communities

This event will highlight the strengths and contributions of minority communities to Ocala and Marion County. In this case, this will allow the community to appreciate the contributions of the Indian diaspora to the healthcare profession, local businesses, education, etc., in Ocala and Marion County. This event will provide an insight into the Indian culture and arts that is not available anywhere else in Marion County in a public setting.

F. Cross-Cultural Experience

The most unique and exciting aspect of this event is the active participation and hands-on experience of the culture and traditions of one ethnic background by individuals from various backgrounds and ethnicities. In contrast to participants being passive audiences and by-standers, this event has proven to encourage and offer opportunities to citizens to learn about arts, culture, traditions, and history of India through active, first-hand, hands-on experiences such as performing Indian dances, modeling in Indian fashion shows, wearing Indian traditional clothes, tasting Indian food, participating in India Trivia/Quiz, etc. – a true cross-cultural experience that will have a profound impact and enhanced sensitivity by fostering understanding, appreciation, mutual respect, civility, and inclusion in our community. This is the trademark and branding of cultural events organized by SCA.

G. Making of History – Establishing a Model of Excellence

If provided consistent and sustained support to such an initiative/program, the Ocala art and cultural community can create a continuous learning mechanism to foster cultural enrichment to our citizens, provide a revenue stream for local partners, and serve as a model program for others to emulate as it matures. The most promising aspect of SCA's India Fest 2024 is that it will serve as a template and a pilot for future expansion and extrapolation to other cultures, ethnicities, and countries once SCA and its partners establish a viable and self-sustaining community-wide annually occurring India Fest in Ocala. This event could be a framework to plan and organize events on a larger scale, such as World Unity Day, where all ethnicities, cultures, and traditions represented in Ocala can be showcased and celebrated. The sky is the limit for creating a mecca of diverse multi-ethnicity cultural experiences that our community can be known for among the national and international art and cultural communities.

**OMAC Grant Application
Strategic Community Alliance, Inc.
SCA's Gentiva Ocala Metro India Fest 2024
Page Six**

Budget Narrative:

Strategic Community Alliance, Inc. is requesting **\$2,000.00** from Ocala Municipal Arts Commission in support of SCA's Gentiva Ocala Metro India Fest 2024, a community-wide cross-cultural experience of India's arts, history, and culture for all citizens of Ocala Metro and Marion County. Budget spreadsheet for this event is as follows:

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OMAC Grant Application
Strategic Community Alliance, Inc.
SCA's Gentiva Ocala Metro India Fest 2024
Page Seven

Projected Expenses

Category	Item	Cost
Marketing	Signage/Banners	\$1,000.00
	Event T-shirts	\$2,000.00
	Advertisement and flyers	\$2,500.00
	Goodie bags & materials	\$850.00
	Social media	\$1,500.00
Total Marketing Cost		\$7,850.00
Operational Cost	Rent a truck to transport things to/from the venue	\$100.00
	Hotel room and storage space for the night of October 4 th	\$350.00
	Tent and weight	\$300.00
	Renting of tables and chairs	\$250.00
	Cleaning Products	\$50.00
	DJ and Equipment	\$4,000.00
	Stage Decoration	\$250.00
	Event insurance	\$300.00
	Large India Flag and Stand	\$300.00
	Face painter	\$360.00
	Cleaning crew	\$400.00
	Lunch for volunteers	\$200.00
	Fashion show choreography, music, design and manufacture of attire	\$2,000.00
	Canopy over performance stage	\$2,500.00
Total Operational Cost		\$11,360.00
City Fees	Permit Fee	\$150.00
	Police	\$1,040.00
	Garbage Cans	\$50.00
	Dumpster	\$55.75
	Processing Certificate of Insurance	\$25.00
	Vendor Sales permit	\$100.00
	Electrical Fee	\$45.00
	Staff	\$70.00
Total City Fees		\$1,535.75
Total Marketing, Operational, City Cost		\$20,745.75
Miscellaneous		\$2,074.58
TOTAL EXPENSE		\$22,820.33

OMAC Grant Application
Strategic Community Alliance, Inc.
SCA's Gentiva Ocala Metro India Fest 2024
Page Eight

Projected Revenue

Sponsorships	\$10,000.00
Vendor Fees	\$6,000.00
Grants	\$6,000.00
SCA's cash contribution	\$1,000.00
Total Revenue	\$23,000.00

Request from Ocala Municipal Arts Commission (OMAC):

SCA is requesting **\$2,000.00** from OMAC as a grant in support of SCA's Gentiva Ocala Metro India Fest 2024 towards the expenses of this project. Financial support of the grant from OMAC will help SCA implement its program successfully so that Ocala will see the return on its investment through enhancement of the arts, culture and economics.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at shenimeghani@yahoo.com or 267.575.1227 should you have any questions. Thank you for considering our organization's request and I look forward to hearing from you.

Again, thank you for all you do for our community.

Sincerely,

Sheni Meghani

Dr. Sheni Meghani
President
Strategic Community Alliance, Inc.
www.scacommunities.org

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