



YOUNG JAINS OF AMERICA



Designed by Ankit Chaudhari

**2014 YJA CONVENTION
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

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NAMOKAR MANTRA

Ṇamō arihantāṇaṁ

I bow to the arihants, destroyers of their inner enemies.

Ṇamō siddhāṇaṁ

I bow to the siddhas, the liberated souls.

Ṇamō āyariyāṇaṁ

I bow to the acharyas, the religious leaders.

Ṇamō uvajjhāyāṇaṁ

I bow to the upadhyays, the religious teachers.

Ṇamō lōē savva sāhūṇaṁ

I bow to all the sadhus and sadhvis,
those who have renounced the worldly life and follow a path of simplicity.

Ēsōpaṇchaṇamōkkārō,

This five-fold bow (mantra)

savvapāvappaṇāsaṇō

Destroys all sins and obstacles,

Maṅgalā ṇaṁ ca savvēsiṁ,

And of all auspicious mantras,

paḍamama havaī maṅgalaṁ

Is the first and foremost one.

णमो अरिहंताणं
णमो सिद्धाणं
णमो आयरियाणं
णमो उवज्झायाणं
णमो लोए सव्व साहूणं
एसोपंचणमोक्कारो,
सव्वपावप्पणासणो
मंगला णं च सव्वेसिं
पडमम हवई मंगलं



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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

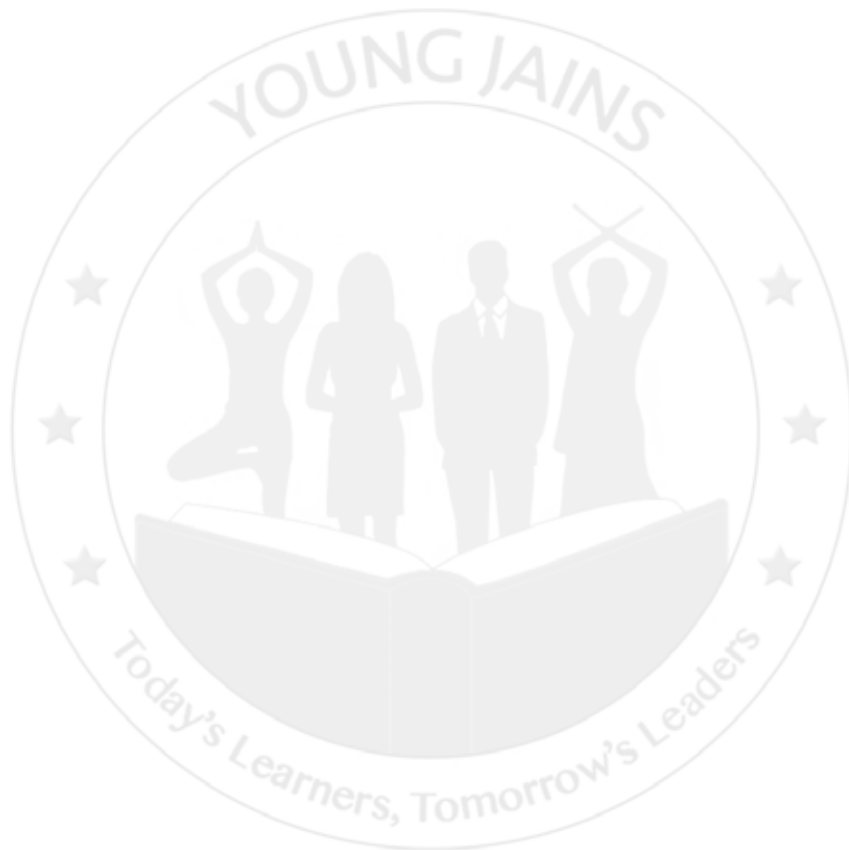
June 26, 2014

I send greetings to all those attending the 2014 Young Jains of America (YJA) Convention.

For our Nation to meet the challenges ahead, we need the courage and compassion, talent and determination of all our young people—including young people of faith. The 2014 YJA Convention provides a special opportunity for young Jains to explore faith together and foster community and camaraderie. And this year's conference theme, "Young Jains: Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders," challenges everyone gathered to take on a role in shaping our country's future.

I hope you take pride in your commitment to faith, and I wish you all the best for an enjoyable convention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", with a large circular flourish on the left and a horizontal line extending to the right.



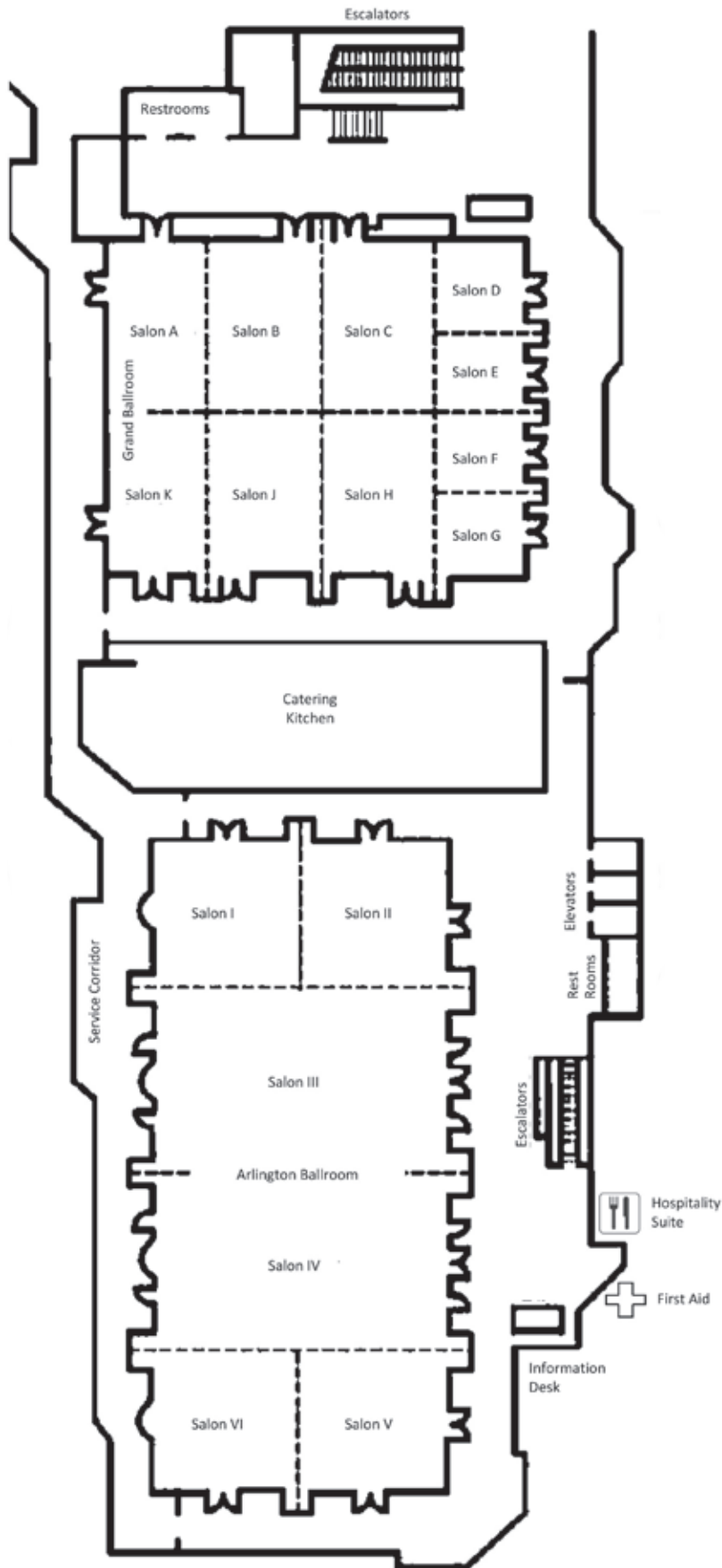
2014 YJA Convention Schedule

	Thursday, July 3 rd	Friday, July 4 th	Saturday, July 5 th	Sunday, July 6 th
7:00 am		English Pratikraman/Yoga	English Pratikraman/Yoga	
8:00 am		Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
9:00 am		Sessions 1	Sessions 1	
10:00 am		Sessions 2	Sessions 2	Closing Ceremony
11:00 am		Keynote Speaker	Keynote Speaker	
12:00 pm	Registration Opens	Lunch	Lunch	
1:00 pm	Ice Breakers			
2:00 pm	Ice Breakers	Sessions 3	Sessions 3	
3:00 pm	Ice Breakers	Sessions 4	Sessions 4	
4:00 pm	Ice Breakers	Sessions 5	Sessions 5	
5:00 pm	Opening Ceremony	Rec Hour	Rec Hour	
6:00 pm	Dinner	Dinner	Break/Change	
7:00 pm			Dinner	
8:00 pm	Group Photo	“The Jain Factor” Talent Show	“Starry Night Gala”	
9:00 pm	“Garba in the Gham”			
10:00 pm		“Boardwalk Afterglow” (HS/COL) & “Paris Nights, Paris Lights” (JNF)		
11:00 pm				
12:00 am	Late Night Events	All Night Slumber Party		
1:00 am				
2:00 am	Lights Out	Lights Out		
3:00 am				

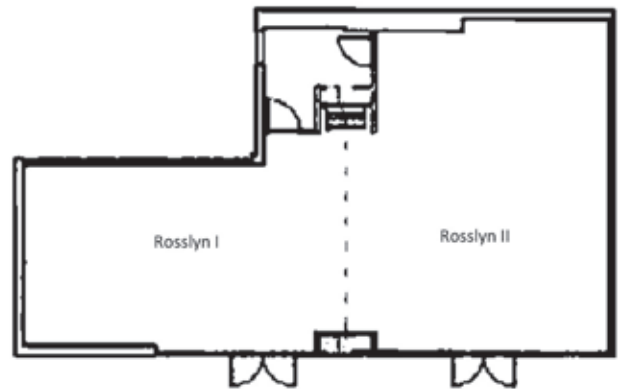
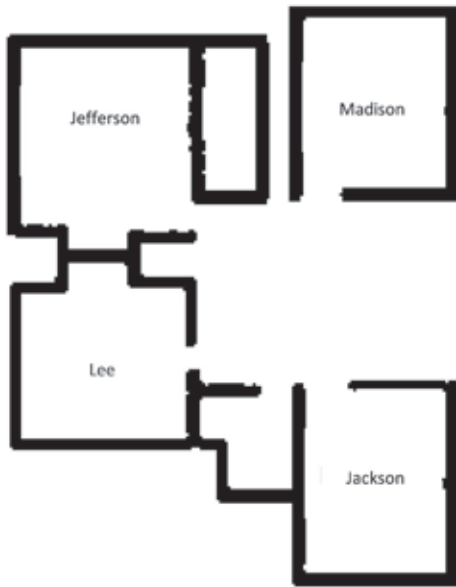
Note: Schedule is tentative and is subject to change prior to convention.

Crystal Gateway Marriott Floor Plan

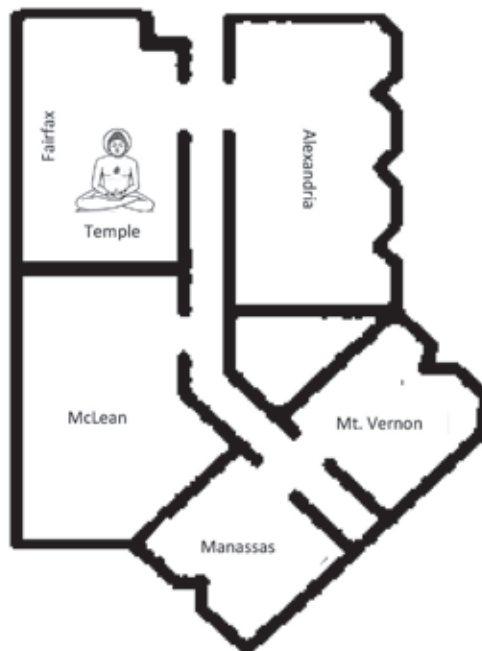
First Floor



Lobby Level



Second Floor





Young Jains of America

Young Jains: Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders

The 11th Biennial Convention

In Partnership with The Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington

www.yja.org | 2014@yja.org



Dear Young Jains of America Convention Attendees, Distinguished Guests and Supporters,

Jai Jinendra and welcome to the 2014 YJA Convention!

Every two years, hundreds of young people come together for the largest Jain youth convention in the world. On behalf of the YJA Executive Board and Convention Committee, and along with the Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington, we are very excited to host all of you. It is an exciting time for the Young Jains of America organization ("YJA") as we continue to grow and reach out to Jain youth across North America. We can proudly say that this year's convention is one of the largest conventions to date, and is also the fastest convention to sell out. This year, the convention is being held at a major metropolitan city for the first time in YJA's history. YJA is growing faster than ever before and it will continue to bring inspired youth together to ensure Jains from around the world can gather to share ideas, stories, and knowledge about leading a Jain way of life for years to come.

The theme of this year's convention is "Young Jains: Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders." This theme not only reflects the location of the convention, but also seeks to remind Jain youth to use the lessons learned from Jainism to lead a Jain way of life and to guide and assist others in living a more physically, spiritually and personally healthy lifestyle. Becoming a leader involves taking the initiative to correct a wrong, showing compassion, being altruistic, performing service to benefit those less fortunate and working to improve the human condition.

Many great leaders, such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Susan B. Anthony, and Mahatma Gandhi, came from diverse backgrounds, but they all shared a vision of a better society, in which all people are treated equally, have the same kinds of opportunities, and are able to live a better life. These aforementioned leaders achieved what they set out to do by having the courage to stand up and challenge what society felt was correct, and by learning how to instill change. Change does not have to happen immediately, but can arise organically through dedication, persistence and continually learning.

As young Jains, we are full of potential and there is no better time than now to explore what we are capable of accomplishing! We believe the sessions presented throughout the weekend will assist in developing your awareness about issues facing our generation, which is the next wave of leaders. As you hear our speakers share stories, think about what you want to do in the future and how attaining your goal will impact society as a whole. Take the time to share your knowledge with fellow attendees, speakers, Board Members, and volunteers, because your personal development can only be enhanced by such interactions.

We encourage you to internalize what you hear and experience throughout the 2014 YJA Convention because these experiences will allow you to continue to grow into an individual that can make a difference locally, nationally or even internationally. A good place to start is within your local sangh because, as young Jains, we will be carrying on the mission of Jainism. Ensuring our sanghs continue to thrive will be our responsibility, one that is very much in capable hands.

We leave you with one final thought: tomorrow's leaders will always be learners. As John F. Kennedy said, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."

Sincerely,

Your 2013-2014 YJA Executive Board and Washington, D.C. Convention Committee

Chairpersons Sejal Dhruva Parag Parekh Aakash Shah Pathik Shah chairs.dc@yja.org	Adult Volunteer Committee Leads Kayuri Shah Kunal Dagli Vaishali Shah volunteer@yja.org	Daytime Programming Committee Leads Priyal Gandhi Shikhar Shah Harsha Nahata daytime@yja.org	Fundraising Committee Leads Sunny Dharod Anshul Mehta Ravi Doshi fundraising.dc@yja.org	Hospitality Committee Leads Bonita Parikh Khushali Gala Aanal Gandhi hospitality@yja.org	Jain Networking Forum Committee Leads Mayha Parikh Krupa Shah jnf@yja.org
Public Relations Committee Leads Amit Shah Megha Vipani Virag Vora pr.dc@yja.org	Registration Committee Leads Ankit Shah Bharat Srikishan Priyank Shah registration@yja.org	Security Committee Leads Kunal Shah Viraj Mehta Vishal Mehta security@yja.org	Site Committee Leads Neeketa Sheth Paras Goda Salonee Shah site@yja.org	Social Committee Leads Jinen Shah Sneha Parikh Charmi Vakharia social@yja.org	Souvenirs Committee Leads Sonny Shah Anika Jain Neil Shah souvenirs@yja.org





To Preserve and Share Jain Dharma and Way of Life

JAINA

Federation of Jain Associations in North America

JAINA Headquarters: 43-11 Ithaca Street, Elmhurst, NY 11373 USA | (510) 990-0204 | www.iaina.org | info@iaina.org

Executive Committee

President

Mr. Prem Jain
(510) 770-0503
president@iaina.org

First Vice President

Mr. Ashok Domadia
(510) 979-9312
firstvp@iaina.org

Secretary

Mr. Yogendra Jain
(781) 979-9321
secretary@iaina.org

Treasurer

Mr. Gunvant Shah
(732) 253-7049
treasurer@iaina.org

Vice President- Canada

Dr. Raj Patil
(905) 792-8655
vp-canada@iaina.org

Vice President- Mideast

Mr. Haresh Shah
(302) 475-2672
vp-canada@iaina.org

Vice President- Midwest

Mr. Hemant T. Shah
(630) 933-8311
vp-midwest@iaina.org

Vice President- Northeast

Mr. Rajeev Pandya
(917) 783-7017
vp-northeast@iaina.org

Vice President- Southeast

Mr. Rajendra Mehta
(321) 217-8531
vp-southeast@iaina.org

Vice President- Southwest

Mr. Piyush Mehta
(480) 820-5091
vp-southwest@iaina.org

Vice President- West

Dr. Jayesh Shah
(626) 379-5590
vp-west@iaina.org

Young Jains Professionals

Mr. Vaibhav Ajmera
Mrs. Aml Doshi-Shah
chairs@yjp.iaina.org

Young Jains of America

Ms. Sejal Dhruva
Mr. Parag Parekh
chairs@yja.org

Past President

Dr. Sushil Jain
(703) 208-1681
pastpresident@iaina.org

2014 YJA Convention

Young Jains: Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders

On behalf of JAINA, I welcome you to the 2014 YJA Convention in Washington D.C.

The theme of this year's convention is Young Jains: Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders. This theme perfectly exemplifies the importance of having an active youth base. It is your responsibility as young Jains to preserve our Jain roots and build upon what has already been established for future generations.

I want to recognize and congratulate the YJA Board for doing a great job putting together a weekend full of networking, spiritual awareness, education, and fun. I have personally seen the concept of a YJA convention grow from an idea at the Stanford JAINA Convention in 1991 to now a sold-out event with tremendous speakers and great participation from our youth. For the future, my only hope would be to scale the size of the convention so that more Jains from the US and around the world can experience such a fulfilling, life-changing weekend.

Best wishes for a very successful 2014 Convention!

Sincerely,
Prem Jain
President, JAINA



"Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world"
- Nelson Mandela

Founded 1981, UN NGO, A Non-Profit Tax Exempt Religious Organization 501(c)(3) EI # 54-1280028





Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington

A non-profit tax-exempt religious organization, id # 54-1139623

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Vice-President

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301-274-0319

Dear Friends

Jai Jinendra.

On behalf of the Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington (JSMW), Executive Committee, and Board of Trustees, we are thrilled to welcome you to 11th Biennial YJA convention 2014 in Nation's Capital. JSMW is proud to sponsor and partner with YJA to bring this convention to Washington DC.

The Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington (JSMW) was established in March, 1980 with the objective of promoting a better understanding and following of Jain principles, preserving our rich heritage, and passing it on to our next generation. JSMW has grown from initial membership of less than 30 families to around 600 families. Our center is thriving with many activities. Among some of the ongoing activities we conduct monthly Snatra Pooja, Devshastra Guru Pooja, Pathshala (1st and 3rd Sundays). Please come and visit our Center in Silver Spring, Maryland.

We have embarked on a journey to build an authentic Shikharbandhi Jain Temple. We will have our Pratistha Mahotsav in Fall of 2016. We invite you to come and participate in our Pratistha Mahotsav in Fall of 2016.

The theme of this year's convention "Young Jains: Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders" is an inspiring statement of the strength, and sense of purpose. This makes Washington DC, Nation's Capital a perfect location for this year's convention.

JSMW members are very excited to volunteer, support and partner with YJA for this Biennial Convention. YJA has planned many different activities and sessions which will help our youth in developing deeper understanding of Jain way of Life. The convention will inspire youth to understand life experiences through learning the principles of Jainism. Please participate, learn and make new friends.

Thank you for the opportunity to sponsor and be part of this convention. With Best wishes for a successful convention, lots of learning, and making new friends.

Paresh Shah
President
Executive Committee

Dr. Gita Shah
Chair
Board of Trustees

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MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 4548, SILVER SPRING, MD 20914. Web Address: www.JainSocietyDC.org



MARK R. WARNER
VIRGINIA



UNITED STATES SENATOR
WASHINGTON, D.C.

July 3, 2014

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to all who are gathered for the Young Jains of America's 11th Biennial Convention.

"Young Jains: Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders" is an occasion to honor the strength of the mission that characterizes your organization. The programs and services you offer provide important resources to make a positive impact on Jain youth around the Nation. You are committed to helping others and making new connections that bring us closer together as families, as neighbors and as communities. Your commitment to the broader good is especially commendable and necessary during these challenging times.

On this important occasion, I am very pleased to join with your families, friends and community in wishing the Young Jains of America the very best for a successful and fulfilling event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark R. Warner".

MARK R. WARNER
United States Senator



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Terence R. McAuliffe
Governor

May 20, 2014

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to extend a warm welcome to everyone attending the Young Jains of America 11th Biennial Convention. I send my greetings to those of you who have traveled from around the world to gather here in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Your theme, "Young Jains: Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders," is appropriate for your mission. The hundreds of young people attending your convention have the power and responsibility to teach their communities about the importance of dialogue, cooperation, and non-violence. Thank you for all your efforts, and I send you my best wishes for a successful event.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Terence R. McAuliffe, written in a cursive style.

Terence R. McAuliffe

Patrick Henry Building • 1111 East Broad Street • Richmond, Virginia 23219
(804) 786-2211 • TTY (800) 828-1120
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Federal Relations

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The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 122
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3634 • 301-858-3634
800-492-7122 Ext. 3634
Jamie.Raskin@senate.state.md.us

April 28, 2014

Young Jains of America
1021 Briggs Chaney Road
Silver Spring, MD 20905

Dear Young Jains of America,

Congratulations on your 11th biennial Young Jains of America Convention, which is coming to Washington, DC July 3-6, 2014. Your public activism and your dedication to promoting Jainism and educating young people in Jain principles are all to be commended. I wish you the very best for your convention's success and hope you enjoy your time in Washington, DC. And be sure to come out to beautiful Silver Spring and Takoma Park while you are in town!

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Raskin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jamie Raskin



WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

April 14, 2014

Greetings,

On behalf of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI), I send my warmest welcome to the attendees of the Young Jains of America's 11th Biennial Convention. I applaud the organization's tireless efforts to encourage and inspire youth to make a positive difference in their communities.

President Obama reauthorized WHIAAPI to improve the quality of life and opportunities for the AAPI community through increased access to and participation in federal programs, in which they remain underserved. With your involvement, the Initiative seeks to highlight both the tremendous unmet needs in AAPI communities as well as the dynamic assets that can be leveraged to meet those needs.

I commend the Young Jains of America for recognizing the importance of civic engagement among youth today and for their dedication to the AAPI community.

I wish you a warm congratulations and continued success in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Kiran Ahuja
WHIAAPI Executive Director





Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington

A non-profit tax-exempt religious organization, id # 54-1139623

President

Paresh Shah

Vice-President

Manna Shah

Secretary

Jatin Shah

Joint-Secretary

Autumn Dhanote

Treasurer

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Dr. Atul Shah

Harshid Shah

Congratulations and Best Wishes

Young Jains of America

11th Biennial Convention July 2014



Background: Jain Society was established in March 1980

Current Facilities: Acquired in 1989, consists of 4.35 acres of land with a 4300sq.ft. two story building with a Jain temple, multipurpose hall, classrooms, library, kitchen and rooms. In July 2010, Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington achieved an important milestone of purchasing land for the future traditional Jain Temple located at 4241 Ammendale Road, Beltsville, MD 20705.

Membership: Over 580 families including 530+ families as life members.

Activities:

- Regular religious classes on Sundays: 6 levels for children and 3 levels for Adults
- Celebration of Jain holy days (Mahavir Janma Kalyanak, Paryushan Parva, etc.)
- Speeches by Jain spiritual leaders and Jain scholars.
- Youth activities in coordination with national umbrella youth organization (YJA) for establishing a network to share Jain heritage and Jain religion principles.
- Celebration of Ahimsa Day on Thanksgiving Day.
- Picnic, Open House and Medical Checkups.
- Community outreach activities.

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CONVENTION KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

From Wharton Business School to Wall Street, to fame and fortune as a MTV Rap star, at some point along Nimesh (“Nimo”) Patel’s journey he realized that he was walking a path of suffering, and that the only path to light was through selfless service to others and his own internal purification. In his mid-twenties, he abandoned the limelight and found himself meditating in the foothills of the Himalayas. There, an inner voice nudged him to radically simplify his life and find his purpose in service to others. He moved to the Gandhi Ashram in India and dedicated himself to the children in the surrounding slums. Fast-forward to April 2012: Nimo and a dance troupe of sixteen of “his kids” toured the world with *Ekatva* – a performance whose ultimate message was Oneness. Nimo has recently embarked on a project to bridge selfless service, love and music. He calls it Empty Hands Music.

NIMESH
PATEL



SONAL
SHAH



Sonal Shah is Professor of Practice and the founding Executive Director of the Beeck Center for Social Impact & Innovation. Sonal, an economist and entrepreneur, has spent her career focused on actionable innovation in the public and private sectors. Most recently, she was the Deputy Assistant to the President and founding Director of the White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation. She spent seven years at the U.S. Department of Treasury, and then went to Goldman Sachs and Google, while simultaneously co-founding Indicorps, a non-profit building a new generation of socially conscious global leaders. She is a senior fellow at the Case Foundation and the Center for American Progress. Sonal serves on the Board of Social Finance, Inc. and the Washington Area Women’s Foundation.

JNF KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Masum Momaya has been working for social change and social justice for more than twenty years. Currently a Curator at the Smithsonian Museums, her most recent exhibition “Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation” is showing there until March 2015 and will travel around the country for five years afterwards. Formerly, Dr. Momaya has done curatorial work at the International Museum of Women in San Francisco and the Indo-American Heritage Museum in Chicago. She has also served as lead researcher and writer for the Association for Women’s Rights in Development and on the boards of the Third Wave Foundation, Amnesty International’s Women’s Human Rights Program, and the Women’s Intercultural Network. In her spare time, she bakes vegan sweets, watches tennis and enjoys spending time with family and friends. You can learn more about her work at www.masummomaya.com.

MASUM
MOMAYA



ABOUT YJA

“Leading into the 21st century, the future of Jainism will lie in the hands of the youth. It will be the youth’s mission to preserve Jainism’s rich heritage and insure its growth for future generations. Young Jains of America will aspire to impart the Jain heritage to the next generation.”

–The First YJA Convention: Chicago, IL 1994



Young Jains of America (“YJA”) is an entity of Federation of the Jain Associations in North America (“JAINA”), a non-profit religious organization. YJA puts emphasis on projects relating to Jain youth from ages 14-29. YJA was first established in 1991, and held its first youth convention in 1994.

Throughout the years, YJA’s membership has grown substantially. Today, YJA serves over 10,000 members. Our mission is to be recognized nationally and internationally as an umbrella Jain youth organization for establishing a network for and among youth to share Jain heritage and religion.

Our objectives are:

- To raise awareness about Jain ideals and principles in North America and the world;
- To create a forum for sharing Jain religion;
- To instill a sense of pride among youth about Jain heritage;
- To address the problems, difficulties, and concerns facing Jain youth;
- To assist and to promote charitable community activities;
- To prepare youth, who ascribe to Jain values, to become successful leaders of tomorrow;
- To develop friendships among the youth, who ascribe to Jain values; and
- To foster and strengthen local Jain youth groups.

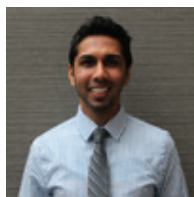
YJA hosts a number of events throughout the year: the annual National Dinner, movie or bowling nights, community service activities (such as serving vegetarian meals at homeless shelters and helping package food items at food banks), and our annual regional retreats. Members of YJA also take part in activities at their local Jain centers, such as serving meals for Paryushan and helping host Mahavir Jayanti celebrations.

Each event, whether a group dinner, volunteer or social activity, aims to bring Jain youth together to collaborate on their views on Jainism but also meet similar minded individuals in their state/region. Youth are encouraged to communicate regularly with their Regional Coordinators and Local Representatives to suggest or help plan events they wish to see in their state/region.

YJA conventions are organized and hosted every two years for over 600 Jain youths, aged 14-29, from across the globe. Each convention is organized by a team of 30-35 individuals – students and young professionals – from across the United States. The goal of each convention is to inspire Jain youth to understand life experiences through the lens of Jainism.

We invite you to attend any one of our local or national events. For more information, or to sign-up for our e-mail marketing list, please visit www.yja.org or e-mail info@yja.org.

YOUNG JAINS OF AMERICA (YJA) EXECUTIVE BOARD

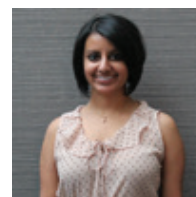


Parag Parekh | Executive Board Co-Chair

Parag was born and raised in New York City and is probably the only native NY'er that is a Red Sox fan. He graduated from law school with a JD and a LL.M. in Taxation, and is currently working as a corporate attorney in Manhattan. Parag has enjoyed his experiences with YJA, from being an Executive Board member, to hosting sessions at Conventions, and is honored to serve as a Co-Chair for the current year. Parag appreciates nerdy things, basketball, goes gaga for Lady GaGa, and loves cupcakes!

Sejal Dhruva | Executive Board Co-Chair

Sejal was born in Wisconsin but raised in beautiful California. She is a contracts negotiator for Salesforce in San Francisco. This is her third year on the Executive Board, second as Co-Chair, and she is thankful for her time with YJA. In her free time, Sejal enjoys being with her family and friends, working out, traveling, baking (and eating) cupcakes, and watching football. She believes laughter and music are essential to life. This will be Sejal's final year on the Executive Board and she looks forward to an unforgettable YJA Convention!

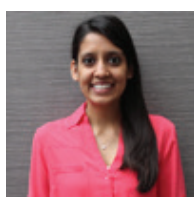


Priyal Gandhi | Director of Education, Daytime Programming Committee Co-Lead

Priyal has lived in Kansas and Northern Virginia for most of her life. She is entering her second year at The University of Virginia and is on a pre-med track. Though YJA is her favorite hobby, she also enjoys community service, art, and music. Fun facts: she's learning sign language, has met the Obamas, and is obsessed with Disney. This is Priyal's second year serving as Director of Education, and she's excited to bring some awesome Jain education to this convention!

Bonita Parikh | Director of Events, Hospitality Committee Co-Lead

Bonita was born and raised in Houston, TX. After graduating from Texas A&M University (gig 'em!), she started working at Hewlett-Packard as a data analyst. This is Bonita's third year on the Executive Board, and every year keeps getting better! In her spare time she loves to dance, bother her older sister, and spend time with friends and family. She is so excited for the 2014 YJA Convention, and can't wait to see what this year's team will bring to the Convention.

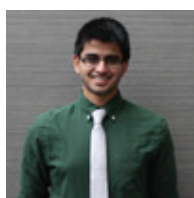


Neeketa Sheth | Director of Finance, Site Committee Co-Lead

Neeketa was born and raised in Fort Lauderdale, FL. She graduated from pharmacy school with her PharmD and MBA. Neeketa got involved with YJA in 2012 as the Registration Committee Co-Lead, and since then has created a second family with YJA. When she's off YJA duties, she loves to venture to new places, try new cuisines, and always appreciates a delicious slice of cake!

Sunny Dharod | Director of Fundraising, Fundraising Co-Lead

Sunny grew up in Lenexa, KS. He is a rising junior studying economics and Spanish at The University of Michigan. His interests include community service, inspirational books, the Kansas City Chiefs, and most of all, long-distance running (Bostonian Jains: please support Sunny as he conquers the Boston Marathon). Sunny loved his first year with YJA, and would like to give a shout out to his Boardie family, his Fundraising Committee, and his fellow Kansans and Michiganders!



Ankit Shah | Director of Information Technology, Registration Committee Co-Lead

Ankit is entering his junior year at Brown University and studying computer science. His passions are nerdy innovative technologies, basketball, football, and learning. He is from Texas, also known as the best place on Earth, specifically Houston, and is the biggest Texans and Rockets fan out there. This is Ankit's first time on the YJA Executive Board, and he thinks the best things about his experience are the vegan desserts the other board members make for him.



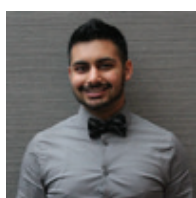
YOUNG JAINS OF AMERICA (YJA) EXECUTIVE BOARD



Mayha Parikh | Director of Project Development, JNF Committee Co-Lead

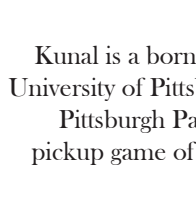
Mayha was born and raised in Connecticut, and graduated from Boston University with a bachelor's degree in economics and mathematics. She most recently worked in operations at Kaplan Bar Review in New York City, and will be starting business school in the fall. Though being a Boston sports fan in NYC was a bit difficult, she enjoyed every minute of it. She loves dancing, traveling, her friends and family, and of course, her YJA experiences. She looks forward to an awesome Convention in our nation's capital!

Amit Shah | Director of Public Relations, Public Relations Committee Co-Lead
Amit is from Chicago, IL. Born and raised in the Mid-West, Amit has been very active in YJA for many years. Currently, he is the Director of Public Relations on YJA's Executive Board. He loves to dance (especially to Bollywood music), photography, and just chilling with his friends. Amit is really excited to share his wisdom with you all.



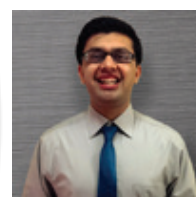
Sonny Shah | Director of Publications, Souvenirs Co-Lead

Sonny was born and raised in Poughkeepsie, NY. He is currently a student at MCPHS in Boston, obtaining a Doctorate in Pharmacy, along with a minor in pre-med studies, set to graduate in May 2015. Besides YJA, Sonny enjoys reading about and discussing business, catching up on the latest technology, spicing things up in the kitchen, and dancing around. But when it's time to get serious, Sonny knows how to crack down and get things done! Catch him in action at the YJA Convention.



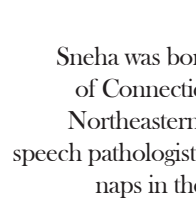
Kunal Shah | Mid-Atlantic Regional Coordinator, Security Committee Co-Lead

Kunal is a born and raised Pittsburgh Yinzer. He is a rising senior studying neuroscience at The University of Pittsburgh. His interests include rooting for all Pittsburgh sports teams, dancing (woo Pittsburgh PantheRaas!), technology, TV shows, and Mexican food. If you ever want to play a pickup game of any sport, Kunal will definitely be there. This is his first time on the YJA Executive Board and he cannot articulate how excited he is for the Convention!



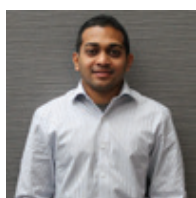
Shikhar Shah | Mid-West Regional Coordinator, Daytime Programming Committee Co-Lead

Shikhar was born in Bilimora, Gujarat and raised in Chicago. He once found a four-leaf clover, and has a fountain pen. He studies epidemiology at The University of Illinois at Chicago, and will be starting medical school in the fall. He also likes math, medical decision making, and classic literature, so definitely bring those up in conversation. In his work with YJA, Shikhar has come to realize that Mid-West is best. Very Jainism. Much principles. Such holy.



Sneha Parikh | Northeast Regional Coordinator, Social Committee Co-Lead

Sneha was born and raised just outside of Hartford, CT and attended undergrad at The University of Connecticut, where she spent most of her time at dance practice! She recently graduated from Northeastern University with a master's degree in speech-language pathology, and now works as a speech pathologist. Sneha loves to dance, swim, cook, spend time with her family and friends, and take naps in the sun! She is so excited for the YJA Convention and can't wait to see all of you there!



Viraj Mehta | South Regional Coordinator, Security Co-Lead

Viraj was born in India, and grew up in Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and India. He went to Texas A&M University, and is a proud Aggie. Viraj works as an IT analyst for Valero Energy in San Antonio, TX. This will be his second YJA Convention, and he looks forward to providing a safe and secure environment. Viraj enjoys playing soccer, volleyball, and running 5k's that benefit causes. In his free time, he enjoys hanging out with friends, watching soccer, football, and basketball games, and exploring new places.

YOUNG JAINS OF AMERICA (YJA) EXECUTIVE BOARD



Jinen Shah | Southeast Regional Coordinator, Social Committee–Co-Lead

Jinen is a recent graduate from Troy University (located in Alabama) with a Bachelor of Science in Biology, and he will be starting his first semester of optometry school at The University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry this fall. He is a brother of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity and enjoys meeting new people. Jinen spends his free time playing sports, watching TV, and studying (Facebook). He hopes everyone enjoys the 2014 YJA Convention!

Khushali Gala | West Regional Coordinator, Hospitality Committee Co-Lead
Khushali is a student at San Jose State University majoring in business administration. She hopes to one day take over her parents' business. Khushali currently lives in Southern California but spent most of her life in a small town in Kansas. Her hobbies include obsessing over her nails, playing with her two dogs and cooking. She hopes to make the 2014 YJA Convention the best one yet!



YOUNG JAINS OF AMERICA (YJA) CONVENTION COMMITTEE



Aakash Shah | Convention Committee Co-Chair

Aakash is the proud Canadian serving on this year's YJA Convention Committee. Being born and raised in Toronto, ON has led Aakash to be a passionate Toronto Maple Leafs and Toronto Raptors fan! Aakash is a dentist in private practice who enjoys watching sports, staying active, and eating pizza. This will be Aakash's final year on the YJA board after serving as Director of Public Relations (2010-2011) and Director of Project Development (2011-2012), and he hopes everyone has a legen - wait for it - dary time at the Convention!

Pathik Shah | Convention Committee Co-Chair

Pathik was born in Virginia, and raised in Maryland. Pathik studied aerospace engineering at The University of Maryland, College Park (Go Terrapins!). He is currently completing his Masters there (part-time) in Systems Engineering. He works in Air Traffic Surveillance and enjoys his job very much. Outside of work and school, YJA has been a big part of his life growing up, and he enjoys the friendships he has attained through it. Other hobbies of his include international and domestic travel, computers, discovering new vegetarian foods, reading, and exercise.

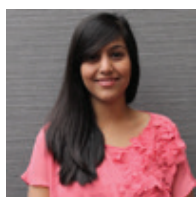
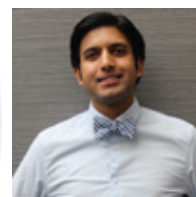


Kayuri Shah | Adult Volunteer Coordinator Committee Co-Lead

Kayuri was born in Johnson City, TN, but has lived most of her life in Virginia. She will be entering her sophomore year at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she is majoring in biomedical engineering, and working at a hospital. It is hard to catch her sitting still because she loves to dance and has a serious sweet tooth. Kayuri is also captain of VCU's fusion dance team, Nach Ve. She can't wait to make 2014 YJA Convention amazing!

Kunal Dagli | Adult Volunteer Coordinator Committee Co-Lead

Kunal has been a Jersey boy his whole life. After studying mathematics, economics, and computer science, he found his way into the world of start-ups. Outside of work, he enjoys promoting veganism and environmentalism, working out, reading comic books (DC!), rooting for the 49ers and Mets, and immersing himself in technology and design. By night he roams the streets pretending to be Batman and showing #yjalove to evildoers. Can you tell he's a nerd at heart? Kunal Dagli stands for truth, justice, and the Jain way!

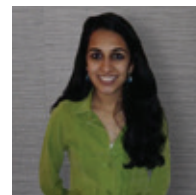


Vaishali Shah | Adult Volunteer Coordinator Committee Co-Lead

Vaishali was born and raised in sunny Orlando, FL. She just graduated from pharmacy school at The University of Florida (Go Gators!) and is a licensed pharmacist. She enjoyed working with Adult Volunteers during the 2012 YJA Convention, so she decided to do it again (in hopes that they will not try to marry her off this time). When she is not busy studying about new medicine, you can find her cooking different recipes, catching up on TV shows, and obnoxiously singing Bollywood songs. She hopes everyone has an amazing time during this Convention!

Harsha Nahata | Daytime Programming Committee Co-Lead

Harsha is a recent graduate of the University of Michigan. She majored in public policy with a concentration in international security and development policy. At Michigan, Harsha wrote opinion columns for the student newspaper, The Michigan Daily, and was part of putting together a two-day social justice conference on behalf of the South Asian Awareness Network. In her free time, Harsha likes to write, try new food, and watch Scandal.



Anshul Mehta | Fundraising Committee Co-Lead

Anshul is a senior at The University of Michigan at Ann Arbor studying industrial and operations engineering. He has been a dedicated youth member of the Jain Society of Greater Detroit, and is excited to be serving as a YJA Convention Committee member for the first time. In his free time, Anshul enjoys watching Detroit and Michigan sports, playing golf, learning about technology, and listening to Bollywood music.

YOUNG JAINS OF AMERICA (YJA) CONVENTION COMMITTEE



Ravi Doshi | Fundraising Committee Co-Lead

As one of the youngest board members, Ravi recently turned 18 and graduated from high school. He is beyond excited to join the class of 2018 at Emory! Although mediocre, Ravi believes he has special talent in basketball and dance. In addition to being a football, psychology, and photography junkie, Ravi loves all things fast and furious. At his first YJA Convention he made lifelong friends, had unforgettable experiences, but above all, he discovered his Twitter name, @RavDosh. He hopes that everyone has a great time at the 2014 Convention in the #DMV.

Aanal Gandhi | Hospitality Committee Co-Lead

Aanal was born in Mumbai but has lived in Kansas and Northern Virginia most of her life. She recently graduated from high school, and is excited to attend Virginia Commonwealth University this fall. She plans to major in business management and administration. In her free time she loves to travel, dance, make punny jokes and go crazy over all things Disney related! Aanal has enjoyed her experiences with YJA and cannot wait to make this the best Convention ever! GO HOSPITALITY!



Krupa Shah | JNF Committee Co-Lead

Krupa is a born and raised Queens girl and loves New York City. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology and is currently working as an HR assistant at a law firm. In her downtime, Krupa loves sports (she is loyal fan of the Knicks, Giants and Yankees), Justin Timberlake, dancing, and traveling. She's a total foodie and loves trying all types of cuisine. Krupa is thoroughly enjoying her first time being on the Convention Board. She looks forward to being part of a great YJA Convention!

Megha Vipani | Public Relations Committee Co-Lead

Megha just finished her freshman year at The College of William & Mary, where she is pursuing a degree in chemistry. She has called Northern Virginia her home for 13 years. In her free time, she enjoys graphic design, music, and photography, and she's always up for a dance party! Megha is an avid fan of froyo, Daughtry, We the Kings, Jon Stewart, Matt Bomer, and Indian college dance teams. This is Megha's first YJA Convention and she is excited for all of the experiences to come!



Virag Vora | Public Relations Committee Co-Lead

Virag was born in Texas, but grew up in Foxboro, MA. He is a rising sophomore at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, pursuing a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering. He has been a local representative for the Northeast Region for two years, and is very excited to be able to serve on the Convention Committee this year. In his free time, Virag enjoys DJing and producing new tracks. He is extremely thrilled to be a part of this year's Convention, and hopes you all enjoy it!

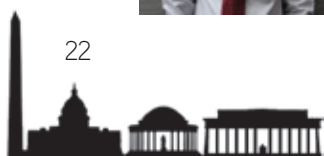
Bharat Srikishan | Registration Committee Co-Lead

Bharat was born in Kerala, India but was raised in the Chicago area. After graduating from UIUC, he began work as a software engineer within the vibrant startup community of New York, NY. As a result of his diverse background, Bharat has many different interests including math, music, travel, art, and working out. Being a first year member of the YJA Convention Committee, he is enthusiastic to be giving back to his community while working to make this an unforgettable convention.



Priyank Shah | Registration Committee Co-Lead

Priyank was born in New Jersey and raised in Virginia. He graduated from Virginia Tech in December 2012, and currently lives in New York City. Priyank works in the finance industry with a concentration in real estate acquisitions. One character trait Priyank emphasizes is having the ability to not take one's self too seriously. As a result, he loves to goof off, joke around, and take each day as it comes. In his free time, Priyank likes to explore New York City, eat tons of different food, and watch sports.



YOUNG JAINS OF AMERICA (YJA) CONVENTION COMMITTEE



Vishal Mehta | Security Co-Lead

Vishal was born in Ann Arbor, MI and will be entering his senior year at The University of Michigan this fall, pursuing a degree in political science and communication studies. Over the years, Vishal has served on the YJA Executive Board in a few different capacities. In his spare time, he enjoys golfing, running, and playing pickup football. Vishal has had an awesome time being part of YJA and can only hope to continue to find lifelong friends through the organization!

Salonee Shah | Site Committee Co-Lead

Salonee was born in Ahmedabad but was raised in Texas (the best state). Salonee attended The University of Texas at Austin (the best city), where she earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing but then rebelled and went into education. Her favorite things are traveling, music, video editing, and crafting. She first joined the YJA Executive Board in 2009 and has been hooked every since. Her favorite thing about being on Board is meeting incredible people all over the country and running around at Conventions!



Charmi Vakharia | Social Committee Co-Lead

Charmi was born in Queens, NY, but has lived in Monroe Township, NJ for the majority of her life. She will be entering her senior year at Rutgers University, where she is majoring in bio-mathematics. She just took her MCATs for medical school applications. Her passions include dancing, playing tennis, and singing. After serving two years on the YJA Executive Board, she is excited to be a part of another great Convention! Fun Fact: Charmi once ate a fat sandwich every day for two weeks.

Anika Jain | Souvenirs Committee Co-Lead

Anika is a rising third year at The University of Chicago, and a proud native of Gaithersburg, MD. She is majoring in anthropology, and has an identical twin sister! This is her first time serving on the YJA Convention Committee, and Anika is thrilled to have the 2014 YJA Convention here in the D.C. area. She hopes you come to love the city as much as she does. Ask her about her spirit animal.



Neil Shah | Souvenirs Committee Co-Lead

Neil is originally born and raised in the Metropolitan Detroit area. He is a recent college graduate from a small school in Michigan, Oakland University, with a Bachelors of Science in Biochemistry. In his free time he enjoys reading, watching films, and learning about the technology industry. He has served on the YJA Executive Board in the past as the Director of Fundraising and Finance from 2010-2012. He has really enjoyed all his experiences through YJA, including traveling all over the country for meetings and events!



Jai Jorendra

With best wishes for a successful YJA convention
Chandha, Shailesh, Amit, & Krupa Shah
Orland Park, IL

In memory of
Late. Mrs. Sardaben Mehta,
Mr. Lalubhai Mehta, & Dr. Manabhai Shah



Hope all the
attendees had a
great YJA experience!

-Hemang & Darshana Shah
(from Newburgh, IN)

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS



Akash Shah
☀️ 📅



Anant Choksi
🔔



Aneri Shah
📅



Anish Doshi
☀️ 🏆



Anjali Doshi
☀️ 🏆



Ankit Chaudhari
🔔



Arpit Doshi
👤



Atsi Shah
🔔



Ayush Jain
📅



Chintav Shah
☀️ 🏆



Divyansh Shah
📅



Falguni Gala
📅



Gautam Srikishan
🔔



Hetali Lodaya
☀️



Jimika Mehta
📅 🔔



Juhi Hegde
🔔



Juhi Shah
📅 🏆



Julie Mehta
🏆



Kinari Shah
☀️



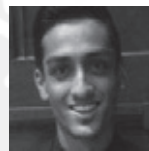
Mitesh Bhalani
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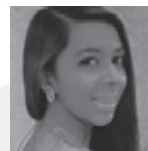
Mohana Nagda
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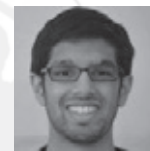
Neeraj Gandhi
☀️



Nikhil Patel
🔔



Pankti Gala
🔔



Paras Vora
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Pooja Nagda
👤



Poojan Mehta
📅 🏆



Prachi Shah
🔔



Purvi Shah
🔔



Ritu Shah
🔔



Ruchita Parikh
👤



Sehali Shah
📅



Shikha Shah
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Shirali Shah
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Shivani Shah
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Siddharth Shah
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Tejas Kataria
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Tejas Sangoi
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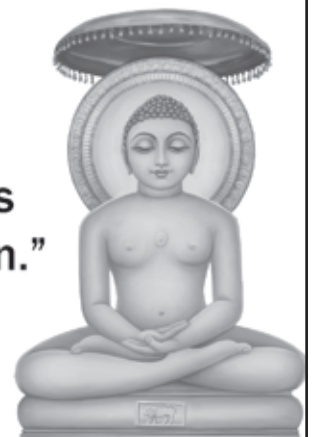


Tina Lapsia
📅

COMMITTEE KEY

☀️ Daytime Programming	👤 Jain Networking Forum
📅 Fundraising	🔔 Public Relations
🍴 Hospitality	🔔 Social
🏆 Jain Academic Bowl	📖 Souvenirs

**"Kill not, cause no pain. Nonviolence is the greatest religion."
- Mahavira**



**Congratulations to the
2014 Convention Board!**
We wish you all the very best.



With love from the Dhruva Family
(Dr. Shishir and Kalpana Dhruva,
Dr. Sanket and Pallavi Dhruva,
& Sejal Dhruva)

Congratulations and very best to
YJA members & volunteers

Jai Jinendra!

-Jiya, Nikhil, Asha, Aashish, Chitra,
Anoop, Madhu, and Padam Dhakad

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Excellent work YJA and Washington DC Planning Committee
for putting together an outstanding convention.

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Jai Jinendra!

**Prem Jain & family welcome you to the 2014 YJA
Convention in Washington D.C.**

Young Jains: Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders

We hope that this weekend gives you the opportunity to learn the fundamental principles of Jainism, interact with other Jain youth on a social and spiritual level, and leave with a renewed sense of purpose to impact the world in a positive way.



Prem, Sandhya, Ankit, Mona, Gavin, Sofia, Mohit & Shephali Jain

JAIN ACADEMIC BOWL

That with the help of which we can know the truth, control the restless mind,
and purify the soul is called knowledge in the Jaina doctrine.
-Mahavir Swami Bhagwan

Our mission at YJA Conventions has always been to educate Jain youth about their heritage and the rich values of the Jain tradition, including the principles of ahimsa (non-violence), anekantavada (multiplicity of viewpoints), and aparigraha (non-possessiveness). The Daytime Programming team is excited to announce that this year, we are taking the pursuit of Jain knowledge a step further by holding YJA's first ever Jain Academic Bowl!

Jain Academic Bowl (JAB) is a team competition for young Jains. This competition tests the overall knowledge of Jain philosophy, Jain history, sutras, Tirthankars, revered Jain personalities, the Jain Way of Life, and more, as well as the ability of participants to answer quickly. This competition is in a "jeopardy" type of format. Participant teams "buzz in" to answer questions.

In a modified version of the hit competitions at JAINA conventions, we invited youth from all over North America to take part in a preliminary online test. The top 16 scorers were randomly placed into teams. During Daytime sessions at the 2014 YJA Convention, there will be two semifinal competitions. The top two teams will advance to the final competition, also held during Daytime sessions.

Vitaragi Victors:

Ayush Jain (MD)
Juhi Nahata (MI)
Mahima Shah (NJ)
Somik Shah (NJ)

Jain Jewels:

Akhil Ajmera (MD)
Parshva Vakharia (NJ)
Saagar Shah (NJ)
Vishwa Shah (FL)

Gandhars:

Ayushi Sangoi (NJ)
Charmi Vakharia (NJ)
Mitesh Bhalani (GA)
Varun Singhai (MD)

Breaking Paap:

Anjali Shah (NJ)
Kanvi Shah (VA)
Romit Nagda (NJ)
Shreyans Munot (MI)

A special thank-you to:

JSMW for providing buzzer systems;

Shweta Shah, Priti Shah, Vinit Shah, Hema Ojha, Harsh and Bhavisha Shroff, Anjali Doshi, Pravin Shah, and Megha Doshi for revising the JAB Manual;

Ravi Mehta, Shachi Nagda, Kayuri Shah, and Akash Shah for serving as moderators and assistant moderators;

Aanal Gandhi and Neeraj Gandhi for serving as scorekeepers;

Pravin Shah and Megha Doshi for their invaluable support and creation of test papers; and

Anish Doshi, Anjali Doshi, Chintav Shah, and Siddharth Shah for their hard work as the JAB Administration Team

YJA GIVES BACK

Bhagwan Mahavir once said:

Parasparopagraho Jivanam

"All Souls Render Service to One Another"

Throughout the years, YJA has given back to the community, encouraged youth to be active within their communities, and maintained the core Jain principles of Ahimsa, Anekantavad and Aparigraha. This year, our convention theme is "Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders." To this end, we have an on-site volunteer activity which allows attendees to apply their knowledge of these core concepts by serving those in their community.

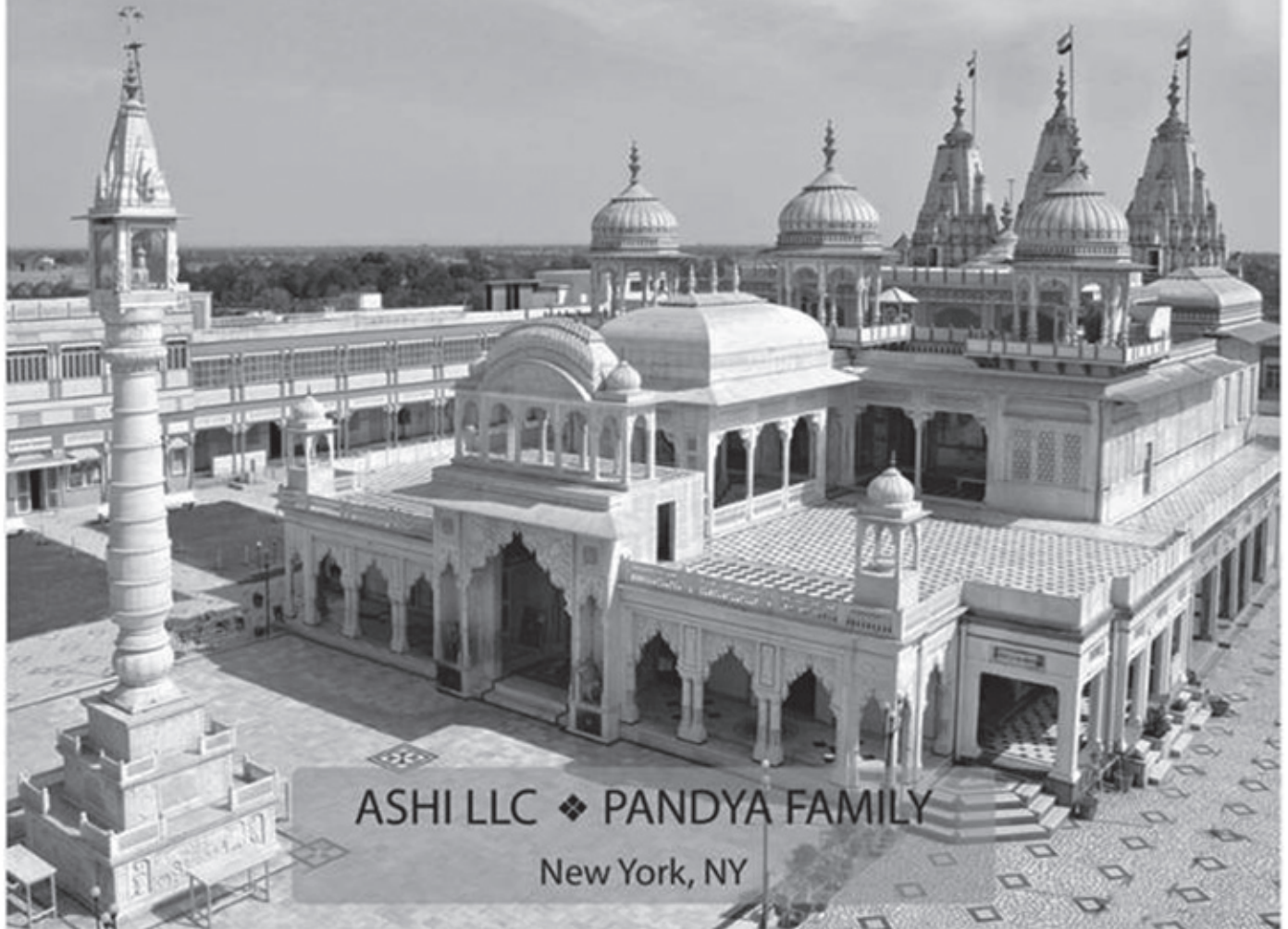
We will be assembling almost 400 kits filled with hygiene products to help the homeless, who do not have access to essential resources and lack the ability to purchase these necessities. We want this activity to spark an interest among youth to work toward causes they believe in, and to work with charitable organizations that help those who may be less fortunate. We hope that through this opportunity, youth will not only learn to give back to the world around them, but will also develop a deep sense of appreciation for what they have been given.

We would like to send a huge thank-you to Dr. Sushil Jain for presenting this opportunity, and to both Dr. Sushil Jain and Paresh Shah for sponsoring this activity.



Best Wishes for The YJA 2014 Convention

Mahavir Temple - Mahavirji, Rajasthan



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Best Wishes to the 2014 YJA Convention
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We would like to give a special thank-you to the following people for their tremendous support in making the 2014 YJA Convention possible:

Paresh Shah (VA)
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Pravin Shah (NC)
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The YJA Board of Trustees, whose advice and guidance has been indispensable:

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Shardule Shah (GA)

The JAINA Executive Committee, for their unstinting support and direction.

The souvenir book cover designer Ankit Chaudhari and printer Ketan Shah (Digital XPress Printing).

The more than 85 guest speakers who took time out of their busy schedules to provide us with their knowledge and wisdom during this Fourth of July weekend.

The parents and families of the 2014 YJA Convention Board, for their unconditional love and support.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR ADULT VOLUNTEERS

We would like to thank all our adult volunteers for their time and support in making this a successful convention.

Alkesh and Rushina Vipani (Chantilly, VA)	Jainesh and Mamta Mehta (Houston, TX)	Prem and Sandhya Jain (Fremont, CA)
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Michhami Dukkadam to all the volunteers we may have forgotten to mention above. We are incredibly grateful for your support.

THANK-YOU!

jainam jayati shasanam
sarovatra sukhi bhavantu lokah



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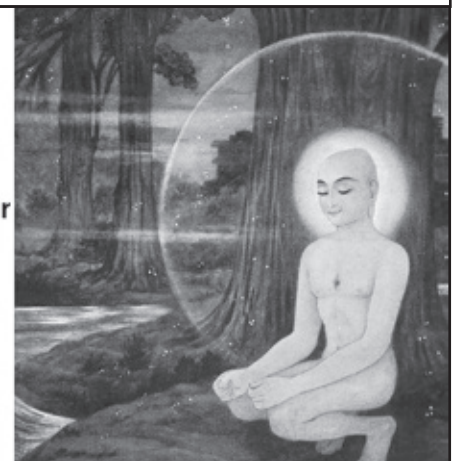
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From Hemant, Lina, Shikhar & Rishabh Shah
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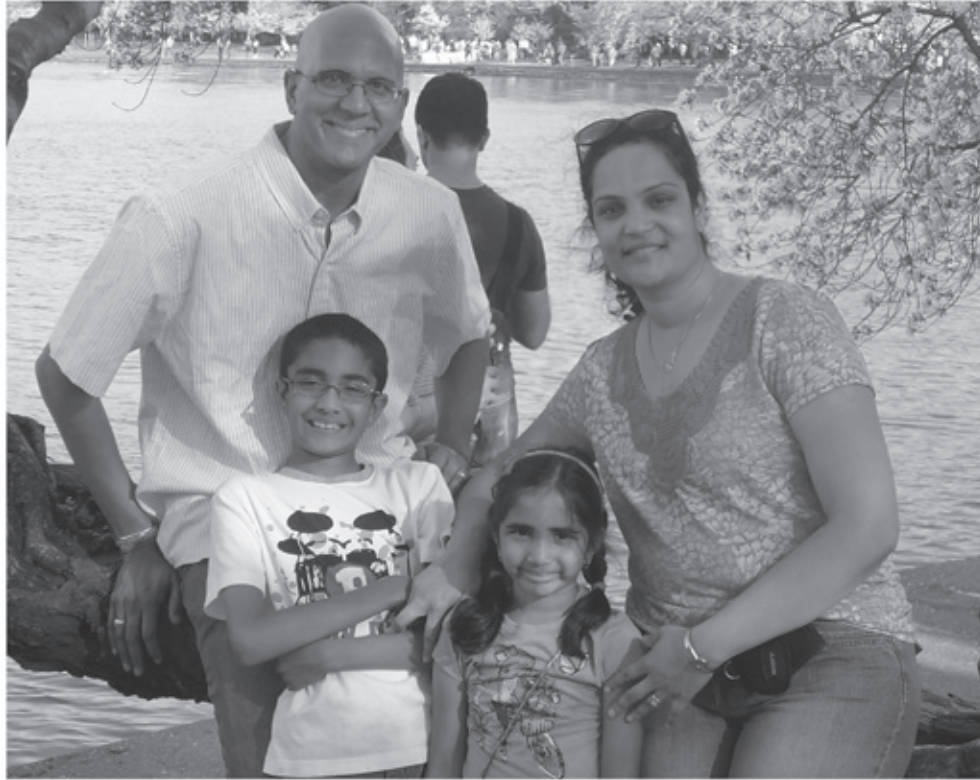


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memorable, and fantastic convention.

From Vatan Indian Restaurant,
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of successful conventions!
Here are our future YJA members**



**Kavya, Manan, Meenal and Pavan Zaveri
(Laurel, Maryland)**

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Use #yjalove and #yja14 to see your posts
on screen during mealtimes.



@youngjainsofamerica



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Love your #YJA14 shirt?

Add the "Keep Calm and Ahimsa" shirt to your collection!

Email info@yja.org.



SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

A Healthy Lifestyle: Ascetism Samani Parimal Pragya and Samani Vikas Pragya	COL
Health is fundamental to happiness; but what makes humanity unhealthy? Human weaknesses and selfishness. The ascetics have concluded that in order to achieve good health one needs self-restraint and a heightened awareness. One needs to exercise control by restraining oneself from excessive food, desires, possessions, and talking. In order to achieve control over these things it is essential to develop a keen awareness of them. Only then can one be completely healthy. Jain monks and nuns exemplify a lifestyle that is based on self-restraint and awareness, and it is these abilities that are the secrets to their health and happiness.	
A Jain Paradigm for Self-Empowerment – Releasing the Inner Lion Vinit Doshi	COL
How can we internalize personal paradigms of self-empowerment based on Jain principles, and apply them to all facets of life? This workshop will help participants recognize self-diminishing behaviors and enact changes in their daily lives. In this workshop, you will briefly review key Jain concepts, understand the role of Mithyatva (delusion) in life, learn how negative emotions limit the soul's potential, and recognize the true source of happiness.	
Act Like a (Wo)man: Confidence in Action Sejal Dhruva and Sheenika Shah	JNF
"What would you do if you weren't afraid?" In this session, Sheenika Shah and Sejal Dhruva explore Sheryl Sandberg's "Lean In" philosophy. They take a look inwards to see how merely changing your posture for two minutes can help you achieve what you want in your career and in life. As American social psychologist Amy Cuddy tells us: your body language shapes who you are. Join us to learn more about how self-awareness and non-verbal cues can advance your professional and personal relationships.	
Advocacy Among the Dharmic Faiths Anju Bhargava	JNF
Hindu American Seva Communities (HASC) is a progressive American organization advancing seva (community service), interfaith collaboration, social justice, and sustainable civic engagement to build healthy communities and coalitions while strengthening our places of worship. Through education and policy change, it seeks to bridge the gap between government and Dharmic communities. HASC has worked with legislators, the White House and other government agencies to incorporate the principles of Seva and community into their initiatives. This session discusses the variety of initiatives HASC has helped with and ways in which young people can become involved with advocacy work.	
Ahimsa In Our Times – Leaving Our Children a Livable Planet Vinit Doshi	HSC
Take some time to reflect upon life on our planet. This session will inspire fundamental change in our ways of living in order to address the universally urgent challenge facing mankind. We'll look at the root causes of the problem and why conventional thinking cannot address them. We'll take a spiritually inspired approach and examine the power and implications of a vegan lifestyle. We will also discuss our spiritual and moral imperative, and the true meaning of honoring the message of Mahavir Bhagwan.	
Ahimsa, Self-Compassion and the Mentally Strong Leader Ramey Ko	HSC / COL / JNF
Ahimsa is a fundamental tenet of Jainism - it isn't just refraining from violence, but also love and compassion. We often forget that universal compassion also means compassion for ourselves. As Asian-American youth, we are pressured to succeed as students and excel as leaders, but we also face the highest rates of suicide and depression in the country. If we ignore our own needs, then how can we care for others and give as leaders? This session will focus on mental and emotional health and how self-compassion is essential not only to strong leadership, but the very capacity to serve.	
Ahimsak Lifestyle Sanjay Jain	HSC / COL / JNF
The Ahimsak Life Style: it's a better choice for animals, the environment, the body and the soul. It encapsulates the principle of "Live and Let Live." Come learn more about this lifestyle and the benefits it can offer to determine if it's right for you!	

SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Alternate Post-College Opportunities Panel

COL

Hetali Lodaya, Harsha Nahata, Salonee Shah, Sneha Parikh

Don't want to go to Medical School, Law School or Business School? Want to see what else is out there? Or just want to take some time between undergraduate and graduate school? This panel provides insight on different fellowships, service programs, and graduate school opportunities. Come learn about programs like Teach for America, City Year, Venture for America, Citizens Schools and alternate graduate school pathways. Bring plenty of questions!

An Interfaith Dialogue

HSC / COL

Aamir Hussain and Hetali Lodaya

Join us for a brief primer on Islam, the religion of peace, and find out how it intersects with Jain doctrines. In today's climate of religious and political turmoil, understanding this ancient culture and maintaining a dialogue about one of the world's largest religions will prove to be an invaluable skill.

Animal Rights FAQ

HSC / COL

Pulin Modi

Everyone cares about animal rights, but sometimes it's hard to answer questions about why these issues are so important. Maybe you've heard that crazy question asking if you'd eat an animal if you were stranded on a deserted island? Perhaps someone's asked you what alternatives exist to animal testing? It could be that people give you a hard time, saying you care more about animals than people. We've got you covered in this session! This workshop will be a discussion where we can hear common questions you get and share the best ways to answer them.

Application of Jain Karma Philosophy in Daily Life

HSC / COL

Pravin Shah

Jain karma philosophy is inherently spiritual in nature; however, it is often misconstrued. When someone suffers, some Jains think it is due to his karma and he should endure the suffering. They think we should not get involved in compassion and charity work, because if a person commits any sin after their help, they will acquire bad karma and ultimately we will have to suffer. These types of interpretations discredit the Jain religion. This short presentation analyzes some of the misconceptions related to karma theory and emphasizes the practical ways to apply Jain karma philosophy.

Applied Ahimsa: Countering Climate Change

HSC / COL / JNF

Saurabh Dalal

This session provides an overview of the mechanisms responsible for climate change and how human-induced activities on a large scale are harming the planet. It then examines actions that each of us can take- some surprisingly simple- to help avert an impending global catastrophe.

Applying Jain Ethics in a Modern Society

HSC / COL

Anthony Paz

How is Jainism inspiring and influencing its non-Jain communities? What is the relationship between ahimsa and anekantavada, and how do we apply these Jain principles to a diverse and modern world? This session will address the micro and macro aspects of violence. Other integral aspects of ahimsa to be discussed are humility, forgiveness, and compassion. In this session, Anthony Paz will also share his story and insights on how he has been able to apply the Jain values of non-violence and cultural pluralism in the culturally diverse city of Miami.

Battle of the Sexes: Part Deux

JNF

Parag Parekh and Sejal Dhruva

The men may have won last year, but it's time for part deux of this epic battle. In this session, we will see which gender can reign supreme! The Battle of the Sexes game is about defending your gender. As a proponent of your sex, you must test your knowledge of the opposite sex by answering questions from a series of gender-based questions. Come join us as we duke it out in a battle of the wits between men vs. women (part deux) in all areas to determine who can really hold their own. May the best gender win!



SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Beyond Bollywood: Museum Trip

JNF

Take a trip to the National Museum of Natural History to check out an inspiring and educational exhibit curated by our very own JNF keynote speaker, Masum Momaya! Explore the diverse experiences of Indian immigrants and Indian Americans in the United States.

Bridging the Gap

HSC

Vijay Mehta

Desi children growing up in the US face a unique challenge: a generational and cross-cultural gap. Many often complain that their parents still live in 80s'-style India and are not willing to change. Do you feel as though you are living a double life? It is time to acknowledge that our culture is not immune to different social issues such as smoking, alcohol, and drugs. Moreover, pre-marital relationships are becoming norms rather than exceptions. This session explores real life situations young Jains might face and provides input on ways they can reconcile their views with those of their parents.

Bringing the Interfaith Movement to Your College Campus

COL

Adam Garner and Gautam Srikishan

There's a growing movement on college campuses across the country. Student leaders from different backgrounds are bringing people together across lines of religious difference for the common good. Learn how Interfaith Youth Core can help you join this movement.

Business and Finance Panel

COL / JNF

Rushabh Kapashi, Khushbu Vora, Ronak Shah, Apurva Bhansali, Lina Shah

Ever wonder what it takes to make it in business? Think you might someday want to start your own? This panel brings together a variety of professionals working in the business and financial sectors to share their stories and experiences. Come hear about what a day in the business world looks like! Participants from all background are welcome.

But You Gotta Have Faith

COL / JNF

Parag Mehta, Seema Nanda, Masum Momaya, Tarak Shah, Gautam Raghavan

As Jains, our religious beliefs inform many aspects of our lives. So, how do we apply the values of our faith to politics and public policy? Religion has shaped many political and cultural movements for social justice, but Jain values are often not represented. It is time to change that. Join a panel of Desi political pros and community advocates as they explore the intersections between faith and policy and attempt to answer the question, "What do our faiths call on us to do with respect to the most pressing issues of our time?"

Campus Organizing 101

COL

Parag Mehta and Deepa Kunapuli

Learn how to mobilize grassroots support and spread awareness for a candidate, issue or other cause with the help of dear, sweet M.O.M. (message + organization + money). This workshop will teach you how to become an effective campus and community organizer capable of developing and implementing strategies for winning campaigns.

College Prep Panel

HSC

Akash Shah, Kinari Shah, Ankit Shah, Pratik Lakhani, Tina Lapsia

College is a new, and sometimes, scary phase of one's life. Do you have questions about the application process, adjusting to the environment, academics, extracurriculars, social life or more? This panel is an opportunity to talk to current college students and have all your questions answered. We hope you take these tips with you as you embark on a new journey.

SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Cooking Jain 101
Geeta

HSC / COL / JNF

We will learn two basic dishes that every desi leaving the nest should know - mug and chai. Geeta of Hush Supper Club will demonstrate how to use a pressure cooker, how to boil chai the right way, and how to make your mother proud! (Even if she won't admit it...)

Current Ethics Challenging Jains in North America
Dr. Sushil Jain

HSC / COL / JNF

This workshop is intended to re-immerses you in discussions of ethical considerations in your practice of Jainism when reasonable people may differ on which ethical values should prevail. In the first 10 minutes, Dr. Jain will review key ethical concepts and approaches to issues. In the past few decades, minority faiths are facing various ethical challenges as they become incorporated in mainstream culture. You will discuss some of these case studies in small groups and present a quick summary of your discussion to the entire group.

Desi Chaat: Playing With Manufacturing
Priya Shah

HSC / COL

What was the inspiration and developmental process behind the game, Desi Chaat? Come listen to the story of how the game came about with the creator, Priya Shah! We'll also talk about entrepreneurship and the importance of networking. Then, expand your mind and try your hand at making a simple product and see all the manufacturing logistics that are involved behind the scenes!

Environmental Justice in Jainism
Anthony Paz

HSC / COL

What is environmental violence and why is environmental activism such a crucial matter in our time? What is our responsibility as Jains toward the environment? How can we as future leaders mobilize others to address the current crisis we are facing? This session addresses these questions and seeks to find solutions for how the Jain community can play a pivotal role in promoting clean and sustainable energy. Environmental justice is an important aspect to creating a safer environment for all living beings.

Everyday Choices That Lead to Bold Transformations
Hema Pokharna

HSC / COL

In the session you will discover how to achieve alignment with your inner wisdom using realistic, practical and powerful spiritual tools that will contribute to making better every day choices. You will also learn how to create an empowering daily mindset that releases old repetitive and disempowering stories. And lastly, you will develop skills that will help you use mindful action to align with your goals, passion, and purpose so you can effortlessly achieve what has been elusive up until now.

Explain Being Jain
Hetali Lodaya

HSC

It has happened to all of us- someone asks you what Jainism is, and your only response is something like: "Uh... it's sort of like Hinduism... but different." This session will help you develop your Jainism Elevator Pitch so you can concisely and accurately explain your beliefs in 30 seconds or less, without getting into all the metaphysics. If you've been selling yourself short all these years, now's your chance! You never know what great conversations might follow.

Finance – It's a Fact of Life
Lina Shah

JNF

We will discuss forming a habit, understanding volatility, objectives of tax deferral, securing a family with a balanced budget, information on 401K and pre-tax dollars, and creating a legacy. This will be a very interactive session with active participation in a fun-filled environment! We will review the basic concept of "Debit what comes in, Credit what goes out," and view finance as a backbone of healthy living.



SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Finding the Activist Within: Youth Political Engagement in Today's Society

HSC / COL

Rina Shah

In this candid and casual session about the current state of U.S. political affairs and youth civic engagement, Washington, D.C.-based political strategist and consultant Rina Shah will discuss how you can find your inner activist and play a role in today's political processes.

Freedom

HSC / COL

Hemandra Momaya

The "Freedom" workshop is an interactive session that reflects each Soul's ongoing journey through various cycles (realms) of birth and death. It is about past life cycles, present life cycles and future life cycles. It is also about attaining freedom from the endless cycles of birth and death by acquiring and practicing right perception, right knowledge and right conduct. The image that is created after the 150 piece jigsaw puzzle is completed is meant to serve as a springboard for the spiritual discussion among peers and family.

Goodbye Barbaadi.com

JNF

Vijay Mehta

Good bye Barbaadi.com hello Vijayuncle.com!

It is time for each of you to have a personalized plan to help you find your soul-mate (unless of course you want to be 'single by choice'). When seriously looking, it is very important to recognize "Window shoppers", "Non-shoppers", "comparison shoppers" and those who are seriously looking. In this workshop, learn how to distinguish between these and develop a plan that is unique to you. Time is a terrible thing to waste once you are seriously looking.

Harmony of Religious Diversity

HSC / COL

Pravin K. Shah

During thousands of years of mankind's history, man's search for God/self has led down many pathways. The result has been the enormous diversity of religious expression found worldwide. It ranges from the endless variety of Hinduism, simplicity of Buddhism, self-control of Jainism, harmonious approach of Sikhism, to the monotheism of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as well as to the oriental philosophies of Shinto, Taoism, and Confucianism. The presentation will highlight the similarities and philosophical differences found among the World's major faiths.

How to Be a Good Leader

HSC / COL / JNF

Annette Cowart

This workshop will combine dialogue, reflection and simulation activities around personal vocation and Jain values. We will examine how these competencies can be applied to problem-solving and collaboration strategies for meaningful and effective leadership.

How to Not Be a Bad Person

HSC / COL

Shikhar Shah

Objective morality is hard to work with. The difficulty of being "good" stems from how impossible it is to define "goodness." So instead, let's avoid being terrible. What are some Jainism- (and, in the spirit of interfaith awareness, other religions as well) approved methods for avoiding negativity in your life? We will also pay close attention to science. The underlying theme of this session will be the scientific method: all claims will be backed by at least some literature, which will make for a discussion grounded in proper inquiry.

I'm a J - A - I - N. Jane Doe. No Relation - How to Explain Jainism to Americans

HSC / COL

Geeta

Geeta will explain Jainism in simple steps by comparing it to the Abrahamic religions of the West. In doing a comparison of religious concepts, we will learn how to explain Jainism's principles, culinary ideas, and basic meaning to non-Jains and non-desis. Expect practical advice and plenty of humor!

"There's no knowledge without right faith,
No conduct is possible without knowledge,
Without conduct, there's no liberation,
and without liberation, no deliverance."

- Mahavira



Congratulations to the 2013 - 2014 YJA Convention Board on continuing to inspire and lead a new generation of young Jains, promoting a Jain way of life and planning a successful convention.

From Kishor, Indu (Ila), Parag,
Hersh & Rachana Parekh



Best Wishes to the 2014 YJA Convention!

JAIN SOCIETY OF PITTSBURGH
Hindu Jain Temple
615 Illini Drive, Monroeville, PA 15146



Best Wishes for the 2014 YJA Convention



Congratulations to the YJA Board and Convention Committee, Speakers, and Volunteers for your hard work!

Pratik and Dolly Parikh
Rocky Hill, CT



Best Wishes to the YJA 2014 Convention



**The Jain Study Center of North Carolina
would like to wish YJA & the attendees a
very successful convention.**

*"Non-violence and kindness to living
beings is kindness to oneself."
-Bhagwan Mahavir"*

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**With Best Compliments from the
Jain Sangh of Hudson Valley
(Hindu Samaj)**

The Kansas City Jain Sangh



**On behalf of the
Kansas City Jain
Sangh, we would like
to express our
support for all Jain
youth in America.**

SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

I Went To The Temple – Now What?

HSC / COL

Apurva Bhansali

We go to the temple to pray to God, learn about Jainism and ultimately to find inner peace. But what happens when we leave the temple and delve back into our daily routines? Do the mantras, mala counting, rituals and lessons of the super-human acts of our Bhagwans have applicability in the real world? In this workshop, we will explore the core philosophy of Jainism and how it can be relevant to our daily lives.

Interfaith Cooperation and Its Role in Our Community

HSC / COL

Mitesh Shah, Sy Majidi, Symi Rom-Rymer, Mohamed Elsanousi, Paul Monteiro

“Today’s Learners, Tomorrow’s Leaders” involves learning how to navigate a diverse community. How can we work together with other faiths to bring about positive change in our local neighborhoods? Come listen to different perspectives and advice from important interfaith leaders in the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. area.

Interfaith Leadership in a Time of Global Religious Conflict

HSC

Adam Garner and Gautam Srikishan

America is the most religiously diverse nation in human history and the most religiously devout nation in the West. In this era of global religious conflict, will religion be a barrier of division or a bridge of cooperation? Explore why, as Jains, interfaith leadership is more important now than ever.

Interfaith Youth Core Panel

HSC / COL

Meghan Roth, Aamir Hussain, Miranda Hovemeyer, Shikhar Shah

We live in a time when people of different religious and nonreligious backgrounds interact with greater frequency than ever before. We hear the stories of people who seek to make faith a barrier of division all too often. Instead, religious and secular traditions can be bridges of cooperation. In a world of interfaith cooperation, religiously diverse people can live together with equal dignity and mutual loyalty. During this session, IFYC’s Alumni Speakers will address the importance of building a culture of respect for religious and non-religious identities, mutually inspiring relationships across religious boundaries, and common action for the common good.

It’s the Thought That Counts

HSC

Krupa Shah and Priyal Gandhi

Didn’t your mother ever tell you, “If you have nothing nice to say, don’t say anything at all”? Well, all of us at some points during our lives have negative thoughts about someone or something. These negative thoughts can sometimes fester into worse things, like negative speech and action. Come learn about the ways in which we can control our thoughts and emotions, and put your acting skills to the test!

Jain Academic Bowl Finals

HSC / COL

Come watch the top two Jain Academic Bowl teams compete for first place! Jain Academic Bowl (JAB) is a team competition for young Jains. This competition tests the overall knowledge of Jain philosophy, Jain history, sutras, Tirthankars, revered Jain personalities, the Jain Way of Life, and more, as well as the ability of participants to answer quickly.

Jain Academic Bowl Semi-Finals

HSC / COL

The top 16 competitors in North America have been placed into four random teams and are now ready to compete in YJA’s first-ever Jain Academic Bowl! Come watch and cheer them on. Jain Academic Bowl (JAB) is a team competition for young Jains. This competition tests the overall knowledge of Jain philosophy, Jain history, sutras, Tirthankars, revered Jain personalities, the Jain Way of Life, and more, as well as the ability of participants to answer quickly.



SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Jain Dialogue

HSC

Akash Shah, Harsha Nahata, Kinari Shah

These sessions offer a space to engage in discussion surrounding pressing issues or questions related to the Jain religion. Participants will be able to engage with peers to address uncertainties or questions they might have while talking about larger philosophical ideas related to our religion.

Jain Diet and Food- Holistic Approach to Spirituality, Health, and Ecology

HSC / COL

Pravin Shah

What does Jain food mean? Is it vegetarian food that contains no root vegetables? Do the Jain scriptures define such a narrow definition? This presentation investigates the Jain diet definition using the holistic approach of ahimsa and self-restraint from Jain scriptures. It properly defines the criteria of Jain diet and concludes that Jain diet, if practiced properly, is an ideal and practical diet that helps to progress our spirituality and is healthy and eco-friendly to our environment.

Jain Potpourri!

HSC / COL

Mitesh Shah and Priyanka Shah

Jain Potpourri is a session that follows the open forum format. Ask anything to other attendees who may have answers for you and questions of their own. This is an incredible opportunity for Jain youth from around the world to inquire about the world as another Jain youth might see it. Our session mentors, Priyanka and Mitesh, are knowledgeable and will guide dialogue on current issues relating to Jain youth. There is no agenda. Ask anything, and don't be shy!

Jain Rituals

HSC / COL

Preyas Shah

Ever wonder what the significance behind different Jain customs and rituals is? In this session, we will go into detail on various Jain Rituals. We will discuss the intentions behind the rituals, what they symbolize, as well as how to perform these rituals.

Jain Stories: Writing and Talking about Being Jain

HSC / COL / JNF

Jennifer Craig-Savla

"What's a Jain?" How many times have you gotten this question? It's time everyone knew. And the best way to do this is for us to tell our stories – the good and bad, the ordinary and extraordinary. In this session, the lead editor for JAINA's "Jain Perspectives" blog on The Huffington Post will facilitate dialogue about what it's like to be Jain in North America. Hear others' experiences, and be heard. All stories will not leave the room – unless, of course, you answer the call at the end of the session to have your story published on the blog!

Jain Universe

HSC / COL

Pravin Shah

Jain literature has described, in great detail, the structure of the universe. However, the present of knowledge of universe significantly differs from what is described in the literature. Our scriptures claim that the Earth is flat, not moving, and is the center of the universe. The presentation will summarize the Jain literature version of the universe and provide comparisons with the present understanding of the universe.

Jainism IS Social Justice (or Can We Make It So in the 21st Century)

HSC / COL / JNF

Parag Khandhar

It is easy to reduce Jainism to soundbites like "non-violence" and "vegetarianism." What does it take for us to go from the idea of asceticism and the abstraction of non-violence to a more engaged and proactive stance of community and anti-violence? In this modern world where everything feels more connected, cannot the philosophies and lessons of Jainism play a role in creating a world with less suffering, more equity, and greater sustainability? We will ask some of these questions in this interactive session and begin a dialogue that we can continue in the future.

SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Jainism, Ecology, and Kicking Butt in Antarctica
Tushar Mehta

HSC / COL / JNF

What is the state of our planet's ecology, and what single word captures the root of all of earth's ecological problems? What are the solutions? And how does Jain philosophy tie in? Find out in this session! Dr. Tushar Mehta will also discuss his experience working with the Sea Shepherd Zero Tolerance campaign through which he spent three months in Antarctic waters, amongst icebergs and ocean life, as crew and ships battled whaling ships to stop a slaughter. Get ready to see some great pictures and challenge your thinking!

Jainism: Ancient vs. Modern
Hemang Srikishan

HSC

With several thousand years of history it is easy to believe that Jainism has always been the same. However, early Jain scriptures paint a different picture of Jainism than we see today. In this session, come learn about early Jainism, shifts in scriptures, and ideas of how Jainism will progress.

Know Your Body and Food
Pundit Radheshyam Mishra

HSC / COL

This session will cover a variety of topics related to physical well-being. These include conscious sleep for mental peace (Yoga Nidra), control over sense organs (Nishpand Bhava), and ways in which different types of food impact the body. In this session you will learn strategies that can help with controlling weight, stress management, concentration, all-day energy, and immunity development.

Kshmapana In Our Times – Jainism's Gift of Forgiveness to the World
Vinit M. Doshi

HSC

This session will explore the universal and profound power of the Jain tradition of Kshmapana (unconditional forgiveness). We will specifically look at the origins and universality of Paryushan, the consequences of anger and resentment, and how forgiveness can be applied to multiple levels and facets of life. We will also analyze the stages of forgiveness and its relationship to karma, and find how to move from self-victimization to a new paradigm of personal empowerment.

Law and Policy Panel
Ramey Ko, Rina Shah, Ronak D. Desai

COL / JNF

Curious about what a career in law or politics might look like? Want to learn about current issues of the day? This is the panel for you! This panel brings together people pursuing a variety of careers in fields related to law and politics, to give you an idea of what a day in the life of a professional might look like. Participants from all backgrounds are welcome.

Leadership 101
Hema Pokharna

JNF

Develop the ability to behave with Wisdom and Compassion while maintaining inner and outer peace (equanimity) regardless of the circumstances. Wisdom and Compassion compose the two keys to transformational leadership. We will provide you with Nonviolent Communication skills, which offer a simple framework for communicating that is based on understanding the underlying needs that drive our own behaviors and those of others. Even the most difficult messages can be more easily heard and expressed using this framework to support each other to explore and accomplish what we most care about and what matters most.

Leveraging Social Media
Pulin Modi

HSC / COL / JNF

It's 2014. There's a rich history of people organizing for good causes using marches, protests, and lobbying, but in today's day and age, social media platforms empower people like never before! We'll talk about how students and the general public can use sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Change.org to raise awareness and win campaigns from local to global – all for free!



SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Making Jainism Right for You
Monica Shah

COL

Do you ever question how traditional Jain principles are applicable in today's high paced Western culture? Do you feel like Jainism doesn't make sense anymore in today's times? Are you wondering if Jainism is right for you? Being Jain is not just about what rituals you practice or what "rules" you follow. It's also about how you apply the essence of Jain values. This session will discuss situations in which Jainism feels applicable and others in which it does not. We'll go through examples that you are experiencing today, helping you discover how you can make Jainism work for you.

Meaning In Navkar Mantra
Nirav Shah

HSC / COL

Your first exposure to our faith, even before you can remember, was likely hearing Navkar Mantra, our most fundamental prayer. For many young Jains, this exposure is the seed from which a connection to their personal faith grows. In its phrases is found the path to liberation in Jainism. The title of this session is not an error. Our intention is to understand the mantra, and through that understanding, find a greater meaning and purpose in our lives.

Medicine and Healthcare Panel

COL / JNF

Ruchita Parikh, Aakash Shah, Sonali Vakharia, Hema Pokharna

Curious about how the healthcare industry works? Want to learn more about different types of opportunities in medicine? This panel brings together professionals working in different arms of the healthcare industry. Come learn about their jobs and experiences! Participants from all background are welcome.

Misconceptions About Finding the "Right One"
Monica Shah

JNF

Been there, done that....Are you tired of avoiding awkward set-up dates? Are you wondering why the idea of "chemistry" is a foreign concept to your parents when they are constantly pressuring you to settle down? Take a time out from feeling so lost and overwhelmed with the thought of finding the "Right One." Rather, hear from someone who has gone through exactly what you're going through. Hear what she wishes she knew when she was in your shoes. You'll be surprised to hear it's more about looking for the right things, not the right one!

Modern Jain Values: Social Practices vs. Traditional Rituals
Amam Vasaniwala

HSC

Praying at the temple, checking the ingredients label at the grocery store, performing daily Samayik, volunteering at the soup kitchen...how do we practice Jainism in today's modern world? This interactive session will allow you to discuss differences between social practices and traditional rituals, while learning how to apply Jainism to modern day life.

Modern-Day Slavery & Human Trafficking in the U.S.
Aashika Damodar

COL / JNF

This session will introduce participants to modern-day forms of slavery and human trafficking in the United States, while they examine the human rights violations associated with these injustices. Participants will learn about transnational and local forms of human trafficking as well as misconceptions concerning trafficking. They will reflect on case studies illustrating instances of slavery and learn what can be done to address this egregious crime and violation of human rights. Please be aware that some of the activities in this session will contain sensitive language and graphic material, which may be difficult and/or traumatic for some to experience.

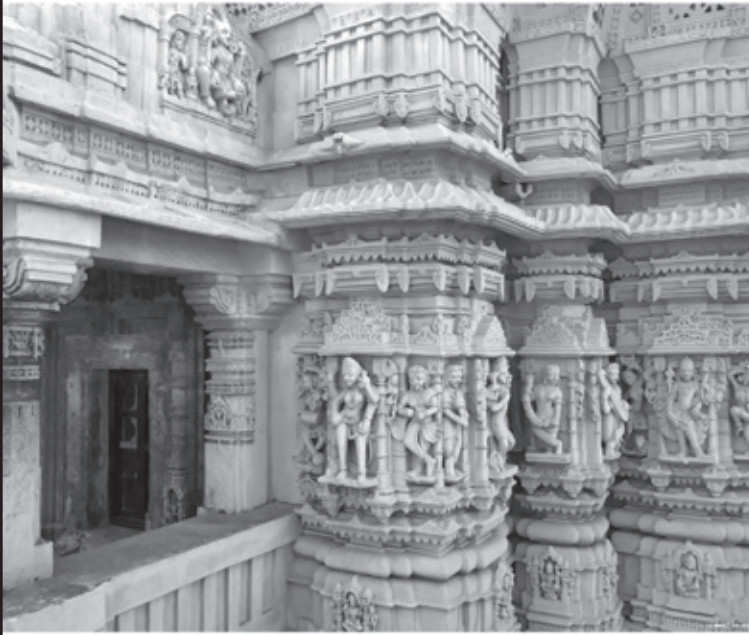
Negotiating Across Differences
Parth Savla

HSC

Time to work together! This interactive session explores what it takes to work with and lead a team. While collaborating with your team members on a hands-on building project, you will discover more about cooperation, competition, and communication – and their limits. This session will get you thinking about how to communicate well within a team dynamic and the importance of being aware of *anekantavada*, the multiplicity of views.

Wishing you all Young Jains of America 2014
a great success.

-Gala Foundation



Jain Center Of Connecticut



Jai Jinendra!

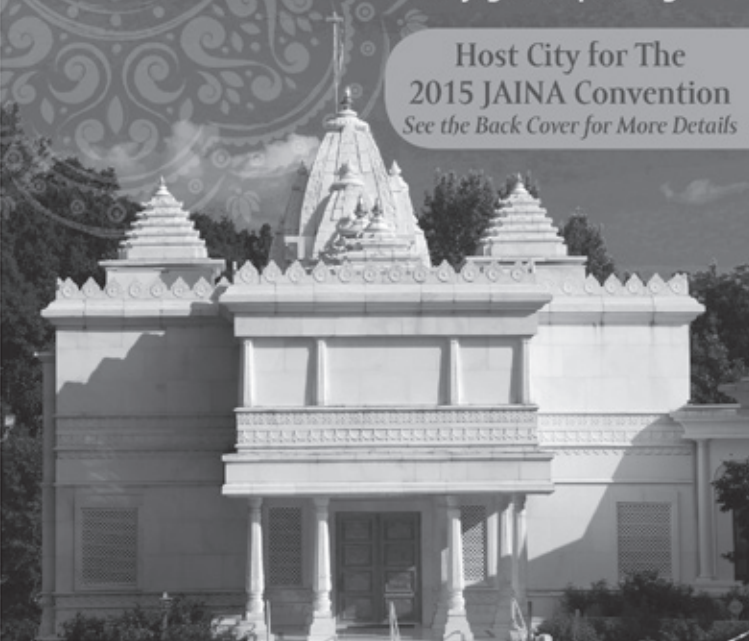
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Jain Society of Houston Sangh Members, Executive Committee, Board of Trustees and our Jain Youth Group leaders wish YJA Team Leaders a grand success for their convention being held this year and for years to come...

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Youth Group Leaders:

Tanvi Daga

Payal Kapadia

Amrita Boghani

SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Nirjara: A Workshop on Karma
Lina Shah

HSC

We will be learning about Nirjara (eradication of Karma) through this interactive workshop. This session will address questions such as how we can improve self-introspection and reflection to eventually achieve becoming a better person. We will also look at how controlling passions like greed, anger, ego and deceit contribute to maintaining equilibrium and ultimately lead to liberation. So join us in discussion as we clear our concepts on Nirjara!

Nutritional Benefits of a Plant-Based Diet and Ethical Research Methods
Zeeshan Ali

HSC / JNF

The health problems caused by fat, sugar, and calories have become the subjects of massive research efforts. Dietary approaches have evolved over the years to overcome these health problems. Researchers put diets to the test and it was found that a low-fat vegan diet can not only prevent, but even reverse illnesses. This session will give you insight into how this diet works and what are the nutritional benefits of a plant-based diet. The second part of the session will describe ethical research methods which are being used to make research more human-relevant.

Our Experiments With Truth
Nimesh Patel

HSC / COL

An interactive session on the topic of discovering our own “truth”. What is “truth”? And how do we discover what it means to each of us. Gandhiji said that truth is God and his life was a dedication to aligning with his ever-evolving sense of “truth”. In this session, Nimesh will share a little about his journey in self-discovery and help bring up questions and discussion that incite the participants to engage deeper into this question: “What is my truth and how can I further align with it”?

Plant Based Nutrition for Health and Fitness
Derek Tresize

HSC / COL / JNF

In this discussion, vegan bodybuilder Derek Tresize will cover some of the many benefits of plant-based nutrition alongside regular exercise. He will also discuss what foods a well-rounded, plant-based diet should be centered around, and what kinds of exercise everyone should include in their regimens and why. This discussion will include some brief demonstrations on flexibility and exercise technique as well.

Power of Gratitude
Mandakini Pokharna

COL

“If the only prayer you said was thank you, that would be enough.” Meister Eckhart

The gratitude that we encounter helps us believe in the goodness of the world, and strengthens us to do what’s good. In this workshop, you will learn how simple practices and ways of showing gratitude can reconnect us with the flow of life and empower us to become co-creators of our lives.

Project Jain
Parag Parekh

HSC / COL / JNF

Welcome to Project Jain! In this interactive teambuilding session, attendees will be split into random groups and given a challenge to design creative solutions to various issues affecting young Jains, while working within the parameters of a given theme. After developing a concept, the groups will present their concept to the entire audience within the session. Although there will be no actual supermodels in the session to judge the presentations, attendees will have the opportunity to network, use their ingenuity, and appreciate Jainism’s various core tenets in a fun way, which is always in vogue!

Q & A with the JAINA Director of Education
Pravin Shah

HSC / COL

This presentation delves into the brainstorming and discussion on powerful and thought-provoking questions that have no absolute answers. It includes social and cultural perceptions as well as stereotypes and generalizations from both youth’s and adults’ perspective. The discussion will provide insights into questions that are important to our youth in order to develop them spiritually, ethically, and socially in the Western world.



SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Real Talk: Getting Clear About Gender Stereotypes

JNF

Parth Savla

How does the other half live? What are girls/guys thinking? Here's a chance to figure out what's really going on in the brains of the opposite sex. This session will have you thinking about assumptions and realities. Led by a man and a woman, you get to talk privately with your gender group about your opinions on the opposite sex – and then you will hear what the other side thinks! Discover your personal stereotypes, how common they are, and whether they are anywhere near the truth.

Relationship Panel

JNF

Puesh Kumar, Monica Shah, Raju Shah

Bollywood isn't able to capture every love story. Join us as we witness the more common ones in a panel discussion about the ups and downs and rights and wrongs of being in a relationship. Soundtrack not included.

Relevance of Jainism in the 21st Century

HSC / COL

Falguni Zaveri

Jainism is the oldest living religion, predating recorded history. It is even said that Pyrrho, the Greek thinker, studied philosophy at the feet of gymnosophists who were probably Jain Yogis. The world today is standing on the turmoil of terror. If we really want to make the universe a better place to live, Jainism's triple A's, ahimsa, anekantvada, and aparigraha, may provide the answer.

Right the Wrongs in Only 50 Minutes or Less

HSC / COL

Nita Vakharia

There are many sinful activities we do not engage in, for example fishing or hunting. However, because the possibility of engaging in these acts is still open to us, we are binding karmas. What if you found out that there is a way to "plug these holes" of karma inflow? Even though we do not engage in these sinful activities, the soul binds karma because of vowlessness. In this session, you will learn to identify these acts and relate them to the 12 vows of lay people. This session is conducted under guidance from Pujya Hemyashashriji Maharaj Saheb and Tejuben Shah.

Seize the Moment and Live Without Regrets

JNF

Mandakini Pokharna

This interactive workshop will focus on how to go about daily introspection and how journaling can be used to experience the creation of yourself as limitless in every moment. Participants will also learn how to release your past, reclaim your present and transform any aspect of your life with ease and compassion.

Seva and Social Entrepreneurship

HSC / COL / JNF

Rahul Shah

After receiving his undergraduate degree in 2008, Rahul Shah moved to India to teach English in the slums of Ahmedabad, Gujarat. As an Indian-American serving abroad for a year, he had unique eye-opening experiences. These taught him about himself and his culture while also providing him with the opportunity to do meaningful work. After returning to the US, Rahul became active in local community engagement efforts and a wide variety of DC area non-profits. Learn about his volunteer experiences, how to incorporate seva into your everyday life, and how to better understand social entrepreneurship in this multi-dimensional workshop.

Sharpening Your Sathiyo Skills

HSC / COL

Preyas Shah

In this session, we will learn the significance of "Sathiyo" and discover how to make different designs.

SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Social Impact and Entrepreneurship Panel

JNF

Parth Savla, Pulin Modi, Umang Patel

This panel will allow you to learn from those working towards social justice and social change. Hear how these inspirational people became active leaders in their community, spreading awareness and working for solutions to the issues close to their hearts. For those of you interested in beginning your own venture, you will learn some of the tricks of the trade from our entrepreneur professionals, who will offer advice as well as useful tips to help guide you towards your next big career goal!

Social Justice 101

COL

Harsha Nahata

What is social justice? How can it be applied to daily life? How does it relate to Jainism? This session explores these questions and more. Through interactive activities, participants will be introduced to topics of social justice and see ways in which they can create change in their communities.

Speed Dating: Casually Looking

JNF

Mayha Parikh and Priyank Shah

We can't guarantee you'll meet your life partner, but we can guarantee you'll meet a lot of other interesting Jains! Join us for a great way to network and build some new connections!

Speed Dating: Seriously Looking

JNF

Meit Shah and Ruchita Parikh

We can't guarantee you'll meet your life partner, but we can guarantee you'll meet a lot of other interesting Jains! Who knows- you may just walk out never having to hear about shaadi.com again.

Starting Your Own Business: Eyes Wide Open

JNF

Apurva Bhansali

Starting a business of your own is very tough. Being a Jain can present even bigger challenges. The end results can vary from tremendous success to heartbreaking failure and everything in between. We will explore first hand experiences from the business world and examine how following Jainism can provide an advantage over the competition.

Staying Cool in School – Balancing High School Pressures with Jain Values

HSC

Sonali Vakharia

Growing up in North America surrounded by both Eastern and Western values can be mentally conflicting. How we deal with those pressures and balance our values is vital to mental clarity as well as spiritual progress. While in school, how can we deal with pressures of alcohol/drugs and dating while still trying to fit in? How can we respond to those who question us about Jainism, and how can we describe Jainism to our peers? How does “drama,” and “gossip,” influence our spirituality, and what can we do to avoid these things and improve our surroundings? Come find out!

Suburbs to the Big Campus: Balancing College Pressures with Jain Values

COL

Sonali Vakharia

This session is for anyone currently in college, especially those who are entering in the Fall. How can we make time for ourselves, stay connected with the right people, and mold ourselves in college? How can we approach mistakes that we make? How can we deal with the pressure of parties/ alcohol/drugs and dating? Although these are not really “taboo” topics, sometimes they approached as such in the Indian/Jain community. But, that’s not the case for this session! Come learn how we can be ourselves and remain Jain in a world that is telling us to be otherwise.



SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

The Power of Awareness

HSC / COL

Priyal Gandhi

Why are there so few Jains? Why is Jainism such a hard religion to follow? The great Acharya Umasvati said “pramatta yogat prana vyaparopanam himsa”, meaning deprival of life due to non-vigilance is violence. Maybe we’re too distracted, too lazy, or even just ignorant of our potential. Fortunately, there are simple ways to change that. Come find out how to take your understanding of Jainism to the next level!

The Power of Intentional Movement and the Present Moment

JNF

Anthony Paz

What does it mean to live your life with intention? How do yoga and meditation serve as anchors for us to access and tap into the present moment? As future leaders, channeling this source of intelligence is crucial in order to insight personal and collective harmony and change. In this session, Anthony Paz will be discussing how the role of intentional movement is a key factor in leadership and as a way of establishing a relationship with the present moment, guided by a short meditation.

The Purpose of Religion: The Truth behind Jainism’s Existence

HSC / COL

Chintav Shah

In the end, what is religion but a message with an impact on its believers’ lives? Our religion propounded 2500 years ago by Mahavir Swami has a varied impact on each of us: your mother’s influence from Jainism is vastly different from your own. How can you maximize the impact from this message, and what is inherently wrong with humanity that prevents us from seeing the depths within religion? I travelled alone to India for two weeks to answer these questions at the most auspicious place on Earth – Palitana. The answer I discovered will change everything you think you know.

The Relativity of Religion

HSC / COL

Shikhar Shah

Heraclitus said the only constant in life is change. Why, then, do we never reassess the philosophy that guides and defines so many of our lives? Let’s take a second to put Jainism in a historical perspective and question whether many of these “strict” guidelines we follow are, well, necessarily necessary. Boiled water, milk, varakh - these are just some of the interesting topics we’ll mull over. Join us for this fun and interesting debate!

Understanding Modern-day Slavery

HSC

Aashika Damodar

This session is intended to introduce participants to modern-day forms of slavery and human trafficking in the United States, and to examine the human rights violations associated with these injustices. Participants will learn about both transnational and local forms of human trafficking, learn about coming misconceptions concerning trafficking, reflect on case studies illustrating instances of slavery and learn what can be done to address this egregious crime and violation of human rights. Please be aware that some of the activities in this session will contain sensitive language and graphic material, which may be difficult and/or traumatic for some.

Unspoken Taboos: Breaking Down the Barriers

HSC

Amit Shah, Resha Shah, Ruchita Parikh

Have you ever been in a relationship but had to hide it from your parents? Have you wanted to tell your loved ones something about yourself but weren’t sure how to bring it up? Relationships, love, depression. All of these topics are often seen as taboo in our society, yet they affect each and every one of us to some degree. During this session, we’ll break down the walls of each taboo, give examples of how you can address them with your family and friends, and answer any questions. You’ll be sure to take away something valuable from this session!

Unspoken Taboos: Taken to the Next Level

COL

Amit Shah, Resha Shah, Ruchita Parikh

Have you dated someone outside the community and had to hide it? Is gay marriage an issue you’d like to discuss? Have you ever wanted to tell your family something but weren’t sure how to bring it up? Relationships, Love, Depression, & Suicide. These topics are considered taboo in our society, yet they affect each and every single one of us. They aren’t mentioned by our parents, peers, or community, until now. During this session, we’ll break down the walls of each taboo, give examples of how you can address each situation with your loved ones, discuss them, and answer questions.



JAINOVA

Jains of Northern Virginia

Incorporated May 2003 | www.jainova.org

JAINOVA welcomes the 2014 YJA Convention and its attendees to Northern Virginia and wishes success in communicating the teachings of the Tirthankaras to young Jains. Visit our volunteers at the hospitality booth for a specialty snack!

We invite the YJA attendees, friends and family to visit our place of worship, Rajdhani Mandir, in Chantilly, VA that includes Hindu, Buddhist and Jain deities.

We invite all to learn about and become part of our efforts to build a new Jain temple in Northern Virginia. For more information, send an email to idjorg@gmail.com.

We are accepting donations which are tax deductible and checks payable to "IDJO" can be mailed to:

IDJO, 10421 Lawyers Road, Vienna, VA 22181
(Phone 703-319-2294)

With best wishes from all JAINOVA members and officers including:

Sanjay Jain

President

sanjay_jain@hotmail.com

Priti Jain

Vice President

atulpriti@yahoo.com

Amit Jain

Secretary

amitshaily@gmail.com



Lord Rishabhdev

Lord Parshwanath

Lord Mahavir

Navakar Mantra

Jain Center of Greater Boston

556 Nichols Street, Norwood, MA 02062

Phone: (781) 762-9490 www.jcgb.org

NON VIOLENCE IN THOUGHTS, IN WORDS AND IN ACTION IS THE TRUE RELIGION

*Congratulations to
the Young Jains of America Team 2014
for a job well done.*

SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Use of Memory to Achieve Permanent Happiness

HSC / COL / JNF

Dhiraj Parekh

Memory is the root cause of everything in our lives. From memory stem thoughts, then intellect. How we use our memory is up to us to decide and influences the kind of future we experience. You are the doer of everything happening in your life. This session will discuss the power of memory and the role we can play in controlling it to impact our future.

Veganism 101

HSC

Pulin Modi

Let's talk about the basics of veganism. Why would someone want to consider going vegan for ethical and health reasons? What should you eat at home? What are some options when dining out? What about leather shoes and silk ties? Don't worry, it's a lot easier than you think. We'll go through all of this and have plenty of time for questions so we have a productive discussion!

Veganism: A Jain Community & Societal Imperative

HSC / COL

Saurabh Dalal

This session reviews the fundamental principles of Jainism in an expanded light to show how individuals and society-at-large can meaningfully counter several global crises - conflicts over limited resources, environmental devastation, the massive exploitation and killing of animals, and declining public health. Veganism will be discussed as a solution necessary for a more sustainable and harmonious world.

Wake Up: A Workshop

HSC / JNF

Mercy Carpenter and Jebe Moiwai

Who are we as a generation? What are the challenges we face? How will we transform these challenges into long lasting change? Explore how you can take meaningful action towards a thriving, just and sustainable world! Join us for a powerful interactive and multimedia workshop exploring the challenges and opportunities of our generation in this moment in history. Connect with others, be inspired, and get into action!

What Kind of Leader are You?

COL

Parth Savla

Has being too shy or outgoing ever stopped you from getting what you want? Find out how your personality traits can make you a good leader! Using the Myers-Briggs test and other tools, discover the traits that make you successful and blind spots that prevent you from being the leader that you want to be! In this interactive session, you will reflect, discuss, and get valuable feedback on how simple shifts in perspective can help you get what you want in life with less effort, greater satisfaction, and more fun.

Who Am I?

HSC

Hemandra Momaya

The "Who Am I" workshop delves into the exploration of the Atma (Soul). In this workshop, attendees will find the answers for eternal questions such as: Who am I? Why am I here? Where did I come from? Where will I go? What is the purpose of life? This interactive workshop is very simple yet profound and thought provoking and will allow attendees to acquire a clear and transparent understanding of themselves.

Who Is Responsible?

JNF

Samani Parimal Pragya and Samani Vikas Pragya

As we look around, we observe unexplained differences in people's lives causing us to wonder: Why? Who is responsible? And Can anything be done about it? Interestingly, this is not a new phenomenon. It has been there for as long as there is recorded history, and will always be there. Over time people have used a variety of explanations ranging from "luck" and "destiny", to "time" and even "karma theory". This session provides a different perspective on this phenomenon examining the concept of Samvay and how the 5 Samvays contribute to the causation of all events in the universe.



SESSIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

YJA Gives Back

COL / JNF

Come join fellow YJA attendees in giving back to the community! This session is a hands-on volunteer activity where you will be making hygiene kits for the homeless in Washington, D.C.

Yoga for Spiritual Health

HSC / COL

Pundit Radheshyam Mishra

This workshop examines how yoga can be used to enhance physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Topics that will be covered include yoga postures for maintaining a strong body and mind, special breathing techniques for emotional strength, and meditation. This session will teach beneficial strategies for controlling weight, managing stress, improving concentration, enhancing all-day energy, and building immunity.

YOUNG JAINS

Congratulations & Best Wishes
to the YJA Convention 2014 in Washington, D.C.
Jain Society of Metropolitan Chicago
“Serving the Midwest Community
to enrich their religious, social, cultural, and educational experience
for living a Jain Way of Life.”

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❖ UNITY IN DIVERSITY ❖
JAIN CENTER OF AMERICA



Congratulations & Best Wishes to YJA on the
 11th Biennial Convention
 Young Jains: Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders.
 From All Members of Jain Center Of America, New York
 The Unique Center With Shri Ashtapadji Ratna Mandir
 Where Every Jain Prays Under One Umbrella.



Jain Center of Northern California



Best Wishes for the grand success of *YJA Convention 2014*

Key Events

Religious

Mahavir Janma Kalyanak, Mahavir Nirvan, Paryushan/Das Laxan, Pratishtha Anniversary, Chha Gau Yatra, Shrimad Rajchandra Nirvan, Regularly scheduled lectures & shibir on spiritual topics

Cultural

Annual Picnic, Hike and Dandia, Monthly Senior Citizen Meet, Health Fair, JCNC Theatre Group

Education

550 Students in Jain, Gujarati and Hindi Shala, Adult Swadhyay, Youth run programs like eWaste, Food and Book Drive, Next Steps-Pathway to College

Public Relations

Host field visit for students from Universities, Participate in Interfaith activities, Meet the Titan Event for fostering entrepreneurship

Facilities & Technology

Live Event Webcast, Initiatives underway to make Jain Bhawan Green Technology enabled

722 South Main Street,
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Congratulations to my fellow boardies on
organizing this inspiring convention!

Here's to making the 2016 convention
100% VEGAN!



Kunal Dags

BEST COMPLIMENTS FOR YJA CONVENTION 2014



from:

Maru Family Owensboro, KY
Neena and Harakh Maru
Nalini and Mahendra Maru
Dhenu and Mitesh Savla, Chicago
Sneha and Nimit Maru, New York
Ami and Shardule Shah, Atlanta
Avni Maru, Indianapolis

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Aakash Shah

Aakash is the proud Canadian serving on this year's YJA Convention Committee. Being born and raised in Toronto, ON has led Aakash to be a passionate Toronto Maple Leafs and Toronto Raptors fan! Aakash is a dentist in private practice who enjoys watching sports, staying active, and eating pizza. This will be Aakash's final year on the YJA board after serving as Director of Public Relations (2010-2011) and Director of Project Development (2011-2012), and he hopes everyone has a legen - wait for it - dary time at the Convention!



Aamir Hussain

Aamir graduated from Georgetown University in 2013. He is a Muslim of Indian origin, and speaks Spanish, Portuguese, Hindi, and Urdu. He worked with the Interfaith Youth Core and the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships to promote interfaith leadership. He is a blogger for the Huffington Post Religion, has appeared on Al Jazeera English and PBS, and has been quoted in the New York Times. Aamir will attend medical school at The University of Chicago this fall.



Aashika Damodar

Aashika is a social entrepreneur, artist, tech-enthusiast, and anti-trafficking activist. She currently serves as a Human Trafficking TTA Specialist. Previously, Aashika founded Freedom Connect, a non-profit working to develop and extend innovative technology platforms for anti-trafficking efforts. In 2008, she was awarded the UN Association Community Human Rights Award and the Zimmerman Fellowship and Freedom Award for her anti-trafficking work.



Adam Garner

Adam, mission delivery associate at Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), spends his time supporting and developing resources for student interfaith organizations. Adam graduated from The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a degree in philosophy. He spends most of his time at IFYC supporting campuses as they work to make interfaith cooperation a social norm on their campus. When not interfaithing, he spends his time coding, reading, and trying to be a better person.



Akash Shah

Akash was born in Brookfield, CT, but grew up in Cary, NC. He is a rising junior studying quantitative biology at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Go Heels!). This is his first time speaking at a YJA Convention, though he has volunteered for YJA Executive Boards and Convention Committees in the past. In his free time, Akash enjoys playing basketball, listening to music, and hanging out with friends. He also spends a lot of time watching Boston and UNC sports teams.



Amam Vasanwala

Amam is an engineering manager at Mars, Incorporated. He graduated from Duke University with an Master of Science in Engineering Management and obtained a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Amam enjoys traveling, photography, playing sports, and spending time with family and friends. At the Jain Society of Metropolitan Chicago, he currently teaches Pathshala class for kids ages 10 to 11.



Amit Shah

Amit is from Chicago, IL. Born and raised in the Mid-West, Amit has been very active in YJA for many years. Currently, he is the Director of Public Relations on YJA's Executive Board. He loves to dance (especially to Bollywood music), photography, and just chilling with his friends. Amit is really excited to share his wisdom with you all.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Anju Bhargava

Anju is a Strategic Business Transformation and Risk Management consultant. She works at the intersection of strategy, risk, leadership, process, technology, and culture through a combination of business and human levers. She was the only Indian-American to serve in the Community Builder Fellowship, President Clinton's White House initiative. She served on President Obama's Inaugural Council on Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships and is the founder of Hindu American Seva Charities.



Ankit Shah

Ankit is entering his junior year at Brown University and studying computer science. His passions are nerdy innovative technologies, basketball, football, and learning. He is from Texas, also known as the best place on Earth, specifically Houston, and is the biggest Texans and Rockets fan out there. This is Ankit's first time on the YJA Executive Board, and he thinks the best things about his experience are the vegan desserts the other board members make for him.



Annette Cowart

Annette is an international educator specializing in intercultural communication and language training. She has served in academic, corporate, and non-profit contexts, such as the University of Illinois' service learning program LINC, Kraft Foods, the Archdiocese of Chicago's graduate seminary and COVE Alliance, an international NGO serving vulnerable children with education and health services in rural Uganda. Annette is also an ordained swami in the Kriya Yoga tradition.



Anthony Paz

Anthony is a passionate 22-year old environmental activist from Miami, FL. He graduated from Florida International University last spring and is hoping to attend graduate school. Growing up as a Catholic Latino-American, he always understood the value of cultural tolerance and non-violence towards others. Anthony has been a vegetarian for over two years and actively encourages others in his community to embrace the values he learned through the Jain community.



Apurva Bhansali

Apurva is the founder and CEO of Softex, the company he started in 1992 alongside his father, Mahendra. Today, Softex is a leading provider of biometric and other security software. Located in Austin, TX, Softex was named as one of Inc. 500 Magazine's Top 500 Fastest Growing Private Companies in 2000. He was involved in the creation of the Jain Sangh of Greater Austin and has served as its president in the past. He lives with his wife, Nehal, and two kids, Ayush and Ashna.



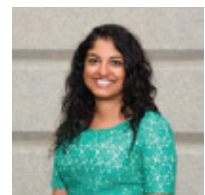
Chintav Shah

Chintav is a 20-year old from New Jersey. He is a rising senior at The University of Pennsylvania, where he is studying systems engineering and business. In his free time, Chintav enjoys playing ultimate frisbee and running. He has been a part of Jain Academic Bowl for the last eight years and enjoys breaking down the difficult and complex aspects of Jainism.



Deepa Kunapuli

Deepa is a digital strategist, writer, and entrepreneur. She currently leads digital campaign strategy for a federal agency and writes for Upworthy, a media company. Previously, she ran online programs for the New Organizing Institute, trained thousands of progressive organizers in digital best practices, and ran online constituency outreach for the 2012 Obama campaign. She is a proud graduate of The University of Iowa.



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Derek Tresize

Derek is a competitive vegan bodybuilder residing in Richmond, VA. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology, is a personal trainer through the American Council on Exercise, has a certificate in plant-based nutrition through Cornell University, and is co-author of the website “Vegan Muscle & Fitness.” Derek has followed a plant-based diet since 2007 and promotes it to his clients as the best means to fitness and long term health. Find Derek on Facebook, or follow @veganmuscle on Twitter.



Dhiraj Parekh

Dhiraj is a scientist with a keen interest in aatma, or the soul. He holds many patents in the fields of physics, chemistry, and biology. Additionally, Dhiraj Parekh is an author, poet and a musician. He has made around 10 movies and a TV serial for Zee TV. He has written about 10 books on self enlightenment and studies many religions. He resides in Maryland. Website: www.aatmagnan.com



Falguni Zaveri

Falguni is a Jain scholar from Mumbai, India. She regularly gives public lectures on Jainism, stress management, personality development, meditation, and more to audiences in India and abroad. Dr. Zaveri also gives various discourses to Jain centers in the US and has been invited to Paryushan and Das Lakshan series since 2004. Dr. Zaveri holds a number of degrees and certificates, including a Ph.D in Jain Pooja Sahitya from the University of Mumbai.



Gautam Raghavan

Gautam serves as President Obama’s liaison to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. From 2009 to 2011, he served as Deputy White House Liaison at the U.S. Department of Defense and as Outreach Lead for the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” Working Group from February to December 2010. Mr. Raghavan was born in India and raised in Seattle, and is a graduate of Stanford University.



Gautam Srikishan

Gautam, a recent graduate of The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, is a communications associate at Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC). He develops resources as a graphic designer, shares the latest news on the interfaith movement, and produces the IFYC podcast, Common Knowledge. When he’s not working, you can find him playing table tennis or his newly acquired banjo. With parents of Jain and Hindu heritage, pluralism is a core part of Gautam’s identity.



Geeta

Hush Supper Club is the brainchild of chef and storyteller Geeta. She began Hush in her home in Washington, D.C. over four years ago. She has hosted over 90 suppers and more than 1,000 guests and has been featured in the New York Times, NPR, and The Washington Post. She also travels with her spice box. Geeta is available for private events, cooking classes, and public speaking on various topics about India’s culture, cuisine, and religions.



Harsha Nahata

Harsha is a recent graduate of the University of Michigan. She majored in public policy with a concentration in international security and development policy. At Michigan, Harsha wrote opinion columns for the student newspaper, The Michigan Daily, and was part of putting together a two-day social justice conference on behalf of the South Asian Awareness Network. In her free time, Harsha likes to write, try new food, and watch Scandal.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Hema Pokharna

Hema is a collaborative communication and transformational executive coach. Hema brings wisdom from her over 20 year career in nonviolent communication coaching, mentoring, consulting, training, and development. The essence of her coaching approach is transformational, intuitive, spiritual, inspirational, energy boosting, and action-oriented. She teaches, collaborates, partners, mentors, and inspires others to ignite inspiration, creativity, happiness, and success every day.



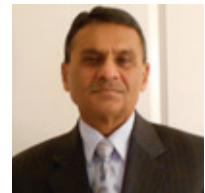
Hemang Srikishan

Hemang is a middle school math teacher at Namaste Charter School on the south side of Chicago. Outside of his professional life, he is a Pathshala teacher interested in how to live out religious values while living a householder's life. Currently, Hemang is most interested in what being Jain is about for youth and in understanding how Jainism will change in America.



Hemendra Momaya

Hemendra has been interested in spirituality since he was a child and has been a Chicago Pathshala teacher for over 15 years. His workshops are interactive and thought provoking, for example, Yatra Games are a reflection of his lifelong spiritual study, introspection and contemplation. His role models are: Gurudev Chitranjaniji, Mother Teresa, H. H. the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, and many more. He has an undergraduate degree from Nagpur University, India and a graduate degree from North Dakota State University.



Hetali Lodaya

Hetali just graduated from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Go Heels!) and will be working at a startup for the next two years through the Venture for America Fellowship. She is interested in science policy, public and private solutions to improve science education in the U.S., bhangra, and finding the next great book to read. She loves YJA because it gives Jain youth in the U.S. a chance to meet their peers and discover what religion means to them. Tweet her (@HetaliLodaya) for more info about any of the above!



Jebe Moiwei

Jebe was born in Durham, NC. As a child, she lived in many places such as Ecuador, New Hampshire, and California. She is extremely passionate about the environment and the future of younger generations. Jebe got involved with Generation Waking Up during the summer of 2013, and has since been facilitating workshops for her community that bring awareness to social justice and environmental issues. Jebe also enjoys playing the violin and ukulele, playing soccer, cooking and eating food, and backpacking.



Jennifer Craig-Savla

Jennifer is the Project Lead for JAINA's Writers Circle, which publishes the blog "Jain Perspectives" on the award-winning news website, The Huffington Post (www.huffingtonpost.com/jaina). She is a writer, an editor, and an English Composition instructor at Wenatchee Valley College. She is passionate about two things: starting communication between people from different religions and empowering people to find their voice.



Khushbu Vora

Khushbu is an assistant treasurer at iQor, a private equity backed services company in New York City. She earned her bachelor's degree in finance and economics from New York University, Stern School of Business. She is also a 2014 Level III Candidate in the CFA Program.



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Kinari Shah

Kinari is a rising junior at The University of Michigan at Ann Arbor majoring in biopsychology, cognition, and neuroscience and minoring in art history. Apart from being a YJA local representative and Daytime Programming sub-committee member, Kinari serves as a co-director of her university's chapter of Baal Dan, an organization dedicated to providing resources to impoverished children. She is a lifetime student of Bharatanatyam, and a member of Michigan Maya, a classical fusion dance team.



Krupa Shah

Krupa is a born and raised Queens girl and loves New York City. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology and is currently working as an HR assistant at a law firm. In her downtime, Krupa loves sports (she is loyal fan of the Knicks, Giants and Yankees), Justin Timberlake, dancing, and traveling. She's a total foodie and loves trying all types of cuisine. Krupa is thoroughly enjoying her first time being on the Convention Board. She looks forward to being part of a great YJA Convention!



Lina Shah

Lina is a loving wife, mother of two dynamic kids, and a Pathshala teacher for the past 10 years at the Jain Center of Metropolitan Chicago (JSMC). She is also a financial consultant, working for New York Life for the past 16 years. Lina is a leader, volunteer, and member in many religious and social organizations. She is an active member and volunteer at JSMC. She loves cooking, travelling, and helping others.



Mandakini Pokharna

Dr. Pokharna is a practicing human being, learning skills to develop her self. She is trained in Nonviolent Communications (NVC) with Marshall Rosenberg, founder of NVC. She practices medicine in Chicago and has been practicing Aikido (martial art of harmony) for five years. Hema and Manda are sisters and their mission is to educate, inspire, and empower people to discover healthy and harmonious ways of being with themselves and being together in the journey of life.



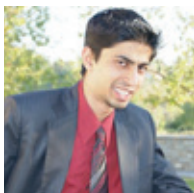
Mayha Parikh

Mayha was born and raised in Connecticut, and graduated from Boston University with a bachelor's degree in economics and mathematics. She most recently worked in operations at Kaplan Bar Review in New York City, and will be starting business school in the fall. Though being a Boston sports fan in NYC was a bit difficult, she enjoyed every minute of it. She loves dancing, traveling, her friends and family, and of course, her YJA experiences. She looks forward to an awesome Convention in our nation's capital!



Meghan Roth Clayton

Rev. Roth Clayton is the associate pastor at Messiah United Methodist Church in Springfield, VA. A graduate of The College of William and Mary and Wesley Theological Seminary, Meghan has previously served in campus ministry at Shenandoah University, The American University, and Armstrong Atlantic State University. She has a passion for building relationships with people of other faiths and intentionally secular identities, and sees interfaith work as central to her Christian identity and vocation.



Meit Shah

Meit is a management consultant based in New York City. He grew up in Southern California and went to UCLA and USC for his bachelor's and master's in engineering, respectively. He currently works at Ernst & Young, focused on project management and process improvement. He is an active participant of YJA and has been very involved in his local Jain sanghs.



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Mercy Carpenter

Mercy was raised in Brooklyn, NY. Her activism career started at the Children's Theater Company, where she learned about word peacemakers and performed in plays with social justice themes. She also presented Michael Douglas at "Say Yes to Children" Campaign with Nelson Mandela and sang with the Unicef World Choir. She is presently working with the Brooklyn Foundation to gather information on the effects of rapid gentrification by leading discussions in local communities.



Miranda Hovemeyer

Miranda recently finished her Master of Arts in Religion degree at Meadville Lombard Theological School, and is a program coordinator for the Interfaith Families Project of Greater Washington, D.C. As a secular humanist and improvisational comedian, she uses laughter to bring together people to participate in positive interfaith experiences. She is certified in interfaith conflict resolution by the United States Institute of Peace, and is an active member of Odyssey Networks and the United Religions Initiative.



Mitesh Shah

Mitesh has been affiliated with YJA for the past six years either as a member of the Executive Board, Co-Chair, or Board of Trustee. He is a senior business intelligence consultant from Atlanta and grew up in Alabama (yes, there are Jains everywhere!). Find him at the convention and you can talk about sports (WAR EAGLE!), life, or maybe even play mafia with him!



Mohamed Elsanousi

Dr. Elsanousi is the Director of Community Outreach and Interfaith Relations for the Islamic Society of North America. He served on Secretary Clinton's Task Force on Religions and Foreign Policy and holds a bachelor's degree in Shariah and Law from the International Islamic University in Islamabad, a Master of Laws from Indiana University, a graduate diploma in philanthropic studies from IU's Center on Philanthropy, and a Ph.D. in Law and Society from Indiana University's School of Law.



Monica Shah

Monica was born and raised in Detroit, MI and is a graduate of The University of Michigan. She has been a Pathshala student, youth group leader, YJA Executive Board member, and now is a Pathshala teacher for nursery students at the Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington. Monica has an engineering degree with a MBA and works for a Fortune 100 CFO and different federal agencies. Outside of work, Monica's interests lie in dance, music, and travelling with her family.



Nirav Shah

Nirav spends his days making satellites in sunny California. Born in New York and raised in Long Island, he moved to Los Angeles a year ago. Prior to coming to CA, Nirav was a researcher at MIT where he earned a PhD in Aerospace Engineering. He has also worked in consulting. Nirav has presented at several YJA, YJP, and JAINA Conventions, as well as local temple events in Boston and Chicago. He looks forward to exploring the surprisingly deep meaning of the Navkar Mantra with you.



Nita Vakharia

Nita teaches Jainism and Gujarati to children in grades 8-12 at the Edison/Franklin Township, NJ Pathshala. She has also coached the New Jersey Jain Academic Bowl teams at JAINA Conventions since 2007. She led her teams to first place in 2009, 2011, and 2013. In 2005, she volunteered at Pujya Diptiben Shah's Sunrise Children's Camp and has organized these camps annually since 2006. Besides being a CPA, she is also an ACCA (United Kingdom), and holds two master's degrees.



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Parag Khandhar

Parag is a community builder, lawyer, educator, writer, and father. He grew up in New Jersey and New York and has worked in and with non-profit arts, social service, advocacy, and organizing groups in NYC, D.C., and Baltimore. He currently teaches and works with local communities in Greater Baltimore and serves on the board of the Asian American Literary Review. Twitter: @ParagCED



Parag Mehta

Parag currently directs communications for a civil rights agency at the U.S. Department of Labor. He served as a public liaison on President Obama's Transition Team and managed the Senate confirmation of former Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke. As a Presidential Management Fellow, Parag was a speechwriter for the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. He graduated from The University of Texas at Austin and the Maxwell School at Syracuse University.



Parag Parekh

Parag was born and raised in New York City and is probably the only native NY'er that is a Red Sox fan. He graduated from law school with a JD and a LL.M. in Taxation, and is currently working as a corporate attorney in Manhattan. Parag has enjoyed his experiences with YJA, from being an Executive Board member, to hosting sessions at Conventions, and is honored to serve as a Co-Chair for the current year. Parag appreciates nerdy things, basketball, goes gaga for Lady GaGa, and loves cupcakes!



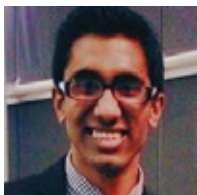
Parth Savla

Parth is an entrepreneur and business strategist for non-profits and small business owners. He currently manages JAINA's daily activities, and is the manager of the SkyBird Group's Fremont, CA, office. With over 10 years of experience, he consults organizations in the development of performance measurement tools, sales strategy analysis, social media promotions, and network participation. In his free time, he enjoys life coaching, spending time with friends, vegan baking, and karaoke.



Paul Monteiro

Paul was born in Columbia, MD. He attended The University of Maryland and The Howard University School of Law. Paul served as deputy director of religious affairs for the Obama for America campaign in 2007. Following the campaign, he worked on the Presidential Inauguration Committee before assuming his post as liaison to faith-based organizations, anti-poverty groups, and Arab Americans at the White House. Paul is currently the director of AmeriCorps VISTA.



Pratik Lakhani

Originally from New York, Pratik is a rising junior at The University of Michigan, majoring in environmental engineering and sustainability. In addition to his interests in YJA, Pratik enjoys being a part of the Michigan Bhangra Team, as well as exploring professional development and community service interests through the Indian American Students Association.



Pravin Shah

Pravin is a founding member of the Jain Study Center of North Carolina (Raleigh). He is the chairperson of the JAINA Education Committee. He is a retired electrical engineer from IBM and has published a complete set of Jaina Pathshala educational books, which more than 3,500 students across North America use today. He is also the author of several other books and established the Jain eLibrary website, which provides Jain religious information worldwide electronically and free of charge. He is also a vegan and activist against animal cruelty.



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Preyas Shah

Preyas, an electronic engineer, enjoys teaching and discussing various Jainism topics. He has taught different levels of Pathshala classes for over 15 years at the Cherry Hill Jain Sangh. He has taught the basics of Jain religion, Jain sutras and their meaning, the “how and why” of different rituals, and karma theory. In addition, he has engaged youth at the Cherry Hill Jain Sangh in discussions on Jainism and the Jain way of living life. He enjoys singing Jain Stavans and playing the keyboard.



Priya Shah

Priya is a graduate of Rutgers University, the founder of the company Culturally Inclined Productions, and creator of the game Desi Chaat. After being involved in several South Asian organizations in her undergraduate years, she noticed a lack of games for the South Asian community to play! Realizing that her game concept had the potential to educate people, bring families together, break barriers, and shift the “ABCD” mentality, she set out to create it. She launched the Desi Chaat in November 2013.



Priyal Gandhi

Priyal has lived in Kansas and Northern Virginia for most of her life. She is entering her second year at The University of Virginia and is on a pre-med track. Though YJA is her favorite hobby, she also enjoys community service, art, and music. Fun facts: she’s learning sign language, has met the Obamas, and is obsessed with Disney. This is Priyal’s second year serving as Director of Education, and she’s excited to bring some awesome Jain education to this convention!



Priyank Shah

Priyank was born in New Jersey and raised in Virginia. He graduated from Virginia Tech in December 2012, and currently lives in New York City. Priyank works in the finance industry with a concentration in real estate acquisitions. One character trait Priyank emphasizes is having the ability to not take one’s self too seriously. As a result, he loves to goof off, joke around, and take each day as it comes. In his free time, Priyank likes to explore New York City, eat tons of different food, and watch sports.



Priyanka P. Shah

Priyanka was born and raised in the suburbs of Philadelphia. She is currently a program manager at LifeCell, a regenerative medicine company, in Bridgewater, NJ. Priyanka was on the 2009-2010 YJA Executive Board and is an active member of the Cherry Hill Jain Sangh.



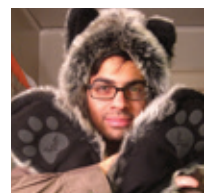
Puesh Kumar

Puesh serves on the Board of KhushDC, the South Asian LGBTQ community for the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. While he works on legislative and regulatory issues for the energy sector in his day job, his passion lies in activism and awareness for the LGBTQ and larger desi community...and Bollywood, of course!



Pulin Modi

Pulin is speaking at his fourth YJA Convention, so he feels very old. He grew up in New Jersey and got involved in human, environmental, and animal rights causes in high school. He graduated from Vassar College in 2002, with a self-designed degree in ecology of social change. After graduating, he went on to work for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) for nine years before becoming a senior campaigner at Change.org where he helps people leverage petitions to create social change.



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Pundit Radheshyam Mishra

Pundit Mishra is a member of the International Board of Yoga, an advisor to the World Yoga Council, and Honorary Secretary for the International Yoga Federation (IYF) at the state level in India. He studied yoga from the “The Yoga Institute” under the guidance of Dr. Jayadeva Yogendra. Pundit Mishra has established a Yoga Training and Research Center in Ujjain certified by the Yoga Alliance International for Conducting Teachers Training Programs.



Rahul Shah

Rahul is currently a senior analyst at Aetna and is pursuing his MBA and master’s in finance at The University of Maryland. After completing his graduate degrees, Rahul plans to work full-time in the non-profit sector. From 2009-2010, Rahul worked for an NGO in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. He currently serves on the board of the Network of South Asian Professionals-DC Chapter as their Community Service Chair and is the VP of Community Development at his business school.



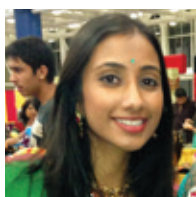
Raju Shah

Raju was YJA Co-Chair from 1996 to 1998. After graduating from Yale with two degrees, he went to the United Kingdom for five years. He also had many travel adventures, such as seeing the Northern Lights in Scandinavia, climbing Mt. Etna, and swimming in Croatia’s clear waters. Upon returning to the U.S., he married Monica Shah and now has two children: Jainam and Devika. He currently enjoys taking the kids to Disney, where his wife is not sure if she has two or three children.



Ramey Ko

Ramey is a partner with the law firm of Jung Ko, PLLC. From 2010-2013, Ramey served as an Associate Judge of the Austin Municipal Court, making him the first Asian American judge in Austin, TX. He serves on numerous civic and non-profit boards and commissions, including the President’s Advisory Commission on Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders. He graduated from Yale University in 2002 and from The University of Chicago Law School in 2006. He loves cooking, karaoke, and trivia.



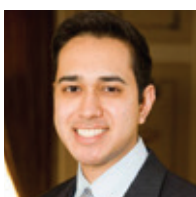
Resha Shah

Resha works as a clinician at a children’s mental health clinic in Houston, TX. She completed her master’s degree in psychology in December 2013, and is currently working on accruing her licensure hours. Resha previously helped out in organizing the 2007 YJA Convention and 2011 and 2013 JAINA Conventions. Feel free to contact her at Resha.Shah@gmail.com.



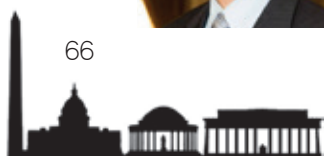
Rina Shah

Rina is a political strategist and writer based in Washington, D.C. From 2008-2011, she served as a senior aide to two Republican U.S. Representatives. She also worked as a field reporter for a local CBS news station and continues to include spots on radio shows. Nowadays, she is principal and founder of Relax Strategies, serves on the House Republican Conference’s Indian American Advisory Council, and serves on the D.C. Republican Party’s Platform Committee.



Ronak Desai

Ronak is a lawyer and foreign policy scholar with public and private sector experience. An attorney at O’Melveny & Meyers LLP, his practice focuses on legal and public policy matters. He previously served as a Legislative Fellow on Capitol Hill. He is a Non-Resident Fellow at Harvard’s Belfer Center and a member of the Board of Directors at the Partnership of a Secure America. He teaches at Johns Hopkins University. He earned joint public policy and law degrees from the Kennedy School of Government and The Harvard Law School.



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Ronak Shah

Ronak is from Sugar Land, TX. She attended The University of Texas in Austin where she majored in finance. In her free time, she enjoys playing and coaching volleyball, traveling (or daydreaming about it), and microfinance work. Ronak currently works at JPMorgan in the Investment Bank's Oil and Gas Credit group.



Ruchita Parikh

Ruchita is from Houston, TX, and is currently pursuing her medical degree at The University of North Texas. During her free time, she likes to play ultimate frisbee, attempt to master the art of photography, sing along to Bollywood songs, plan her wedding, and bother her younger sister.



Rushabh Kapashi

Rushabh is an associate partner with McKinsey & Company. Before McKinsey, Rushabh worked in investment banking at Goldman Sachs. He was also a William J. Clinton Fellow with the American India Foundation in rural India. He has an MBA from Harvard Business School, an MPhil from The University of Cambridge, a BSc in Economics from the Wharton School and a BAS from The University of Pennsylvania, and has passed all three levels of the CFA exams. Rushabh has lived in over 15 cities across the world.



Salonee Shah

Salonee was born in Ahmedabad but was raised in Texas (the best state). Salonee attended The University of Texas at Austin (the best city), where she earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing but then rebelled and went into education. Her favorite things are traveling, music, video editing, and crafting. She first joined the YJA Executive Board in 2009 and has been hooked every since. Her favorite thing about being on Board is meeting incredible people all over the country and running around at Conventions!



Samani Parimal Pragya

Samani Parimal Pragya is a disciple of Acharya Mahashraman. She has a Masters of Art in Peace and Non-Violence from Jain Vishwa Bharati University and National Education Training. She was initiated on November 18, 1992 and has since travelled and lectured in many countries. Her expertise in delivering lectures in any topic in English as well as Hindi is renowned. She is a proponent of Preksha Dhyani.



Samani Vikas Pragya

Samani Vikas Pragya is a disciple of Acharya Mahashraman. She has a Masters of Art in Jain Philosophy and Comparative Religion from Jain Vishwa Bharati University. She was initiated on November 5, 1997. She has travelled many countries and lectured in a diverse array of topics and is especially strong in teaching meditation.



Sanjay Jain

Sanjay is a compassionate leader for animal welfare. Sanjay, his wife Prachi, and their two daughters embraced a vegan lifestyle about six years ago. Since then, he has been promoting an Ahimsa lifestyle. He is also a Jain Pathshala teacher at the Jain Center of Greater Boston for high school students. Sanjay holds a Master of Science in Computer Science from IIT Kanpur and has over twenty years of software development experience. He is an entrepreneur and recently sold his first startup, Copium, to Good Technology.



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



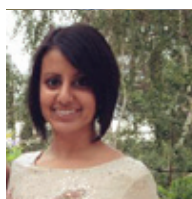
Saurabh Dalal

Saurabh is passionate about education and greater advocacy of ahimsa-based choices as solutions to many global issues. He serves as Deputy Chair of the International Vegetarian Union and President of the Vegetarian Society of D.C. He works with many non-profit groups and has been active in the Jain community. He holds graduate degrees in Physics and Engineering, takes part in several professional and technical societies, and explores ways of integrating sound science into related areas of activism.



Seema Nanda

Seema is the Deputy Chief of Staff at the U.S. Department of Labor, spending more than sixteen years working on labor and employment issues. She has served as Acting Deputy Special Counsel and a senior trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. Seema is a founding member of the D.C. Chapter of the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, as well as Oadanadi, a non-profit organization that seeks to combat sex trafficking in India and globally.



Sejal Dhruva

Sejal was born in Wisconsin but raised in beautiful California. She is a contracts negotiator for Salesforce in San Francisco. This is her third year on the Executive Board, second as Co-Chair, and she is thankful for her time with YJA. In her free time, Sejal enjoys being with her family and friends, working out, traveling, baking (and eating) cupcakes, and watching football. She believes laughter and music are essential to life. This will be Sejal's final year on the Executive Board and she looks forward to an unforgettable YJA Convention!



Sheenika Shah

Sheenika is a business development coordinator (digital) at Knobbe Martens. She is a licensed attorney, but enjoys her time on the other side by helping attorneys with their business development efforts. Sheenika has been involved in YJA since 2008. She is a volunteer for the Jain Center of Southern California Website Re-Design and e-Magazine Committees. She loves to try new vegan restaurants, spend time with her family, and travel. Connect with her on LinkedIn or Twitter (@sheenikashah).



Shikhar Shah

Shikhar was born in Bilimora, Gujarat and raised in Chicago. He once found a four-leaf clover, and has a fountain pen. He studies epidemiology at The University of Illinois at Chicago, and will be starting medical school in the fall. He also likes math, medical decision making, and classic literature, so definitely bring those up in conversation. In his work with YJA, Shikhar has come to realize that Mid-West is best. Very Jainism. Much principles. Such holy.



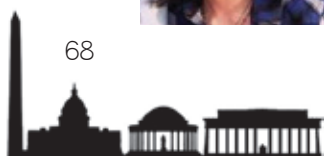
Sneha Parikh

Sneha was born and raised just outside of Hartford, CT and attended undergrad at The University of Connecticut, where she spent most of her time at dance practice! She recently graduated from Northeastern University with a master's degree in speech-language pathology, and now works as a speech pathologist. Sneha loves to dance, swim, cook, spend time with her family and friends, and take naps in the sun! She is so excited for the YJA Convention and can't wait to see all of you there!



Sonali Vakharia

Sonali is a proud Michigander. She is a pharmacist and co-teaches high-school Pathshala at the Detroit sangh. This is Sonali's sixth YJA Convention. She previously served on the Youth Activities Board for the 2013 JAINA Convention. When not working, you can find her at a local concert venue, traveling, taking photos on her Canon, spending time with friends/family, working out, and doing yoga. She believes in Ralph Waldo Emerson's words: "To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment."



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Sushil Jain

Dr. Jain is the first Jain to receive a U.S. Navy Medical scholarship. In his 24-year navy career, he rose to a rank of Captain and received many honors and medals including two Meritorious Service Medals from President Clinton, and Military's Highest Medal Legion of Merit from President George W. Bush. He is past President of JSMW and JAINA. Currently, he is a member of the Medical Ethics Committee at the Uniform School of Medicine.



Sy Majidi

Sy is a Diplomate of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry and founder of Children's Dental Surgery & Hospital Care. Dr. Majidi serves on the Advisory Board for the Kahlil Gibran Chair for Values and Peace at The University of Maryland, where he is a visiting lecturer. Annually, he volunteers in remote and impoverished regions in the mountains of the Dominican Republic with Somos Amigos Medical Missions. He is a member of the Washington, D.C. Baha'i community.



Symi Rom-Rymer

Symi is a freelance project manager and journalist who writes about minority communities in the United States and Europe. She is also the co-founder and the public programs director of the Global Muslim Jewish Friendship Forum (GMJFF). In 2012, she was the recipient of The New York Jewish Week's '36 under 36' award. She is currently a co-chair for the Standing Up for Each Other committee within the Greater Washington Jewish Muslim Forum.



Tarak Shah

Tarak currently serves as a senior advisor at the Department of Energy. From 2010-2014, he served at the Department of Defense as a Special Assistant, to give our troops better energy options in military operations. From 2009-2010, he served as Special Assistant to the Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Tarak has an MBA from Cornell's Johnson School of Graduate Management and received his bachelor's degrees from The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Tina Lapsia

Tina is a rising senior at The University of Connecticut (Go Huskies!) double majoring in political science and economics and hoping to complete a Spanish minor. Some of her hobbies and interests include dancing, taking long walks, obsessing over Bollywood movies, and meeting new people. Tina has loved serving as a local representative for the Northeast region and being a member of the YJA Fundraising Sub-Committee over the past year. She is so excited to create new memories at her third Convention!



Tushar Mehta

Dr. Mehta is an ER physician from Canada with a passion for ecology, international health, and the protection of animals. He is an avid student of Jain philosophy. During 2012-2013, Tushar worked as medical officer and quartermaster with Sea Shepherd Conservation Society as they blockaded Japanese whalers from hunting whales in the Antarctic. He volunteers annually at the Bidada Sarvodaya Trust hospital in Kutch, Gujarat, and with various other organizations. Tushar is a longtime attendee and speaker at JAINA and YJA events!



Umang Patel

Umang started his first business when he was fourteen, selling electronics online. Passionate about music, he later started Masala Entertainment, which provides DJ services for special events. Most recently, he co-founded a software startup called PayTango that helps businesses better manage their customers. Through his experiences, Umang has realized the importance of culture, values, and people, especially during the early stages of a company.



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Vijay Mehta

Dr. Mehta is retired as Chief of General Vascular & Thoracic Surgery from Central Texas Veterans Health Care System. For his involvement with the youth across the nation, he is widely known as Vijay Uncle, the coolest Desi uncle. He is a motivational speaker addressing issues affecting Desi families. He has personally counseled hundreds of youth and has personally registered more than 20,000 Desis to the Bone Marrow Registry. Please feel free to contact him at vijayvip@aol.com.



Vinit Doshi

Vinit is a U.S.born, aspiring Jain with an interest in promoting the message of Jain dharma to the new generation of youth. He has taught at Pathshala and spoken at past YJA Conventions on a range of topics. Vinit studied statistics and liberal arts at The University of Michigan and The University of California at Berkeley. Vinit works in the field of marketing analytics and consulting, and lives in Connecticut with his wife and two children.



Zeeshan Ali

Zeeshan completed his doctorate degree in molecular biology from Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, in Frankfurt, Germany. He completed a postdoc at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from and at The University Piemonte Orientale, in Novara, Italy. He joined the Physician's Committee for Responsible Medicine in 2012 as a research fellow to promote human-based research methods to study diabetes, and is currently heading the Kickstart India program to promote a plant-based diet.





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these memories and friendships.

Love,
Your 2014 Convention Co-Chairs
P.S. It's finally July!

Thank you for joining us for the 2014 YJA Convention!



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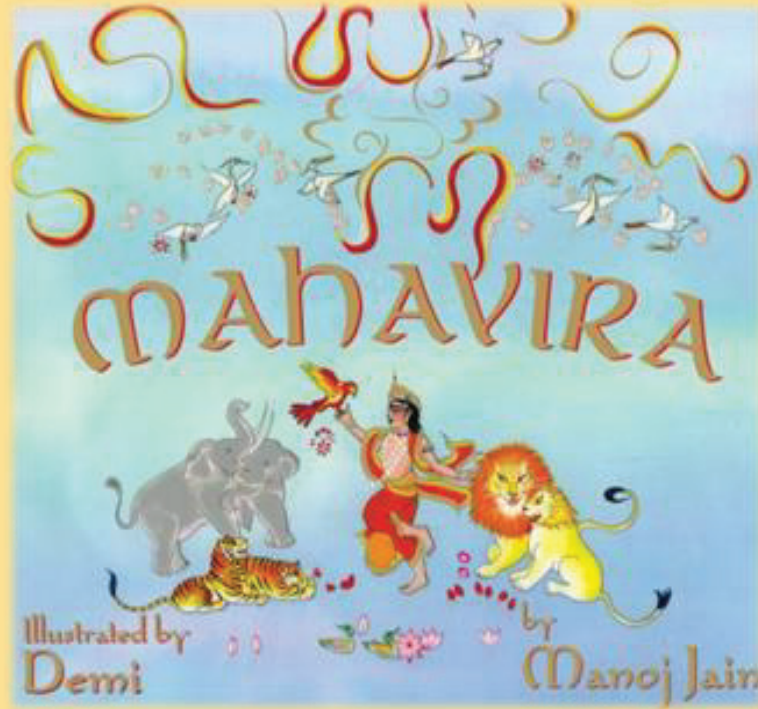


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