

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

Vol. 17 | No. 36 | Dec 28, 2024 - Jan 10, 2025

NEW YEAR SPECIAL

Follow us on | [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) | TheSouthAsianTimes.info

GURU  KRUPA
Foundation Inc



The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism



Founder Mukund Padmanabhan (3rd from left) with three GKF Trustees: Amit Maitra, Lalit Bahl and Deepak Nayak

HELPING CREATE A MORE HUMANE WORLD

Under the leadership of Mukund Padmanabhan, the New York-based Guru Krupa Foundation has been providing funds to charities and reputed institutions in India and the US since 2008 to help the needy, promote learning, and preserve heritage.

12 YEAR OF ELECTIONS

24 IN MEMORIAM 2024

57 2024 PERSON OF THE YEAR

70 INDIA CONFERENCE AT HARVARD



Presenting Organization of the Year 2024

2024 took centerstage, especially the majestic return of Donald Trump as the 47th President of the United States and the unstoppable Narendra Modi becoming Prime Minister of India for the record third time.

With this comes hope that Trump and Modi can play the role of global peacemakers in 2025 to end the long-running Russia-Ukraine war and bring stability to the Middle-East region.

From Manu Bhaker's historic twin bronze medals and Neeraj Chopra's silver in javelin throw at the Paris Olympics to Gukesh Dommaraju becoming the youngest-ever classical World Chess Champion, 2024 saw India's rise as a sporting nation.

The cricket team was not far behind as under Rohit Sharma's leadership, the men's team clinched the T20 World Cup 2024 with a brilliant victory against South Africa in the final.

Amid all the positivity around, the Team @ The South Asian Times is proud to present its annual New Year Special issue. Thank you so much for your continued participation and support, it means a lot to us.

Letter from the Publisher



Kamlesh C. Mehta
Chairman & Publisher

As every year, we start with an incredibly special edition by featuring The South Asian Times Person/Organization of the Year, who have transformed thousands of lives with their generous philanthropy, guidance and by sharing their knowledge, understanding and wisdom.

This year, we are delighted to announce our prestigious annual honor, "The South Asian Times -

Organization of the Year 2024" to be bestowed on Guru Krupa Foundation (GKF) based on Long Island, New York.

GFK is a prominent philanthropic foundation. It has silently helped scores of institutions and charities for almost two decades and continues to support many. It has transformed many lives through its grants and support programs in partnership with well-established organizations. Mr Mukund Padmanabhan founded GFK in 2008 with a mission to help those less fortunate, support the acquisition of knowledge, and preserve the heritage and knowledge that has already been acquired.

In recent years, GKF has given substantial grants to charities and institutions that preserve and promote Vedic wisdom, Education, Elderly Homes and several enhancement programs.

Mr Parveen Chopra, who has handled all our Person of the Year specials since 2008, and has once again beautifully crafted the 'Organization of the Year 2024' feature, even though he is overwhelmed with his own passion project, ALotusInTheMud.com.

Our New Year and Person of the

Year special issues, print and digital, have been read by well over half a million people in America and all over the world, and they are proudly displayed by many families on their coffee tables and kept in their collectibles.

Please contact us if you wish to have a hard copy, we will gladly mail it to you with our compliments.

Since its inception, The South Asian Times has earned an immaculate reputation for its consistency for excellence in journalism, value - based content, clean display, and qualitative advertising. Our unique vision has continuously set new trends and standards in the South Asian media fraternity of America, both in print and online.

We the Team @ The South Asian Times sincerely thank all our supporters and readers who have been integral partners in our gracious presence and success. Hope you will enjoy the New Year Special issue.

Your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

Kamlesh C. Mehta
Chairman
@TheSouthAsianTimes.Info

Dear Friends,

Warm greetings for a joyous, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Trust you, and your loved ones are well.

As I welcome 2025 and look back at the year gone by, I see 2024 as a period of notable achievements and some irreparable losses in former prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh, the 'architect of India's economic reforms' and Ratan Tata, an iconic industrialist and philanthropist.

World mourned the loss of legendary musician Zakir Hussain, who exalted tabla to a global status and blurred boundaries, and former US President and Nobel Peace Prize winner Jimmy Carter, who spent decades working in developing nations on efforts to restore human rights and build democratic institutions.

The political developments in

Cover pages of our last 10 New Year & Person of the Year Special Issues

<p>2024</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>2020</p>
<p>2019</p>	<p>2018</p>	<p>2017</p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>2015</p>

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

Vol. 17 | No. 36 | Dec 28, 2024 - Jan 10, 2025

NEW YEAR SPECIAL

Follow us on | [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) | TheSouthAsianTimes.info

Helping to create a better world, one grant at a time

Started by Mukund Padmanabhan, the New York-based Guru Krupa Foundation has provided funds to charities and reputed institutions in India and the US since 2008 to help the needy, promote learning, and preserve heritage. The South Asian Times has compiled this Organization of the Year feature to salute and felicitate GKF and its founder.

By **Parveen Chopra**
Founding Editor, The SATimes
Founder, ALotusInThe Mud.com

You may have read this story before. An old man, on his daily walk along the beach, spots a boy crouched by the water, scooping something up from the sand and throwing it into the sea.

The boy keeps shuffling a little further down the beach, repeating the same action again and again – stopping, scooping, throwing, moving.

“What are you doing there, boy?” the old man approached him.

“I’m saving these stranded starfish,” replied the boy.

“My boy,” the man said, “on this stretch of the beach alone, there must be a hundred stranded starfish. Around the next corner, there must be at least one thousand more. This goes on for miles and miles – I’ve done this walk every day here for 10 years, and it’s always the same. There must be millions of stranded starfish! I hate to say it, but you’ll never make a difference.”

The boy picked up one more starfish, threw it into the sea, and said, “Well, I just made a difference to this one.”

Mukund Padmanabhan is that kid. He cares, and he wants to make a difference, however small, no matter the enormity of the problem of inhuman living conditions of millions of deprived people who lack opportunities to break away from their



RKM Vivekananda Girls Higher Secondary School in Chennai – opening doors to the future for young children.



Serving the needs of seniors at the South Asian Council of Social Services in New York.

circumstances. So, in 2008, he started the Guru Krupa Foundation (GKF) on Long Island, New York, initially supporting just a handful of projects. With persistent and consistent work over the years, GKF’s footprint now extends to three score and more projects in India and the US.

He shares with The South Asian Times his motivation: “I spent the first 22 years of my life in various cities in India. Poverty is endemic in India, and you frequently come upon children begging on the streets for food. I wanted to do something about these distressing situations.”

“But before working on Wall Street, my resources were limited, and I did whatever I could by making small donations to organizations that helped the needy. Once I started making more money on Wall Street, I could expand the number of organizations I supported and the scale at which I supported them.”

He also realized that India does not have a monopoly on poverty and hunger, and many causes in his adopted country, too, deserved support.

To streamline his charitable activities better, Mukund decided to set up an organization instead of making individual donations to many charities. He would follow due diligence best practices, select charities in India and the US, and monitor the grants made to them. That is how GKF was born.

The selection process

But what is GKF’s grant selection process? Mukund explains, “We have four main focus areas - i) Social, ii) Higher education, iii) Spirituality and culture, and iv) Environment. To a large extent, these focus areas are guided by my personal experience, and from the applications that we receive for support.

“I’ve always had sympathy for kids who

(Continued on page 27>>)

Happy New Year!

Heartiest Congratulations to

GURU KRUPA FOUNDATION
AND
SHRI MUKUND PADMANABHAN

for the well-deserved prestigious recognition as

The South Asian Times
excellence in journalism

**Organization
of the
Year 2024**



With Best Compliments:

Rina Madhani
Co-Founder &
Executive Director

Start LightHouse
Future Leaders Start as Readers



TheSATimes

234 10th Ave., # 20603, New York, NY 10011

information@startlighthouse.org • www.startlighthouse.org



(Continued from page 25)

are born into disadvantaged situations. So GKF activities started by supporting organizations that improved these kids' lives, such as non-profit schools and orphanages. Initially, all these organizations were in India, but now we also support organizations in the US that improve education outcomes in high-poverty schools by providing supplementary education, etc."

GKF also supports organizations that help other disadvantaged categories such as disabled people, old age homes, and food pantries. These are all grants that fall into GKF's 'Social' focus.

And how is the second category, "Higher Education" different from the "Social" category? Clarifies Mukund, "This second category focuses more on advanced study. I came to the US to study, as an international foreign student, fully supported on a scholarship. I thrived on the education I was able to get here and was able to make meaningful contributions to advance the state of art. Similar to me, many smart students in India have much to offer but are unable to avail of this route due to a lack of financial support. I wanted to open the doors of opportunity to this category of people by setting up scholarships at well-known universities and research institutions. "Social" projects address life-or-death situations at earlier stages of life, while "Higher education" projects serve to enable people to maximize their potential at a later stage of their lives."

How did the arc of his focus extend to organizations such as the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) and Flushing Town Hall (FTH)? Mukund, who always thinks things out, explains, "Though I have emphasized the importance and value of education, something even more basic than that is our sense of identity and community. Millennia of thought have been encoded in the cultural practices, spirituality, and value system of our community, and I believe that it is our responsibility to preserve these ideas and practices.

"At the same time, we must be cognizant of other cultures and seek to coexist with them and learn from them when appropriate. This leads to projects in our 'Spiritual/Cultural' focus, which support Hindu temples, *patasalas* and ashrams in India and

the US, and cultural programs that showcase Hindu culture. HAF and FTH fit this bill."

GKF's fourth category of 'Environment' is a relatively new focus area and was born out of a sense of practicality. Mukund says, "I am from Chennai and still have family there. I remember the alternate periods of drought and floods, and many studies have pointed to environmental degradation as a primary cause of these calamities. For our survival, humans had better start looking into these issues. Consequently, we started experimenting with supporting projects that restore and clean up water bodies in the Chennai area."

Implementing best practices

GKF is a private foundation that does not accept outside money, so they don't fundraise. Other than following IRS guidelines

“ Our “Social” projects address life-or-death situations at earlier stages of life, while “Higher education” projects serve to enable people to maximize their potential at a later stage of their lives ”

and filing tax returns, such organizations are not required to make any other information available. However, Mukund adds, "On principle, following best practices and being transparent about them is the right thing to do. Our best practices include hosting a website (<https://guru-krupa.org/>) that clearly states our priorities, lists our current and past projects, and outlines a well-defined procedure for organizations to apply for grants."

The foundation prefers specific projects with measurable deliverables (rather than generic funding) and requires organizations to follow stringent accounting practices and incur minimal costs. These preferences make it easy to track the progress of projects and ensure that funds are spent for the intended purpose.

Funding is only given to organizations in India and the US. In the US, the applicant must have IRS 501(c)(3) status. Applicants in India must have 80G certification (public charity) and FCRA clearance (permission to receive money from outside India).

"Once we receive an application," Mukund continues, "we check the organization's references, their financials, and in many cases visit the organization to verify the scope of its project. Once we make a grant, we also



Opening doors to the future for rural kids through education

require semi-annual reporting on its progress in most cases. I believe that following these practices will help GKF to provide maximum benefit with its grants."

Besides Mukund, the three other trustees of the organization are: Lalit Bahl, Deepak Nayak, and Amit Maitra. Says Mukund about his board: "My trustees are people whom I have known for a long time and who share many of my values. They are people I respect immensely. Coincidentally, we are all from IIT Kharagpur, so you could almost call us an IIT-KGP organization. Two of us - me and Deepak - also share UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) as an alma mater. I am grateful to them for generously giving their time, pro bono."

All four are highly educated and accomplished people who expect efficiency and results from the projects GKF supports.

In addition to Mukund, the trustees travel to India to visit projects funded on their recommendation in their home states. The GKF team includes Adithi Menon, the grants manager who tracks project progress. With such a minimalistic staff, Mukund admits that many weekends are spent on GKF work, but this leads to developing first-hand information about supported projects and organizations.

The grants

The Guru Krupa Foundation takes a holistic approach to charitable giving. Project categories range from basic needs—food, shelter, health, and basic education—to more esoteric ones, such as arts and culture, spirituality, and the environment.

GKF spreads its net wide; the grantees range from an old age home in a far corner of India to the world-renowned Wiki

Education Foundation. In 2023, the organization gave over 70 grants, with around 80% focusing on social causes and a little over 10% in the Spiritual/cultural category. There are many smaller projects, particularly in the Social category, in India because a dollar goes a long way there.

Affirms Mukund, "Helping the impoverished people gets the most bang for the buck because, for them, it's a difference between not having a future and opening the door to a future. That is where it feels more like a duty rather than charity. Just to be able to do that is a great thing."

In dollar terms, 40% of GKF dollars are spent in India, and they account for 60% of the overall number of grants.

Well-known grantees focusing on social issues in India have included, Ekal Vidyalaya, Akshaya Patra, CRY America, and those focusing on social issues in the US include First Book, City Parks Foundation South Asian Council for Social Services, Long Island Cares, and others.

Grantees focusing on Culture include Spic Macay in India and organizations like Hindu American Foundation, Religion News Foundation, Flushing Town Hall and Long Island Children's Museum, among others.

However, to Mukund, no GKF project is greater or lesser in importance. UCLA and, to a lesser extent, IIT Kharagpur have been his biggest projects. At UCLA, he has established Fellowships and faculty Chairs and contributed to capital campaigns. At IIT Kharagpur, he has contributed to the newly instituted Academy of Culture and Fine Arts (ACFA) and established student scholarships (*details on page 30*).

Once GKF selects an organization for a grant, the grant generally continues in subsequent years, leading to a long-term association with good causes and organizations.

The impact

And what is the impact of all this giving?

In the "Social" category, the number of direct beneficiaries is in the thousands, with indirect beneficiaries probably numbering in the tens of thousands. In the "Higher Education" category, around 20-30 graduate students and around a hundred Undergrads have had their futures enabled through GKF Fellowships and Scholarships.

Beneficiaries in the "Spiritual/Cultural" category are harder to enumerate - what is the value of enabling activities that ensure



Promoting and preserving Indian culture and heritage.



Feeding school children through Akshaya Patra

(Continued on page 28>>)

ORGANIZATION
OF THE
YEAR 2024GURU KRUPA
Foundation Inc*(Continued from page 27)*

that one's Culture lives on ? What is the value of finding ways to live in harmony with the many different cultures that inhabit this planet? Says Mukund, "This is not something that can be easily quantified. Nor is it something that can be considered a charitable activity. This is a duty. We should not evaluate this through the benefits that accrue by doing our duty, but by the costs incurred by not doing it." There is a shloka in the Bhagavad Gita that encapsulates this perfectly

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥ २-४७
"Karmanye vadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu
Kadachana,
Ma Karmaphalaheturbhurma Te
Sangostvakarmani"

Despite the huge number of projects it supports and the total amount it has given, the Guru Krupa Foundation has remained low-profile. It may have to do with the reti-



Kanchi Shankaracharya Vijayendra Saraswati propounding religious knowledge at a patsala supported by GKF.

cent nature of Mukund Padmanabhan. A profile of GKF or Mukund is nowhere to be found in the media. GKF is not yet on the radar of Charity Navigator or a similar platform either. However, Trustee Amit Maitra told The South Asian Times, "The organizations who have worked with us are very, very happy." The number of congratulatory messages received from the grantees compiled in these pages testify to that. Besides the funds received to run their projects, many are grateful to GKF and its trustees for visiting and giving

advice and course corrections to improve their functioning.

Looking ahead

Where does GKF go from here? Replies Mukund, "From single digits in 2008, the number of grantees was over 70 in 2023. And these were both in India and the US. Almost all growth has been organic - we receive funding applications, and some align well with our priorities and val-

ues, so the number of grantees increases. I expect the assets of the Foundation to grow, and the number of grantees will also grow. We are always looking for new and worthy causes to support."

(See Mukund Padmanabhan Interview on page 44)

Contact for Guru Krupa Foundation Inc:
info@guru-krupa.org

Congratulations

Guru Krupa Foundation & Mukund Padmanabhan

Thanks to Guru Krupa Foundation's unwavering commitment to the acquisition of knowledge and generosity, the Hindu American Foundation has been able to make significant strides in promoting more accurate representations of India and Hindu Dharmas in K-12 education across the United States. Educational resources unencumbered by inaccuracies have empowered countless students to gain a more authentic understanding of India's rich cultural heritage and the depth of Hindu traditions.

This recognition is a testament to the profound impact of Guru Krupa Foundation's work in shaping a more informed and inclusive educational landscape. Mukund Padmanabhan, may your efforts continue to illuminate minds and bridge cultural gaps for generations to come.



Hindu American Foundation

Religion News Service & Religion News Foundation

Congratulate

GURU KRUPA FOUNDATION

On being honored as

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

**Organization
of the
Year 2024**

Under the visionary leadership of its founder **Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan**, Guru Krupa Foundation has funded coverage of Hindus and Hinduism in Religion News Service (RNS) since 2021. RNS is the only secular media outlet that consistently publishes stories about Hindus and Hinduism. The Foundation's support allows RNS to guide non-Hindu readers' exploration of the faith, while giving Hindus a place to share their experiences alongside other faiths.



GURU  KRUPA
Foundation Inc

RNS

Religion News Service

rns.org

ORGANIZATION
OF THE
YEAR 2024

GURU KRUPA
Foundation Inc

Mukund Padmanabhan has a soft spot for supporting education opportunities for underprivileged children. So why has he given large sums to his alma maters, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and IIT Kharagpur?

He explains his rationale to The South Asian Times: "I came to the US as a graduate student on a full scholarship, without which I would not have been able to study here. As a foreign student entirely dependent on financial aid to survive, when money got tight, things sometimes got a little tense. On the other hand, Indian students who come here to study generally thrive and make good contributions to society. So, guided by my personal experience, I wanted to make it easier for those students.

"Thus was born GKF's 'Higher education' focus, which sets up Fellowships at institutions of higher learning to make it easier for well-qualified Indian students to come here. We have set up these fellowships at UCLA, SUNY Stony Brook, and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory." The last two are on Long Island in New York.

Mukund argues that higher education and scientific research lead to inventions and innovations that benefit humanity in many ways. Though such institutions receive ample government support, these days, private institutional funding also plays a major role in their operations. The growth and impact of an institution depends on the quality of the faculty, students, and infrastructure, which in turn depends on the funds they can raise.

Paying back to his alma maters

Mukund Padmanabhan shares some details of his beneficence for UCLA and IIT Kharagpur

"I benefited greatly from my education at UCLA and would like to give something back. The growth and profile of the school also indirectly benefit all alumni. Consequently, when UCLA was looking to expand the Samueli Engineering School, they reached out to alumni to sponsor parts of the new Engineering VI building, and I sponsored one of the labs there. Similarly, on the advice of the Dean of the Engineering School, I established a couple of endowed faculty chairs there," says Mukund.

The Dean's message to the SATimes attests to the breadth of Mukund's support for UCLA's engineering school.

At the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, Mukund names The Academy of Classical and Folk Arts (ACFA) as a major project he is funding.

Undergrads at the IITs are typically required to take some required credits in areas other than their main concentration. In the past, the only option for these credits were avenues like NCC (National Credit Corps), but a few years ago the Indian government added options such as classical Indian arts immersion to satisfy these credits. ACFA, inaugurated in 2020, addressed this need,



The Systems Scaling Technology Laboratory at UCLA was instituted with support from Mukund Padmanabhan.

and is growing in popularity. Now they get topnotch names in music and other arts to give classes here. Guru Krupa Foundation's beneficence has included the formation of a music auditorium with good acoustics, administration of folk arts workshops, and the engagement of teaching Fellows.

ACFA is off the main track. On the main track, Mukund initiated a project to support IIT KGP students who opt to go abroad for the required summer internships in their third and fourth years. The IIT KGP Foundation vets the students who apply for funds to go abroad. He sponsors about 15 students yearly, and another 10 are supported by other KGP alumni here in the US.

Indian media reported in 2022 that a generous donation from IIT-KGP alumnus Mukund Padmanabhan will boost the Nehru

Hall Ka Tempo Modernization project. His contribution is renovating, refurbishing, and modernizing all the rooms in the D-Top West Wing of the Nehru Hall residential block. The report quoted Mukund as saying, "I'm proud to be a graduate of IIT KGP and have fond memories of my stay in Nehru Hall, a feeling shared by all my wingmates from that time. On behalf of the Nehru D-Top West batch 1987, I felicitate our juniors and wish them the best of success going forward."

The love between alumni and their alma maters runs both ways. Mukund Padmanabhan deservedly received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from IIT Kharagpur in 2021 and a Professional Achievement Award from the Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science at UCLA in 2019.

MESSAGES

UCLA Samueli School of Engineering

Ah-Hyung 'Alissa' Park

Ronald and Valerie Sugar Dean
UCLA Samueli School of Engineering, Los Angeles



We are grateful for the generosity of Mukund Padmanabhan and the Guru Krupa Foundation. With wide-ranging support for students through scholarships and fellowships, innovative research through the establishment of endowed faculty chairs, and continued expansion through capital contributions, the impact of his philanthropy is felt across the entirety of the school.

The Academy of Classical and Folk Arts - IIT KGP

ACFA Team, IIT Kharagpur

The Academy of Classical and Folk Arts (ACFA) at IIT Kharagpur is grateful to the Guru Krupa Foundation, USA, and its President, Mukund Padmanabhan, PhD, for their continued support since the academy's inception in 2020. Thanks to their generous support, ACFA has been able to conduct lectures regularly, invited lectures/performances, and workshops by eminent musicians and artists through the years, as well as conducting regular classes in music and fine arts for the campus community comprising students, employees, and their family members. This contributes to the holistic development of students, focusing on fostering critical thinking, creativity, and ethical values while encouraging

physical well-being, emotional resilience, and interpersonal skills.

The GKF Research Fellows scheme supports seed funding for research ideas at the intersection of music/arts and science/technology. Dr. Padmanabhan takes a special interest in our activities and continu-

ously offers us constructive feedback and ideas. In the initial phase, GKF also supported the setting up of two modern classrooms with state-of-the-art acoustics that are loved by the students and visitors. We sincerely thank GKF and look forward to our continued association.



The music auditorium of IIT Kharagpur's Academy of Classical and Folk Arts (ACFA) has been supported by the Guru Krupa Foundation. (Photo courtesy ACFA)

Indo American Festivals New York Inc.

Organizers of Ganesh Mohatsav, Roslyn and Dusherra Festival
at Lido Beach, Long Island, New York

Wishing Heartiesr Congratulations to

GURU KRUPA FOUNDATION

On being honored as

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

**Organization
of the
Year 2024**



Best wishes



Indo American Festivals New York Inc.

501 c (Non For Profit)

Suman Sharma
(President)

Dr. Ravindra Goyal
(Chairman)



Dear Readers of the South Asian Times,

I want to take this time to wish all of you a prosperous and happy New Year. As we enter 2025, I hope we can learn and grow from our past experiences and meet all upcoming opportunities and challenges with enthusiasm and diligence.

I also want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Guru Krupa Foundation for being named The South Asian Times' Organization of the Year. This charitable foundation's unwavering commitment to philanthropy has made a significant impact through the distribution of annual grants that support Education, Healthcare, Elder Homes,

and other empowering programs. The organization's generosity exemplifies the spirit of giving that I believe makes the Nassau County community so special.

May this year bring all of you joy and success. God bless you all, and God bless the United States of America.

Sincerely,

Bruce Blakeman
Nassau County Executive

JOSEPH SALADINO
SUPERVISOR



OFFICE OF THE TOWN SUPERVISOR
54 AUDREY AVENUE
OYSTER BAY, NEW YORK 11771
516-624-6350

December 20, 2024



Dear Mr. Padmanabhan and the esteemed members of the Guru Krupa Foundation,

On behalf of the Town of Oyster Bay, I am honored to recognize and congratulate the Guru Krupa Foundation on being named *The South Asian Times - Organization of the Year 2024*. This prestigious accolade is a testament to your unwavering commitment to philanthropy and your outstanding contributions to society.

Since its inception in 2008, the Guru Krupa Foundation has served as a beacon of hope and generosity. Through substantial annual grants, you have enriched the lives of countless individuals by supporting education, healthcare, elder care, and empowerment initiatives. Your dedication to improving communities both here in the United States and in India exemplifies the true spirit of global citizenship.

The visionary leadership of your founder, Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan, deserves special commendation. A

proud alumnus of IIT-Kharagpur and UCLA, Mr. Padmanabhan has seamlessly blended academic excellence with a deep sense of compassion. His work with Renaissance Technologies and his quiet yet impactful philanthropy stand as an inspiration to all.

As we usher in the New Year, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Guru Krupa Foundation for its invaluable contributions to our community. May the year 2025 bring you continued success in your noble endeavors, and may your generosity continue to inspire others to make a difference in the world. Wishing you a joyous and prosperous New Year.

Yours truly,

Joseph Saladino
Town Supervisor

Happy New Year

2025

Heartiest congratulations to

GURU KRUPA FOUNDATION

AND

SHRI MUKUND PADMANABHAN

On being Honored as

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

**Organization
of the
Year 2024**

With Best Compliments from:

Kavita & Mohan Wanchoo

ECI MW HOLDING COMPANY, INC.

Happy New Year

Heartiest Congratulations to

GURU KRUPA FOUNDATION

AND

SHRI MUKUND PADMANABHAN

On being honored as

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

**Organization
of the
Year 2024**

With Best Compliments

RAVISHANKAR BHOOPALPUR

President

1000 Woodbury Road
Suite 109, Woodbury, NY 11797
Tel: (516)-333-2244
www.xusom.com



XAVIER UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE &
SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE
ARUBA





By SATimes



Man with a Midas touch and a heart of gold

Education brought Mukund Padmanabhan from a middle-class family in Chennai to America and to a position where he could afford to donate large sums of money to worthy causes. He believes education can open the doors of opportunity for the poor and underprivileged, and that is where most of his giving is directed.

Sharing his life story with The South Asian Times, Mukund says, "Education has been important in my family; my father, uncles, and paternal grandfather were all engineers. Consequently, I inherited a value system prioritizing education, hard work, and ethics. I studied hard and got into IIT Kharagpur, earning a Bachelor's in Electronics and Electrical Communication." Then, he came to the US for higher studies.

Mukund's is a well-traversed path by many enterprising youths in India. However, not everyone obtains a PhD in Electrical Engineering from UCLA (University of California Los Angeles) as he did.

After UCLA, he worked at the IBM T.J. Watson Research Lab in Yorktown, New York, managing the Advanced Telephony Speech Algorithms group. He points out IBM Research is a pseudo-academic institution doing blue-sky research that increases scientific understanding and its application to the real world. Reminisces Mukund, "I fit in perfectly and made career progress at IBM. However, after a decade there, work started to become routine. It was then that I got an opportunity to try something new."

And a whoa opportunity it turned out to be! In Mukund's telling, "I've always been a bit of a risk-taker, and the professional environment, people, and work at Ren-

aissance Technologies, a New York hedge fund, seemed very interesting, so I made the transition. I'm still working there after over two decades as a partner and researcher."

That pivot to Wall Street started making him enough money to float and fund the Guru Krupa Foundation, which may not have been possible if he had remained in engineering.

However, not many people who amass wealth start charitable foundations. So, what was Mukund's motivation? He replies, "I have done reasonably well in life and am grateful for my circumstances. So, I feel I can afford to give something back to the society where I've thrived."

He also credits his heritage: "My value system is derived from Hinduism, which my family handed me down. It emphasizes the importance of education, hard work, ethics, charity, empathy, and spirituality. One interpretation of these values is that an individual is merely an insignificant member of a society, and his/her moral values should guide them towards making that society better, once their basic needs are met."

Professional achievements

Running GKF since 2008 may outshine his professional achievements, which, too, are formidable. Mukund has published over 80 technical papers in international journals, presented at conferences, and been granted over 20 US patents.

He received the Professional Achievement Award from the UCLA Samueli School of Engineering and the Distinguished Alumnus Award from IIT Kharagpur, his alma mater in the US and India, respectively. He is also a recipient of the IEEE's (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) Signal Processing Society Senior Award.

Mukund has been a trustee of the Hindu Temple Society of North America (Ganesh



Mukund Padmanabhan visits the GKF-funded projects in India and the US to review progress and give advice and helpful suggestions to beneficiary organizations. This picture is from his visit in 2023 to Sevalaya, near Chennai, which provides free education to underprivileged children.

Mukund Padmanabhan

Channeling his success into philanthropy

With degrees from IIT Kharagpur and UCLA, Mukund Padmanabhan earned professional eminence. Then, his researcher's brain earned him success at a hedge fund, which he channels into the Guru Krupa Foundation.



Mukund Padmanabhan was presented the Distinguished Alumnus Award by the Director of IIT Kharagpur at a felicitation at the Indian Consulate in New York in July 2022.

Temple in Flushing) and the Long Island Children's Museum. He currently serves on the Dean's Executive Board at UCLA Engineering.

Praise by grantees and associates

Giving money to a charity is fine, but ensuring the donation is properly utilized is also important. Mukund has evolved systems to do due diligence on the grants that GKF makes. His grantees say that Mukund personally visits the far-flung projects in India and the US. GKF trustee Deepak Nayak said, "The most important thing about Mukund is not the amount of money he gives but the time he devotes to GKF."

S. Madhavan, the former CEO of India-based Cognizant Foundation, tells The SA Times, "Mukund is very methodical and meticulous, whether he evaluates proposals

at the application stage or reviews the progress of projects in the field. I have accompanied him on some project review visits in India. He offers beneficiary organizations thoughtful advice and helpful suggestions, identifying him and GKF as partners (not just donors) in their mission to serve society."

Robert Lemle, co-founder of Long Island Children's Museum, agrees. "Mukund has been a true partner to us. He met our staff and trustees, asking thoughtful questions and learning about our decision process that brings our values to life. When he joined our Board, he brought insight and wisdom that strengthened our work."

Sesshadri Srinivasan, Managing Trustee of Sri Poorna Mahameru Trust in Chennai, admires GKF's transparent functioning. "They do their due diligence while respecting our autonomy, which speaks to their trust in us and their strong values."

Mohan Wanchoo, an entrepreneur-turned-philanthropist whose New York fundraisers for Ekal Vidyalaya and Sankara Eye Foundation have been supported by Mukund, calls him an exemplary role model. "His altruism, channeled through the GKF, is helping to make our world a better place, one good deed at a time," he says, complimenting his personality: "Despite doing and accomplishing so much, he is humble and soft-spoken with a mild demeanor."

Dr. Jayshree Vencatesan, Managing Trustee of Care Earth Trust in Chennai, shares similar sentiments: "Sri Padmanabhan is a quintessential Chennaite - top academic credentials and a highly successful career dotted with achievements of global impact, yet he remains a simple, unassuming, and grounded individual who is determined to do good to others."

Mukund Padmanabhan is a man with a Midas touch and a heart of gold.

(All photos courtesy: GKF)

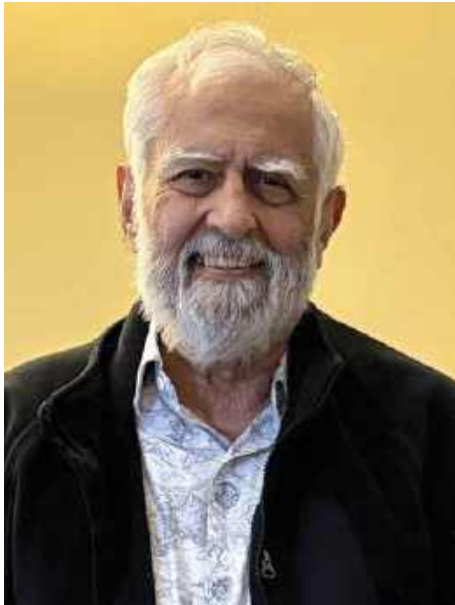


In Guru Krupa We Trust

Two long-term Trustees of the Guru Krupa Foundation recount their association with it and Mukund Padmanabhan's central role in expanding GKF's footprint in India and the US.

GKF represents an excellent example of good governance

Lalit Bahl GKF Trustee



I've known Mukund Padmanabhan for about 30 years and have been associated with GKF since its inception. Guru Krupa Foundation was his creation. When it started, it was an informal organization with only a few grantees.

Mukund has done a great job of formalizing its operations, including the due diligence process for evaluating grant applications. With feedback from the Trustees, the organization has continued to grow. It is most impressive that we now have over 70 grantees, and they span both India and the US.

The Trustees Board also receives regular updates on the organization's status. I believe GKF now represents an excellent example of good governance, from vetting the grants to monitoring them and all the administrative work, which is carried out seamlessly.

Most importantly, the organization continues to do noble work, helping those who need it most, promoting knowledge acquisition, and preserving heritage. I can confidently say that it has been my privilege to serve on GKF's Board, and I hope we can keep the good work going for many more years to come.

Lalit Bahl, Formerly with IBM and Renaissance Technologies, New York

Lalit Bahl earned his B. Tech in Electrical Communication Engineering from IIT Kharagpur and his PhD in Electrical Engineering from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

After his PhD, he joined the IBM TJ Watson Research Center in New York, where he worked for 30 years.

Lalit retired from IBM as Manager of the Speech Recognition Group.

During his career, Lalit has published over 80 technical papers in scientific journals and conferences and been awarded 37 patents.

He was elected to the IBM Academy of Technology and is a Life Fellow of the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers). He has

received the IEEE Signal Processing Society Senior Award twice and the IEEE Information Theory Society Golden Jubilee Award. He was also elected a Distinguished Alumnus of IIT Kharagpur.

After retiring from IBM, Lalit embarked on a second career at Renaissance Technologies, a hedge fund. There, he worked for two decades before retiring as a Senior Researcher.

Lalit is also a philanthropist and has made major contributions to the SUNY Stony Brook Medical School for cancer research and his alma mater, the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He also serves on the Board of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and has been one of the Trustees of the Guru Krupa Foundation since its inception.

The time Mukund gives to GKF is more important than \$\$\$ he gives

Deepak Nayak

GKF Trustee and Vice President



college. At the Institute for Helping the Disabled, also in Bhubaneswar, GKF has created a physical therapy center. We also support Jyoti Kala Mandir to teach Odissi dance to poor girls and instill in them self-esteem and confidence. For Grassroots India in Cuttack, GKF's grant provides vocational training to poor teenage girls from villages.

I also oversee a couple of GKF-supported projects at UCLA.

In Silicon Valley, many people have lots of money but don't want to give it away. The most important thing about Mukund is not the amount of money he gives but the time he devotes to GKF. He travels to visit projects in different places and spends all weekends on GKF work, thus sacrificing part of his life. You can always cut a check for a charity but working two hours in a soup kitchen is a different feeling altogether.

Deepak Nayak, Engineering Manager, Consumer Hardware, Google, Mountain View, CA

Deepak Nayak was born in a village in Odisha (earlier Orissa), India. He obtained his engineering degree from IIT Kharagpur. He moved to the US in 1983 and completed an MS and PhD in Electrical Engineering at UCLA. He also earned an MBA from UC Berkeley. He has 130 patents and publications to his name.

Deepak has worked in Silicon Valley's high-tech industries for over 30 years, blending management and engineering

excellence to cover the semiconductor, solar, LED, and consumer hardware markets.

Deepak is currently at Google. Before Google, he worked at Intel and AMD.

Deepak is passionate about helping poor and disadvantaged people by providing good education, better economic opportunities, and progressive political and social changes. As part of his charity work, he was an early leader of Asha for Education, Los Angeles chapter.

He has been a Member of the Guru Krupa Foundation's Board of Trustees and Vice President since 2010.

He lives in Union City in the Bay Area.

Long before the Guru Krupa Foundation was established, a few friends working at IBM pooled as little as \$400 each, and I used to send the collection to support village schools in Odisha, my home state. Mukund Padmanabhan, my junior at IIT Kharagpur, was part of our group. Later, he moved to New York and founded GKF. I have been supporting his work since 2010.

GKF has funded half a dozen projects in Odisha over the last few years, on my recommendation. We choose those projects over which we will have some control. I spend one or two days at each place to monitor their progress.

For Adruta Children Home in Bhubaneswar, GKF has built the Bolangir Center building and supports its operation, covering hundreds of orphans. Here, a child is fully supported till he or she graduates from



GKF Trustee Deepak Nayak visited Grassroots India project in Odisha. (Photos courtesy: GKF)



Happy New Year 2025!



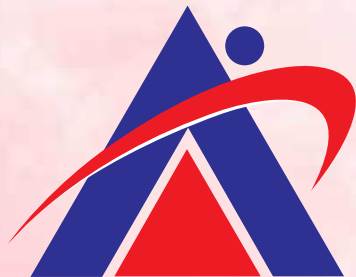
Heartiest Congratulations to

The South Asian Times
excellence in journalism



**Organization
of the
Year 2024**

With Best Compliments



ATLANTIC DIALYSIS
MANAGEMENT SERVICES

**Atlantic Dialysis
Management Services**
23-14, College Point Boulevard
College Point, NY 11356, Tel: (718) 821 3182

DR. J. GANESH BHAT
FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL

DR. NIRMAL K. MATTOO
FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL

ORGANIZATION
OF THE
YEAR 2024

GURU KRUPA
Foundation Inc

In Guru Krupa We Trust

One Trustee and Grant Manager of the Guru Krupa Foundation recount their association with it and Mukund Padmanabhan's central role in expanding GKF's footprint in India and the US.

At GKF, Mukund Padmanabhan does everything by the book

Amit Maitra GKF Trustee



All GKF Trustees, including Mukund, are engineers, so the efficiency of the grantees' projects is very important to us - the proposals' intent should be matched to the

best extent possible in the final outcome. For any GKF project approval, we have made it a requirement that, in most situations, at least one of us should be able to visit the project.

Mukund does his utmost to ensure everything is done by the book - all the

Amit Maitra, Principal - Research Dept, Nvidia, Santa Clara, CA

Amit Maitra is an internet technologist who develops high-availability networking solutions for high-performance computing (HPC) data centers for Machine Learning. He holds a leadership position at Nvidia and has worked with HP, Cisco, and Intel.

Earlier in his career, Amit was instrumental in developing core routing platforms that formed the backbone of the internet infrastructure in its early growth phase. He has been instrumental in various innovations in the data networking

laws and bylaws in America and India are followed.

The exceptionally qualified trustees of GKF bring diverse, well-formulated life experiences that make my association with the foundation personally informative and fulfilling.

On my own, too, I support some smaller projects that focus on educating and empowering the less privileged, mainly in India but also in America.

domain, innovating networking technologies from core IP routing to metro ethernet solutions. He also created power management solutions for x86 mobile processors and was part of the core team that developed the widely used USB standard.

Amit has also innovated around scaling the wireless infrastructure, including streaming real-time content over cellular networks. This was employed in a live telecast and streaming of the 2011 Cricket World Cup in India, which the Men in Blue won.

Amit was born in Kolkata, grew up in Bombay, and lives in Cupertino, California.

GKF inspires by transforming the lives of the underprivileged

Adithi Menon

Grants Manager with GKF



I have worked at the Guru Krupa Foundation for the past four years. It is an inspiring organization dedicated to making a lasting and meaningful change in the lives of countless underprivileged and underrepresented individuals in the US and India.

As Grants Manager, I have the privilege of working directly with the founder, Mukund Padmanabhan, to ensure funds are used to address critical needs and drive positive change. The Foundation's commitment to transparency and impact is commendable as Mukund takes a holistic, personal, and strategic approach to grant-making.

I am excited to continue working with the Foundation and look forward to contributing to its continued growth and success.

Adithi Menon, Nonprofit Professional, Toronto

Adithi Menon is a seasoned nonprofit professional with over 17 years of experience in grant writing and management, communications, and business development. Her passion for positively impacting the world drives her work in building partnerships, fostering collaboration, and achieving impactful results.

Adithi has extensive experience in grant management. As a part-time Grants Manager at the Guru Krupa Foundation, she is crucial in managing all aspects of grant monitoring. Her meticulous attention to detail and strong organizational skills ensure funds are appropriately utilized.

As a skilled grant writer and consultant, Adithi has secured significant funding for grassroots and international nonprofit organizations like A Future for Every Child and Save the Children Australia. A talented communicator, Adithi excels at developing compelling proposals and crafting engaging content for various platforms to raise awareness and build strong donor relationships.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Adithi is a foodie who enjoys traveling and hanging out with her husband and two sons.

Thank You!

Mukund Padmanabhan

GKF Founder

I want to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members, Amit, Deepak, and Lalit, for their hard work.

Inspiration may be a fine starting point, but it takes much guidance and help to shape a successfully functioning organization.

My fellow Board members have provided this guidance throughout the process, and they have guided and informed our current operating procedures and priorities.

Not just that aspect, but their involvement has also been essential in monitoring the projects that function in their respective hometowns.

All of them are highly successful people with ongoing full careers, and for them to take time out of their busy schedules to serve on GKF's Board is truly creditable, and I am more than grateful.

Last but not least, I want to thank



our Grants Manager, Adithi, for keeping things humming year-round. Without her organizational skills and follow-ups, we would operate much less efficiently.

GKF has been fortunate to provide solace and support to thousands of people in India and the US. With the continued help, involvement, and hard work of our Board members and staff, I earnestly hope that we can extend that support to many more thousands.



Mukund Padmanabhan with trustees Amit Maitra (2nd from left) and Deepak Nayak (extreme right), and friends.

Happy New Year 2025

Warmest and most heartfelt congratulations to

GURU KRUPA FOUNDATION

AND

SHRI MUKUND PADMANABHAN

on receiving the prestigious recognition as

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism



With Best Compliments

Paul A. Moeller

KWM CPAs, LLP

100 Jericho Quadrangle - Suite 220

Jericho, NY 11753

516-333-6881 (o), 516-333-6846 (f)



Helping the needy, promoting learning, preserving heritage

Higher Education

Our understanding of the physical world in which we live is constantly evolving. The desire to "understand nature, and the natural laws that govern it, a little bit better than we do today", is a never-ending quest. This quest for knowledge is best nurtured in higher study programs in the halls of academia and research think tanks.

These institutions play pivotal roles in cultivating ideas, expounding theories and driving innovation. Collaboration and critical thinking are celebrated, building on the work of previous changemakers.

Projects in this category seek to fuel the next generation of thinkers by funding scholarships and fellowships at well recognized universities and research institutions.



GURU KRUPA
Foundation Inc
www.guru-krupa.org

The Guru Krupa Foundation (GKF) is a private foundation incorporated in the State of New York. The purpose of the foundation is to fund several charitable causes. Our principles and philosophy, derived from the value system of Hinduism, may be succinctly summarized as:

- Help those who are less fortunate than yourself.
- Support causes related to the acquisition of knowledge (both materialistic and non-materialistic).
- Preserve the heritage and knowledge that has already been acquired.

Spirituality, Arts and Culture

This category addresses the non-materialistic aspects of human life and its power to nourish, inspire & uplift the human spirit. Spirituality inspires a bigger-picture perspective of the world and gives us a sense of group identity. Further, spirituality, arts and culture are intertwined. Artistic forms of expression have been used to illustrate spirituality and culture for millennia and are inextricably intertwined.

Several religions have arisen and evolved over the millennia - of these Hinduism is one of the most ancient. The vast amount of knowledge acquired over several millennia is codified in its scriptures, religious practices and culture. These aspects, though, inevitably undergo a slow transformation as cultures merge and attitudes and priorities change in society. There is thus the risk that the roots of the religion may be forgotten with time and lost to posterity. Our goal is to remember and preserve these roots, while at the same time promoting cultural integration and co-existence with other viewpoints.

Projects in this category include support for ashrams/patashalas and temples, programs that raise awareness of India's traditional art forms & culture, and organizations that are focused on promoting interfaith dialogue.



*Guru Krupa Foundation
Wishes the Readers of
The South Asian Times
a Happy, Healthy, and
Prosperous 2025.*



Social Welfare

The standard of living today varies, by several orders of magnitude, between the most and least fortunate of people, and there are many people for whom even basic material needs are not met. Consequently, there is no shortage of vulnerable and disadvantaged people on earth, who suffer, seemingly for no fault of their own.

Our Social Welfare mandate attempts to address these issues by investing in organizations that run a variety of initiatives from providing access to education, nutritious food and healthcare, to supporting at-risk populations, and providing essential resources. Our goals are to improve the lives of these people and give them the tools to break out of the cycle of poverty they live in.

Projects in this category include providing food and shelter to vulnerable populations (orphanages, old age homes); increasing children's access to education; improving the educational environment; empowering women & children; improving rural health outcomes; and, generally, uplifting disadvantaged communities.



Environmental

This category addresses the preservation of the environment we live in. The environment encompasses all living and non-living things. The Earth sustains us and provides for us, and it is our duty to nurture it for our sake and for the sake of future generations.

Our goal is to fulfill our responsibility by taking care of the environment we live in.

Projects in this category empower local communities and are centered around clean water management, reforestation & activities that preserve or reintroduce lost flora & fauna to habitats.



5745
81859
68 m



Congratulations and Commendations

Welcoming The South Asian Times' recognition of Guru Krupa Foundation as the Organization of the Year 2024, messages pour in from charities and organizations it supports in India and the US, as well as admirers of GKF and its low-profile founder, Mukund Padmanabhan.



Ranjani Saigal

Executive Director, Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA

Guru Krupa Foundation deserves recognition as Organization of the Year from The South Asian Times. We are immensely grateful for the foundation's unwavering support of Ekal Vidyalaya, which serves over 100,000 remote rural and tribal villages in India.

GKF's generosity has enabled education for over 15,000 tribal children and supported holistic development initiatives for a population of 15,000 in rural Telangana. These include women's skill training, health services, farming advance-

Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA



GKF's support to Ekal has enabled the education of disadvantaged children and supported holistic development initiatives.

ments, and digital literacy programs.

GKF Founder Mukund Padmanabhan exemplifies compassion and humility. His selfless dedication reflects the spirit of the bhajan Vaishnava Jana-to, embodying service without ego.

Mukund's inspirational philanthropy has profoundly impacted countless lives, making him a true force for good in uplifting the underprivileged. We are proud to partner with the Guru Krupa Foundation in creating lasting change in rural India.

South Asian Council for Social Services

Sudha Acharya

Executive Director, South Asian Council for Social Services, Flushing, NY

On behalf of everyone at the South Asian Council for Social Services (SACSS), I would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Mukund Padmanabhan, Founder and President of the Guru Krupa Foundation on this honor. His unwavering support and dedication to our mission have made an immeasurable impact over the years. It is because of people like him that we continue to grow and serve so many people with crucial services that they need.

Once again, congratulations on this well-deserved recognition, and thank you, Mukund, for being such an important part of our community.



SACSS Executive Director Sudha Acharya and New York Senator John Liu honored Mukund Padmanabhan on behalf of GKF.

Flushing Town Hall

Ellen Kodadek

Executive & Artistic Director Flushing Town Hall, NY

Guru Krupa Foundation has generously supported Flushing Town Hall for six years. We are grateful for their commitment

to our programs for local audiences and families, including our annual Diwali Festival, Holi celebration, and Global Mashup concerts. Their support of our mission to present global arts that engage and educate New York's diverse audiences allows us to foster strong and caring communities.

The Foundation's humanitarian work directly reflects its founder Mukund Padmanabhan, whose humble and generous nature is an inspiration and gift to all.



Mukund Padmanabhan was an honored guest at the Flushing Town Hall gala in 2023.

Religion News Foundation

Deborah Caldwell

Religion News Foundation CEO
Religion News Service
Publisher, Columbia, MO



Thanks to GKF support, Richa Karmarkar covers Hinduism and the Hindu community for Religion News Service.

Religion News Foundation congratulates the Guru Krupa Foundation for receiving this prestigious honor from The South Asian Times. Under the visionary leadership of Mukund Padmanabhan, GKF has funded the coverage by Religion News Service (RNS) of Hindus and Hinduism since 2021 and the hiring of Richa Karmarkar in 2023 to cover this beat.

Says Richa: "Writing about the Hindu-American diaspora has been nothing short of joyful. It is a privilege to cover one's community, and especially to keep learning about the multifaceted Hindu faith. Thanks to GKF, I will continue increasing awareness about Hindus, especially as the Hindu community makes inroads into American life."

RNS is the only secular media

outlet that consistently publishes stories about Hindus and Hinduism. Through GKF's support, RNS has guided non-Hindu readers' exploration of the faith, while giving Hindus a place to share their experiences alongside other faiths. This support has also helped RNS fulfill its mission of increasing religious literacy among our readers and in the broader news environment.

Akshaya Patra Foundation USA

Ankita Narula

Vice President, Akshaya Patra Foundation USA, Fremont, CA



GKF has supported Akshaya Patra's Tri-State chapter. Akshaya Patra's mission is to eradicate classroom hunger in India.

The Akshaya Patra Foundation extends its deepest gratitude to the Guru Krupa Foundation for their exceptional leadership and steadfast commitment to transforming lives. GKF's visionary support has been a cornerstone of our mission to eradicate classroom hunger, enabling us to serve millions of hot, nutritious meals to underprivileged children across India.

During the pandemic, GKF's unwavering support was pivotal in Akshaya Patra's ability to deliver over 220 million meals to migrant workers and vulnerable communities. Their timely contributions ensured that food reached those most in need, showcasing their profound compassion and dedication to impactful philanthropy.

Mukund, the visionary founder of GKF, has also been an unwavering supporter of Akshaya Patra's Tri-State chapter. The Akshaya Patra Foundation is honored to collaborate with Guru Krupa on this transformative journey. Together, we are creating a brighter, hunger-free future for generations.

Happy New Year!

2025

Heartiest Congratulations to

GURU KRUPA FOUNDATION

On being honored as

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

Organization of the Year 2024

With Best Compliments

Pam Kwatra and Eric Kumar



"Your Dreams Our Expertise"



Nationwide Lender / Broker for Business Loans and Commercial Mortgages

OUR PROGRAMS

- ▶ COVID 19 - Special Loan Programs
- ▶ Main Street Lending
- ▶ Refinance and Cash-out from existing business
- ▶ Franchise Startups and Acquisitions
- ▶ Small - Mid Size business of all types
- ▶ Business Line of Credit
- ▶ All types of retail business
- ▶ SBA loans for all types of business with or without real estate Upto 90% financing
- ▶ Special programs for professionals - doctors, engineers, CPA, Upto 100% financing
- ▶ Investment properties - multi-family and apartments buildings upto 80% financing
- ▶ Special programs for hospitality industry upto 90% financing
- ▶ Restaurants - Acquisitions and expansion upto 90% financing
- ▶ Special Loans (Grants) for minority / women-owned businesses
- ▶ SBA disaster loans and PPP loan forgiveness



ERIC KUMAR OVER 25 YEAR EXPERIENCE

55 N. Broadway Suite 201, Hicksville, NY 11801, Ph: (646) 813-3350 | www.commercialcapitalfunding.com

ORGANIZATION
OF THE
YEAR 2024

GURU KRUPA
Foundation Inc

‘Helping the needy feels more like a duty rather than charity’

Mukund Padmanabhan opens up about helping Guru Krupa Foundation in an exclusive interview for *The South Asian Times’ Organization of the Year* cover feature.

By Parveen Chopra

Reticent, reclusive, spartan, self-effacing. Such adjectives come to mind when you interact with Mukund Padmanabhan. You can find commoner epithets from scanning his bio: industrious, brainy, accomplished, and moneyed man. To him what is important is adding his mite to mitigating misery and creating a better world.

Guru Krupa Foundation (GKF), which he set up with the money he made after pivoting from engineering to a hedge fund, Renaissance Technologies, has silently helped scores of institutions and charities for almost two decades. Through its grants and support programs, which are in partnership with reputed organizations, it has transformed many lives. It has given substantial grants to preserve and promote Vedic wisdom, education, old age homes, and enhancement programs.

In an interview with *The South Asian Times*, Mukund discusses his belief system and running GKF, which has given him purpose and a mission to which he dedicates himself.

Excerpts from the interview:

Q The South Asian Times: Which GKF donation has given you the most satisfaction?

A Mukund Padmanabhan: Difficult to pick one or the other. The only reason we give grants is because we believe they are worthwhile causes. Yet, I’d say helping the impoverished people gets the most bang for the buck because, for them, it’s a difference between not having a future and opening the door to a future. That is where it feels more like a duty rather than charity. Just to be able to do that is a great thing.

Q Which projects you have funded made the most difference?

A The ones in the social category. I have a soft spot for kids, especially poor kids. Helping the disabled who cannot lead independent lives is equally important. Anything that reduces misery - particularly extreme misery - is worth doing.

Q Which have been your biggest grants?

A Dollar-wise, the biggest grants are in the US because making a difference here takes a lot of dollars. The biggest grant so far has been to my alma mater, UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles). Over many years, it has run to a few million. I first set up a UCLA grant to support research scholars because I had experienced financial difficulty as a graduate student there. Subsequently my

support expanded to faculty support and capital contributions.

UCLA is a public university with significant government support, but private institutional and alumni support is beginning to play a significant role in public universities. Universities are always happy to get the support of their alumni, and it gives satisfaction to the alumni to do something for their alma mater.

A major project I have at IIT Kharagpur has been supporting the Academy of Classical and Folk Arts since its inception.

Q Sometimes you reach out to institutions rather than them reaching out to you...

A Yes, some religious causes fall into this category. I belong to a particular sect, an ashram, and helping them is more of a duty than an option. I would ask them, “What do you need?”

Q Which ashram do you belong to?

A My family belongs to Andavan Ashramam in Srirangam in Tamil Nadu. There is also a huge temple with which many other organizations are aligned. Ours is the Vishishta Advaita tradition, a subcategory of Vedanta propagated by Ramanujacharya.

Q Do you visit the projects you fund in India?

A Yes, I do, particularly the ones around Chennai, my home town, and New York, where I live. Other GKF trustees visit projects in their respective hometowns.

I like visiting these projects because it gives me a first-hand view of the project and its needs and suggests synergies that can be exploited with other grantees. Many organizations support education for kids. They do things slightly differently, but each one has the same end goal.

However, traveling to grantee projects can be time-consuming if they are spread out. Consequently, I try to keep projects as local as possible. Many projects are concentrated around Chennai, India, and New York City, USA.

Organizations are also happy to see the donor visit and take a real interest in their work and mission. It’s not like I have a foundation, I need to give some money away and then forget about it. So, for us to take an interest and ask questions appears to be pleasing to almost all our grantees. Because whichever project I visit, being detail-oriented, I ask a lot of questions. I probe and push them, and they seem to like it.



Visiting book distribution at Brooklyn Book Bodega in Brooklyn, NY.

“ We should be proud of our lineage and should preserve our traditions. There is value in our traditions. It has good principles, such as “live and let live”, “look out for others and be of service to them”, “expand your priorities to much more than materialistic acquisitions”, and so on ”



Q Do organizations live up to their promises?

A Most organizations do what they promised to do with the money we gave. Only occasionally do we have problems. We did find an integrity problem with a couple of grantees. They sent us photoshopped pictures as part of their progress reports, but we found out and stopped supporting them. I would say that most grantees are not like that.

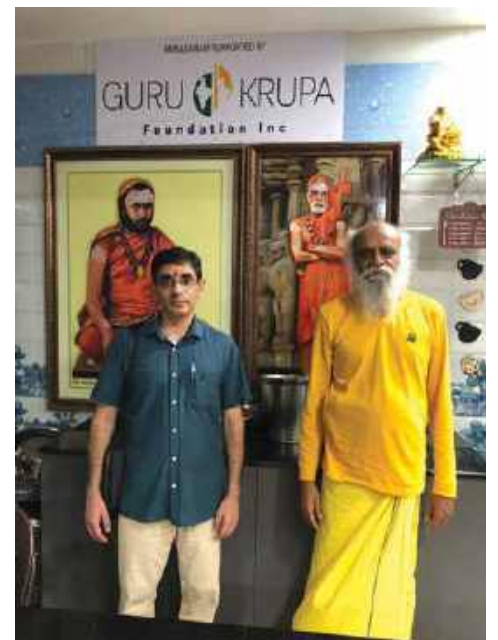
Q You have supported Hinduism-linked institutions as well as secular ones. How do you view Hindutva?

A My interpretation of Hindutva is perhaps more middle-of-the-road. The Sanskrit word means "the quality of being Hindu" - which could be interpreted as referring to the cultural and spiritual practices that are associated with Hinduism, and which form the roots of the Hindu religion. These days, unfortunately, there is a tendency among Indian origin youth to discard our roots because it's not cool in modern life, especially when they are outside India.

America is the most powerful country in the world, and people from all over want to come here. America is a potpourri of cultures from all over, and we, as Americans, have also evolved an American culture that is an amalgamation of several cultures.

However, there is no reason for us to discard our roots and the long lineage we come from - American culture can co-exist with them.

We should be proud of our lineage and should preserve our traditions. There is value in our traditions. It has good principles, such as "live and let live", "look out for others and be of service to them", "expand your priorities to much more than materialistic acquisitions", and so on. Each one of us exists on earth for only a few decades, and



Mukund Padmanabhan visiting (clockwise from top left) Seva Chakkara Samajam, an orphanage; Sri Poorna Mahameru Trust, an old age home; and Anandam, which provides supplementary education to children - all in Chennai.

we have no idea what happens afterward. What is certain is that we cannot take our materialistic acquisitions with us, so let that not be the sole focus of our life on earth.

As much as Hindutva seeks to preserve these ideas and values, there is certainly a place for it, especially in Hindustan, which, as the name suggests, is the home of the Hindus.

“ The fact is that most recent material advancements have happened in the West. The success of Indian-origin people on the global stage today is because they have accepted these advancements, worked hard to build on them, and contributed to advancing the state of the field. That is how you make progress and do well in society ”



Mukund Padmanabhan indulging in his pastime pleasure of reading.

Q But isn't the pendulum swinging back? People like you who have done well in America are proud of their Indian identity. The Indian diaspora everywhere has flourished, and people are seeking meaning in their roots and taking pride in their traditions.

A These days, there are many examples of Indian accomplishments. Just think: Sundar Pichai, the CEO of the biggest search company on earth, is an Indian. Incidentally, he is also an IIT Kharagpur graduate - just saying. We are proud of many people like him who came from India and have succeeded here. But we should not forget where we came from.

You don't discard your grandparents, right? They give you so much love when you are young, you thrive with their attention and their love. Our heritage is grandparents raised to the power of n. We want to make

sure that our knowledge base and our traditions are preserved. But at the same time, you have to be practical. You can't sit in an ashram and meditate or live on past glories and hope to survive.

We have to compete on the global stage today as well. So, you must keep one foot here and one foot there. So that is what I do.

Q Indian civilization is many millennia old. Has that background contributed to the success of Indians abroad?

A Yes, I believe it has. The main reason is the emphasis that Indian civilization places on learning and education. You have to study - your parents force you to do it. If you value education, the doors to success will open. It doesn't mean you get success, but the doors open.

(Continued on page 46>>)



(←Continued from page 45)

Our civilization also emphasizes the value of humility, hard work and ethics - all these attitudes have contributed to our success on the global stage. Notwithstanding the many stories that are out there about the phenomenal feats and advancements of ancient India, they are not quite relevant today. The fact is that most recent material advancements have happened in the West. The success of Indian-origin people on the global stage today is because they have accepted these advancements, worked hard to build on them, and contributed to advancing the state of the field. That is how you make progress and do well in society.

Q You have many patents and technical papers to your credit...

A Patents I earned are in a variety of areas. I used to work at IBM's TJ Watson Research Center in Yorktown Heights, Westchester, NY. My area of work was speech recognition - developing various algorithms to convert speech to text. My patents are mostly related to that area, but they do span sub-fields or

different types of methods to get the job done.

Big royalties? No. If you are working for a company and you file for a patent, the company owns the patent and gets the royalties.

The papers are based on my PhD research in circuits and signal processing and proceed to speech recognition, which I was working on at IBM. Signal processing involves techniques and methods that remove noise from a signal, such as wireless signals received and sent on your phone. Speech recognition involves the computer (or phone) automatically transcribing your speech into text.

Q Any pastimes?

A I enjoy reading books in various genres, including fantasy, adventure, science fiction, and humor. I am also learning Sanskrit, taking a weekend online class conducted by



Mukund Padmanabhan received the Professional Achievement award from UCLA in 2019.



Mukund being honored at Flushing Town Hall gala in 2022.

a teacher at Samskrita Bharati, a charity I support. I watch movies and enjoy listening to music, especially Hindi film music, not necessarily classical.

Q But through GKF you have supported classical music and Indian arts.

A Yes, culture is one of our focus areas. So, what if I have no talent whatsoever in arts and music - I still enjoy them. If arts and culture decay and are forgotten, life may go on, but as they say, all the things worth living for would be gone. Hence, we would like to ensure that our cultural concepts are preserved and that people are given an incentive to develop them and remember them. But in a multicultural society, we have to coexist

with others. So, we should make other ethnic groups aware of our culture and heritage by portraying it well. Hence, we fund the celebration of festivals such as Diwali and Holi (at Flushing Town Hall and Long Island Children's Museum), attended and enjoyed by many non-Indians. Even some platforms for classical arts in India suffer from a lack of funding, so we support them, too.



Parveen Chopra feels blessed compiling this Organization of the Year 2024 cover feature and thanks GKF founder Mukund Padmanabhan for helping in its production and making necessary pictures and other material freely available. Parveen has started his own nonprofit, ALotusInTheMud.com, a web magazine focused on wellness and spiritual content for all.

A Tribute from Mrs Malti Shah & Mr HK Shah to Guru Krupa Foundation

On behalf of World Vegan Vision, Mrs. Malti Shah and Mr. H.K. Shah, the esteemed Founder and Chairman, proudly congratulate the Guru Krupa Foundation (GKF) and its founder, the extraordinary Mukund Padmanabhan ji, for being honored as the Organization of the Year 2024 by the prestigious The South Asian Times.

This accolade highlights GKF's steadfast commitment to uplifting society through transformative efforts in education, social welfare, and cultural preservation. Mukund Padmanabhan ji's humility and visionary leadership inspire us all, showcasing the profound impact of compassion-driven philanthropy.

On behalf of World Vegan Vision, we deeply value our association with Guru Krupa Foundation and commend its noble mission of serving underprivileged communities with dedication and purpose.

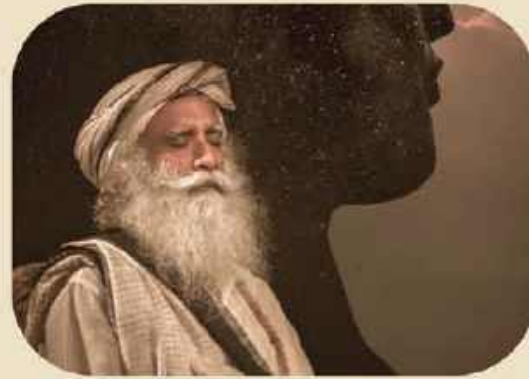




The Best of Lotus Blooming in 2024

Sadhguru decodes spirituality, mortality, & intensity to share lifetech.

Exclusive interview with the contemporary master



Sophie Gregoire Trudeau shares insights on wellness, self-growth and life purpose.

Chat with the ex-First Lady of Canada



In praise of India's civilizational contribution to the world

Vishwabandhu to Vishwaguru: Deep Dive



Satvic Revolution – Ancient wisdom for health & happiness today

Profiling a fast-growing movement



ALotusInTheMud.com

Web Magazine for a Happy, Healthy, and Peaceful You.

To give a tax-deductible donation to help Lotus reach the wider world, contact Founding Editor Parveen Chopra: +1 516 710 0508, or lotus4usa@gmail.com

Happy New Year!



Congratulations and Commendations

Welcoming The South Asian Times' recognition of Guru Krupa Foundation as the Organization of the Year 2024, messages pour in from charities and organizations it supports in India and the US, as well as admirers of GKF and its low-profile founder, Mukund Padmanabhan.

CRY America

Patrick Bocco

Director of Fundraising, CRY (Child Rights And You) America Inc., Braintree, MA

On behalf of CRY's children, we are grateful to Mukund Padmanabhan and the Guru Krupa Foundation for their generous annual donations to Child Rights and You (CRY) America directed towards funding the project Rural Workers Development Society (RWDS) working in 52 villages in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu. RWDS works to reduce child labor and ensure access to schools for underserved children.



Patrick Bocco of CRY America with Project RWDS children in Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu, in 2022.

Mukund is a true Child Rights Champion. His unwavering support to CRY America has impacted thousands of underprivileged children and his ongoing generosity inspires the CRY Staff.

Srijan Dance Center

Abha Bhatnagar Roy

Director, Srijan Dance Centre, NY



Srijan Dance Center is grateful to the Guru Krupa Foundation and Shri Mukund Padmanabhan. His vision and continuous support have given a splendid opportunity to not only the South Asians but all communities. His insights in helping to understand

the importance of Indian culture and its Vedic aspect are remarkable. The foundation's significant contribution to shaping people's lives to bring peace and harmony around us is truly appreciable.

Due to GKF support, school children are introduced to Indian culture very early through Indian



GKF helps Srijan Dance Center introduce school children to Indian culture.

classical dance, folk dances, theatre, and Indian literature. They understand the importance of Indian festivals, which bring families together. It not only helps with overall personality development but also enables children to share thoughts and expressions required to be happy individuals.

Mohan Wanchoo

Chairman, ECI MW Holding Co, Inc, NY Philanthropist



I have known Mukund Padmanabhan ji for over a decade. When I think about him, simple living and high thinking are the qualities that first come to mind.

He has had a very successful career, and a heart of gold when it comes to philanthropy. His benevolent spirit is universal, and his thoughtful mind always seeks to do dharma in every aspect of life.

Mukund ji is an exemplary role model for many. His altruism, channeled through the Guru Krupa Foundation, is helping to make our world a better place, one good deed at a time. Be it Ekal Vidyalaya, Sankara Eye Foundation, his alma mater UCLA, or a myriad of charities in India and America, he has always been the first to open his big heart and support their efforts unequivocally. His love for children and opening vistas of opportunities for underprivileged children can be matched by only a few. Despite doing and accomplishing so much, he is humble and soft-spoken with a mild demeanor.

I commend The South Asian Times for recognizing the Guru Krupa Foundation as the Organization of the Year 2024. Thus, you have honored Mukund ji, a self-effacing man. You have raised the bar, challenging him and others to do more to help humanity.

The world needs many more Mukund Padmanabhans!

Hindu Temple Society of North America



Dr. Uma Mysorekar

President, Hindu Temple Society of North America (Ganesh Temple) Flushing, NY

It is an honor and a privilege to write about Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan. He is a dedicated and

generous devotee of the Ganesh Temple and has served on its Board of Trustees.

Mr. Padmanabhan established the Guru Krupa Foundation in 2008 to help the needy and the less fortunate. The foundation does a remarkable service to humanity by supporting social welfare, spirituality, arts and culture, and education in the US and India.

On behalf of The Hindu Temple Society of North America and my own, I congratulate Mr. Padmanabhan for this well-deserved recognition. I wish him continued success in his goals to serve the needy in the US and India.

Long Island Children's Museum

Robert Lemle

Co-founder and Trustee Long Island Children's Museum, Garden City, NY

I'm thrilled to congratulate Mukund Padmanabhan and the Guru Krupa Foundation (GKF) on being recognized as Organization of the Year by The South Asian Times. For those of us at Long Island Children's Museum (LICM), Mukund has been more than just a supporter — he's been a true partner.

Before GKF got involved, Mukund took the time to get to know us. He met with our staff

and trustees, asking thoughtful questions and learning about our decision-making process, which brings our values to life. His genuine curiosity and dedication were clear from the start.

When Mukund joined our Board of Trustees, he brought insight and wisdom that strengthened our work. His contributions have been invaluable, and we are deeply grateful for his and GKF's ongoing commitment to our mission and the community.

I'm proud to call Mukund a friend and celebrate this well-deserved recognition!



Westbury STEM Partnership students and families with LICM President Erika S. Floreska (extreme right) and GKF's Mukund Padmanabhan. The project provides STEM resources to all first through third-grade students and K-12 special education students in the Westbury School District.

Maureen P. Mangan, LICM's Director of Communications & Marketing, adds:

Guided by the vision of Mukund Padmanabhan to nurture a love of learning, GKF supports many of our key community initiatives, including:

- **Westbury STEM Partnership:** Providing STEM resources to all first through third-grade students and K-12 special education students in the Westbury School District, teacher workshops, and classroom enrichment materials.

- **Together to Kindergarten:** Helping families new to the US public education system prepare their children for kindergarten, guiding preschoolers and their grownups through this important transition.

- **Cultural Festivals:** Supporting LICM's Holi festival, which celebrates diversity and connects cultures by introducing visitors to the festival of colors.

We are grateful for GKF's support and positive impact on our community.

Happy New Year 2025!

Heartiest congratulations to

GURU KRUPA FOUNDATION
AND
SHRI MUKUND PADMANABHAN

*for achieving the well-deserved and
distinguished recognition as*

The South Asian Times
excellence in journalism



With Best Compliments:

**KANCHANA &
JAGADEESAN POOLA**



Congratulations and Commendations

Welcoming The South Asian Times' recognition of Guru Krupa Foundation as the Organization of the Year 2024, messages pour in from charities and organizations it supports in India and the US, as well as admirers of GKF and its low-profile founder, Mukund Padmanabhan.

Social Welfare / Kids Education - USA

Literacy Nassau

Karen Micciche

Executive Director, Literacy Nassau, Wantagh, NY

Since 2012, I have been privileged to be part of Mr Mukund Padmanabhan's and the Guru Krupa Foundation's orbit. What started as a simple response to an article in a local newspaper has blossomed into an incredible partnership spanning over a decade.

GKF has generously funded our Tutor Training Workshops, a robust internship program for adult English Language Learners, the construction of our indoor and outdoor



Mukund Padmanabhan with Karen Micciche at Literacy Nassau's Outdoor Pavilion built with support from GKF.

learning spaces, and a Saturday English Immersion class for immigrant children.

Mr Padmanabhan's commitment to improving society is unparalleled, and like a raindrop in the ocean, its ripple effect reaches far and wide. Through GKF, this unassuming, gentle introvert has touched the lives of thousands of people worldwide. I can think of no one more deserving of this prestigious honor from The South Asian Times.

St. Nicks Alliance

Debra Sue Lorenzen

Director of Youth and Education, St. Nicks Alliance, Brooklyn, NY

Under the leadership and vision of Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan, the Guru Krupa Foundation has generously supported St. Nicks Alliance's BK Story Voyager (BKSVM) since 2019. This unique mobile library and learning center is the flagship of St. Nicks Alliance's School Success model, designed to improve literacy across North Brooklyn.



Our partnership with GKF ensures the BKSVM is on the road year-round, reaching thousands of children during school days, after school,

and community events. With GKF's stellar support, the BKSVM has gifted over 20,000 books to children's home libraries, built an impressive culturally responsive lending collection, and led direct small group instruction for young readers.

Simons Laufer Mathematical Sciences Institute

Tatiana Toro

Director of SLMath & Professor of Mathematics, University of Washington Seattle, WA

The Guru Krupa Foundation has been an invaluable partner to the Simons Laufer Mathematical Sciences Institute (SLMath) in providing children in low-income communities around the US with storybooks with fun and engaging math-



SLMath provides children in low-income communities with storybooks with fun and engaging mathematical themes.

ematical themes. With their caring and generous support, our Mathical Collection Development Awards with School Library Journal have reached 60,000 students at 100 Title I schools since 2023.

We are grateful to GKF for their leadership in making a difference in the lives of young people by encouraging a lifelong appreciation of mathematics in the world around them.

Brooklyn Book Bodega

Rebecca Cohen

Executive Director & Co-founder, Brooklyn Book Bodega, NY

Brooklyn Book Bodega's mission is to increase the number of 100+ book homes for kids 0-18 in NYC because reading is transformative. Research shows the impact of book access on their educational outcomes (they stay in school longer), financial attainment (they have more earning power as adults), and overall health (their socio-emotional health is stronger).

Since 2023, the Guru Krupa Foundation and Mukund Padmanabhan have been pivotal in our ability to host programming and increase book access in NYC. With



their partnership and generous support, we have hosted two cornerstone programs this year: our monthly Community Days, open to all New Yorkers, and our caregiver program, which gives low-income families the educational resources they need to develop a book culture at home.

We thank Mukund for recognizing that improving access to books and reading can improve life outcomes, create a passion for learning, and break intergenerational poverty cycles.

Reach Out & Read of Greater NY

Megan Foehr

Senior Development Manager, Institutional Giving Reach Out & Read of Greater NY, New York

Guru Krupa Foundation's generous support of Reach Out & Read of Greater New York's (ROR GNY) Building Connections Begins at Birth (BCBB) program has made a mean-

ingful impact on NYC families. By providing foundational support, GKF has helped new families establish important routines around reading to newborns.

The BCBB program provides free, bilingual, culturally reflective children's books and evidence-based literacy guidance during early pediatric visits. Shared reading in the early years is clinically shown to have

a lasting impact beyond language and early literacy; these moments nourish healthy family bonds that positively impact a child's long-term health outcomes.

GKF's support has enabled ROR GNY to expand our services, bringing the BCBB program to more families across the region - with GKF directly supporting nearly 20,000 children. Through GKF's partnership, we are making a difference where it matters most: at the beginning of every child's story.

City Parks Foundation

Cameron K. Robello

Director, Institutional Giving City Parks Foundation, New York

City Parks Foundation is grateful for Guru Krupa Foundation's support of our Coastal Classroom program in 2024. Thanks to their generosity, over 150 young environ-

mental stewards learned about the importance of their local marine ecosystems with hands-on learning in NYC waterways.

Coastal Classroom helps young explorers investigate their urban waterfronts, learn about environmental science and help develop them as the next generation of

marine and environmental scientists. Guru Krupa's commitment has helped us provide year-round instruction to middle school youth across New York City.

We congratulate the Guru Krupa Foundation on their well-deserved recognition as The South Asian Times' Organization of the Year 2024.

Start Lighthouse

Rina Madhani

Co-Founder & Executive Director, Start Lighthouse Bronx, NY

Guru Krupa Foundation has been a vital supporter of Start Lighthouse since 2023. Their generosity has had a transformative impact on our work. Thanks to their support, we opened our third Literacy Hub at PS 161, providing students with multicultural books that celebrate their identities and introduce them to new perspectives. These resources help build home libraries while fos-



tering a love for reading that resonates within families and creates lifelong connections to literacy.

What sets GKF apart is their commitment to creating real, lasting change. Their belief in the power of education has allowed us to expand our reach and deepen our impact within underserved communities. We're grateful for their partnership and the brighter future they're helping us build for our students.

**Wishing you all a
Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year!**

Heartiest Congratulations to

GURU KRUPA FOUNDATION

On being honored as

The South Asian Times
excellence in journalism



With Best Compliments

ANKUR SHAH, CEO



Velocity Pharma LLC., 20 Broadhollow Road, Suite 3011, Melville, NY 11747

www.velocitypharma.com



Congratulations and Commendations

Welcoming The South Asian Times' recognition of Guru Krupa Foundation as the Organization of the Year 2024, messages pour in from charities and organizations it supports in India and the US, as well as admirers of GKF and its low-profile founder, Mukund Padmanabhan.

Social Welfare & Education - India

India Literacy Project



A.L. Rangarajan

Country Manager
India Literacy Project
Chennai

The Guru Krupa Foundation is dedicated to enhancing educational opportunities for children in India. Through a strategic partnership with India Literacy Project (ILP), GKF has significantly impacted thousands of students.

GKF has funded two key ILP initiatives over the past three years:

- **Multi-Dimensional Learning Space (MDLS) Program:** This unique learning framework focuses on reading, experiential science, and social sciences, benefiting over 10,000 students in 27 schools.
- **Hands-on Science and Electronics Education:** In collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology - Madras (IITM), ILP has brought cutting-edge science and technology to 24,000 students in 18 schools. Students are equipped with innovative science and electronics kits to foster scientific thinking and spark innovation.

GKF's partnership with ILP has ensured that ILP improves learning in government schools and prepares students for the future workforce.

ANEW

Sangeetha Alwin

General Manager -
Operations, ANEW, Chennai

Since 1997, ANEW (Association for Non-Traditional Employment for Women) has been a skill-building NGO that empowers less-privileged women. We train and place nearly 1,000 women annually and remain steadfast in our mission: "Educate a woman, empower a family."

Our beneficiaries come from challenging economic backgrounds, often daughters of daily wage earners. These women aspire to improve their lives and lift their families from poverty. With GKF's consistent support, ANEW has provided 350 women with basic IT skills and 150 women with Tally (computerized accounting) training. Today, many of these women are employed in respectable roles such as Admin, HR, and Accounts Executives. Financial independence has not only improved their standard of living but also positively impacted their families and communities.

Grassroots India

Debra A. Pennington

President, Grassroots India
Cuttack, Odisha

Grassroots India works to empower young girls from rural Odisha. We run Hariharanda Vocational Training Center, a residential school for underprivileged girls aged 17-28, and W.I.S.H. Network (Women's Independent Self-Help). Guru Krupa Foundation has consistently

contributed to free housing, food, training, and medical care for hundreds of our girls.

Mukund Padmanabhan's keen listening, asking tough questions, and desire to help have made a strong impression on us. Under him, GKF operates highly professionally, following accounting, law, and reporting processes. However, Sri Padmanabhan's loving attitude, a true reflection of their organization's name, is the most memorable.

Bala Mandir

P. Natarajan

Trustee and Hon. Treasurer
Bala Mandir Kamaraj Trust
Chennai

Congratulations to the Guru Krupa Foundation on being recognized as the Organization of the Year by The South Asian Times newspaper.

We are a 75-year-old organization caring for children facing difficult circumstances. Grants from GKF for the past four years have enabled us to provide nutritious meals and educational aids for 400 children in the school we



Mukund Padmanabhan visited Bala Mandir.

set up. These children are from economically underprivileged families as well as orphans and destitute from Bala Mandir.

Guru Krupa is keen on reviewing and guiding our work. They have encouraged Bala Mandir to adopt some of the best communication practices, including starting a blog on our website.

Yoga Gives Back

Kayoko Mitsumatsu

Founder & Executive Director
Yoga Gives Back, Los Angeles, CA

In 2020, as a nonprofit organization seeking funds to empower underserved populations in India, we applied for the Guru Krupa Foundation's grant to support 50 underserved girls in rural India to live in a safe group home with a solid education. We were inspired to learn the diversity and scale of programs the foundation funds with generous grants in India and the USA rooted in the founder's spirituality to serve the underserved and less fortunate.

At Yoga Gives Back, we are grateful for Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan's unwavering commitment to our mission and his generosity in supporting 140 disadvantaged youths in India to achieve college degrees in 2025. GKF deserves the highest humanitarian recognition for its profound impact in today's world, creating a more just and even playing field for all.

RKM Vivekananda Girls Higher Secondary School

Swami Shashishikhananda

Secretary, RKM Vivekananda
Girls School, Chennai

We at Sri Ramakrishna Math Vivekananda Centenary Girls Higher Secondary School thank The South Asian Times and its team for recognizing the Guru Krupa Foundation, which reaches out and helps hundreds and thousands of underprivileged persons.

I am proud of our association with GKF. The foundation sponsors nutritious meals for our 780 students,



which has helped their all-round development and focus in studies. GKF also covers teachers' salaries in subjects like Computer Science, Mathematics and English. This allows us to focus on improving our quality of education. The state government gave us the "Girl Friendly School" Award, and we are acknowledged as a model school in our area.

When Sri Mukund Padmanabhan visited some time ago, our school staff and students thanked him. It was a blissful moment for us.

Sevalaya

V. Muralidharan

Founder & Managing Director
Sevalaya, Chennai, India

Sevalaya provides free education to underprivileged children. We have received grants from the Guru Krupa Foundation every year since 2016. We utilized the funds to provide school uniforms to over 2,000 students.

For the past four years, GKF has also extended support for Sevalaya's skill development courses,



Mukund Padmanabhan and GKF adviser S. Madhavan (top right) visited Sevalaya.

es, free to underprivileged rural youth, including school dropouts. These courses

have helped over 500 youths get free training in computers and tailoring. Over 80% of our trainees are gainfully employed, earning the much-needed income to support their families. Now, GKF is also supporting a course to train beauticians.

Interestingly, the funds directed toward uniforms indirectly provided a channel of earning for the tailoring unit students.

Ramakrishna Mission Students Home

Swami Dharmisthananda

Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission
Students Home, Chennai

Guru Krupa Foundation has given Ramakrishna Mission Students Home Residential High School grants for five years to meet staff salaries.

We have 14 teachers and other staff. We educate orphaned and poor students with free food and accommoda-

tion in the gurukula tradition. Most of them are first-generation learners. They come from various parts of Tamil Nadu, belonging to different castes, creeds, and religions.

GKF grants are crucial for us. We thank Sri Mukund Padmanabhan and his team at the foundation for their continuous and magnanimous support of the education of poor and orphaned students.

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2025

Heartiest congratulations to
GURU KRUPA FOUNDATION

On being honored as

The South Asian Times
excellence in journalism



With Best Compliments

Nirmala and Surinder Rametra

Chairman and Founder

Shanti Foundation

USA & India



Congratulations and Commendations

Welcoming The South Asian Times' recognition of Guru Krupa Foundation as the Organization of the Year 2024, messages pour in from charities and organizations it supports in India and the US, as well as admirers of GKF and its low-profile founder, Mukund Padmanabhan.

Rakesh Bhargava

Managing Partner, MangoTree Real Estate Holdings President, World Vegan Vision NY

It fills me with immense joy to congratulate the Guru Krupa Foundation (GKF), founded by the visionary Mukund Padmanabhan, on being recognized as the Organization of the Year 2024 by The South Asian Times. This well-deserved honor is a testament to the foundation's unwavering commit-



ment to uplifting society and creating a lasting impact.

Through its exemplary initiatives, GKF has transformed countless lives, fostering education, healthcare, and cultural preservation. The foundation's dedication to serving underprivileged communities with humility and purpose embodies the spirit of selfless service and inspires us all.

Mukund Padmanabhan is exceptionally modest and humble; meeting him, one would scarcely believe the incredible feats he has accomplished in life. His leadership exemplifies how compassion and strategic philanthropy can unite to make a profound difference. We deeply value and respect our association with GKF and are proud to support its noble mission. May GKF continue to be a beacon of hope and positivity, elevating society with its remarkable contributions.

Sanskrita Bharati USA

Sri Natesa Janakiraman

President, Sanskrita Bharati USA Santa Clara, CA

Sanskrita Bharati USA is a non-profit organization teaching and promoting Sanskrit language in the USA for over 25 years. Many young and old people take SBUSA's classes nationwide, conducted in-person and online. SBUSA also runs a 3-year accredited online program -- Samskritam As a For-

eign Language (SAFL) -- for 8-12 grade students.

Guru Krupa Foundation's grants for the past 10+ years have supported SBUSA activities like family camps, lectures, concerts, workshops, souvenirs, publication of textbooks for SAFL students, books for children, and purchase and upkeep of its office building in Aldie, VA.

We are grateful to GKF and Sri Mukund Padmanabhan for helping Sanskrita Bharati USA in its mission to promote Sanskrit as an everyday language and provide access to its rich knowledge repository.

S. Madhavan

Former CEO, Cognizant Foundation India, Chennai

I met Mukund Padmanabhan during my 2021 visit to the US and have cherished our friendship ever since.

As the CEO of Cognizant Foundation (the CSR arm of the global IT major - Cognizant Technology Solutions), I worked with and supported many NGOs. My close interactions with some of them - whose work I admired and respected - prompted me to refer them to Mukund. He accepted my assistance, and the Guru Krupa Foundation has since provided substantial recurring grants to



credible and deserving NGOs in Tamil Nadu.

Mukund Padmanabhan is a simple and unassuming person. He has a genuine concern for the

underprivileged and a sincere desire to help the needy and the deserving. He is very methodical and meticulous, whether he evaluates proposals at the application stage or reviews the progress of projects in the field. I have accompanied him on some of these project review visits in India. His interactions with beneficiary organizations dur-

ing these visits - offering them thoughtful advice and helpful suggestions - reflect his mindset, which identifies himself and the Guru Krupa Foundation as Partners (and not just as donors) to the beneficiary organizations in their mission to serve the society.

I am delighted that the Guru Krupa Foundation has been chosen as The South Asian Times' Organization of the Year 2024. I extend my heartiest congratulations to Mukund Padmanabhan and Team Guru Krupa on this well-deserved recognition for their exemplary work in the USA and India.

Care Earth Trust

Jayshree Vencatesan

Managing Trustee Care Earth Trust, Chennai

Our mission is 'Biodiversity. People. Conservation.' Our pioneering projects have earned us the Indira Gandhi Paryavaran Puraskaar.

GKF has supported two of our projects: a shallow wetland called

Arasankazhani Anaicut Thangal near Chennai, and a bird sanctuary, Therthan in Ramanathapuram.

These remotely located projects need to work with the local government. The threat of an erratic monsoon and missing deadlines also looms. Mukund Padmanabhan factored these into project monitoring. He supports small yet significant pro-

jects, visits the project sites and does not impose his agenda. His interaction with CET's Das Anna is a cherished memory.

Sri Padmanabhan is a quintessential Chennaite. He has top academic credentials and a career dotted with achievements of global impact. Yet, he remains a simple, unassuming, and grounded individual determined to do good to others.

Wiki Education

Kathleen Crowley

Director of Donor Relations Wiki Education, Chico, CA

It has been an absolute pleasure collaborating with Mukund Padmanabhan to bring Wikipedia editing to college classrooms across the US. Since 2022, the Guru Krupa Foundation has generously supported Wiki Education's Communicating Science initiative. This initiative aims to update and expand the amount of high-quality information in Wikipedia articles covering STEM subjects.



To date, the Guru Krupa Foundation has enabled 2,350 students to learn how to assess existing research, identify what's missing, and write in a way that is accessible to the public reading Wikipedia worldwide.

Mukund's dedication to growing young people's interest in STEM will help ensure that our future in science, technology, engineering, and math looks bright. I'm thankful for Mukund's friendship and thrilled to deepen our partnership to create, acquire, and preserve knowledge for all.

Sri Poorna Mahameru Trust

Sesshadri Srinivasan

Managing Trustee, Sri Poorna Mahameru Trust, Chennai



Mukund Padmanabhan visited Sri Poorna Mahameru Trust project - here seen with Guruprasad (extreme right), Kartik and Sri Sesshadri.

Since 2016, the Guru Krupa Foundation has been a vital supporter of our initiatives, such as renovating our elder home and launching a free food distribution van.

We admire GKF's transparent functioning, led by Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan. They do their due diligence while respecting our autonomy, which speaks to their trust in us and their strong values.

Congratulations to GKF on being named The South Asian Times - Organization of the Year 2024.

Women's Organization for Rural Development

Sivakamavalli Muniyandi

Director, Women's Organization for Rural Development Namakkal District, Tamil Nadu

Women's Organization for Rural Development (WORD) is a 33-year-old organization in Namakkal District, Tamil Nadu, dedicated to empowering women. Since 2019, WORD has been supported by grants from the Guru Krupa Foundation. The organization runs tailoring skill development centers and a garment production unit, empowering women to achieve financial independence.

Key achievements include 600 women empowered, providing them with valuable skills.

- 32% work in textile industries, 49% take home orders, 19% are self-employed.

- They earn from ₹1,20,000 to ₹1,36,000 in a year.

Mrs. S. Gowthami, 31, from Namakkal, exemplifies WORD's success. Thanks to GKF, she learned tailoring skills and secured orders from OTP Tex, boosting her income and confidence. She uses her earnings to educate her girls.

GKF's support has created a ripple effect, demonstrating how empowering women can positively change their lives and communities.

Happy New Year

Very warm and heartiest congratulations to

GURU KRUPA FOUNDATION

AND

Mr. Mukund Padmanabhan

On being honored as

The South Asian Times

excellence in journalism

**Organization
of the
Year 2024**



Let this well-deserved recognition ignite inspiration and drive in every member of the Guru Krupa Foundation, fueling their dedication to continue their extraordinary work, spreading light and hope to countless lives.

With Best Compliments & Warmest Wishes for an Amazing 2025

Nimmi & Kamlesh C. Mehta

J.P. Morgan congratulates

The Guru Krupa Foundation

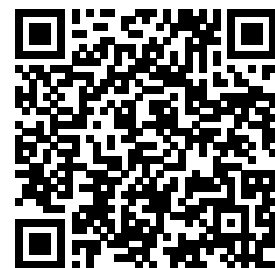
on being named “Organization of the Year” by *The South Asian Times*

This prestigious award is a testament to dedication, commitment and achievement over time. And for almost two decades, the Guru Krupa Foundation (GKF), founded by Mukund Padmanabhan, has helped scores of institutions and charities in the United States and India improve thousands of lives, partnering with reputable organizations and NGOs to effect positive change. We join *The South Asian Times* and those who work for a safer and more prosperous world in celebrating GKF’s “Organization of the Year” award and all that it symbolizes.

Corinne Maloney

Managing Director

corinne.e.maloney@jpmorgan.com



CONNECT WITH US

J.P.Morgan PRIVATE BANK

INVESTMENT PRODUCTS: • NOT FDIC INSURED • NO BANK GUARANTEE • MAY LOSE VALUE