

Ashiyanaa, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, provides culturally-competent support to South Asians in the DC metro area. Founded in 1989 as ASHA for Women to help women and children impacted by interpersonal violence (also known as domestic violence), our services and programs have expanded over the years. We now serve South Asians inclusive of all ages and gender, with origins in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Our culturally-sensitive support is provided in multiple South Asian languages.





## Mission

Empowering South Asians to lead peaceful lives with dignity, hope and self-sufficiency by providing comprehensive and culturally-sensitive services.

## Vision

To create culturally-sensitive pathways to empower individuals and families in the South Asian community.

## Values

Enshrined in the word HOME - Hope, Open-mindedness, eMpowerment, Equality.

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## Message from the Board



### Dear Friends

The roots of Ashiyanaa go back many years. Six compassionate women professionals sowed the seeds that established the mission in 1989 to help women and children impacted by interpersonal violence. 'South Asian' was not part of the lexicon then, but there was the natural feeling that we, the people with origins in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, were one. We expanded, last year, to include Afghanistan in our Ashiyanaa family.

South Asians may talk differently, dress differently, follow different faiths, enjoy different cuisines, yet incredibly, understand and respect each other. Unique cultural almost familial threads bind us. We are 'family people'. Inter-generational discord may take place in homes, changing life patterns may usher in a new set of stresses, but we stay bonded.

What's important to note though: we are all individuals within the family.

#### Concern for the Family and the Individual

We were made aware of the conflict between family and individual as we dealt with interpersonal violence (also known as domestic violence). The needs of each survivor were different. The impact on each child from a disturbed home never followed the same pattern. In 2020 we began to support the upper strata of the family hierarchy, senior women and men and also their caregivers. And now, completing the multi-generational picture, we are working to reach out to young adults and adolescents.

Our mission is to empower all South Asians, without bias, in a nuanced, effective, and non-judgmental way.

What are we dealing with? Issues of abuse, neglect, and abandonment. Depression, isolation, deprivation, and exploitation. Dating violence and insecurity. Cultural challenges and displacement.

#### Our Light is Always On

Let's take heart, in the darkest of dark situations, we find it is possible to kindle HOPE! We are able to empower people to reconstruct their lives.

In all this, Ashiyanaa has certainly not gone it alone. Our way has been to build bridges, starting with individuals, families and community, and fanning out to the greater, hugely supportive universe we are so glad to be part of.



## **Services & Programs**

#### IN TOTAL CONFIDENTIALITY

Toll-free helpline 888-417-2742 offers a safe and secure connection direct to the client services coordinator. Help can also be reached through our website www.ashiyanaa.org. Services are offered in total confidentiality.

### Interpersonal Violence

Case management and coordination, assistance in crisis situations, safety evaluation and plan of action, help to access legal and health services, empowerment to achieve self-sufficiency through career planning, therapeutic counseling and more.

### For Seniors and their Caregivers

Information guidance, help in accessing senior resources, benefits and services, community socialization, interaction to reduce isolation, support to caregivers in meeting caregiving challenges.

### For Children and Youth

Helping them with the stresses of living between two cultures. Issues addressed: discrimination and bias, acculturation, model minority stereotype, estrangement with family or community, alienation, depression.

#### Awareness and Prevention

Outreach across communities to stimulate healthy relationships, cultural competency training to first responders and social agencies, awareness and prevention education at South Asian community forums, promoting better understanding of South Asian culture through social media and via community ambassadors, interaction and collaboration with peer groups within the social sector.

### Partnerships & Collaborations

Building partnerships and collaborations with State and County Government Organizations, community based and faith based organizations, educational institutions, and social services organizations to better serve all our clients.





## **Building Bridges**



### What sets Ashiyanaa apart?

Cultural competency and the ability to relate to the clients we serve. We speak multiple South Asian languages and understand the culture(s), religion(s), and family dynamics. This knowledge and awareness enable us to provide person-centered and culturally sensitive services to address a client's needs, goals and preferences.

Over the year 2022 we explored all opportunities to make a difference in the minds of diverse groups that form the construct of our society, building bridges everywhere.

### Responding to the Afghan Humanitarian Crisis

With scores of refugees arriving from Afghanistan in the United States in February 2022, we worked with the local counties and organizations to help rehabilitate the Afghan community. We teamed up with Women for Afghan Women (WAW), Immigrant and Refugee Outreach Center (IROC) and other social organizations to access resources for essentials like housing, schooling, health care, and analyzing their judicial status. In addition, we campaigned for support for the families at various forums.

### Calling for a Nuanced Approach to Children

The lives of most South Asian children are profoundly influenced by a code of family values and public behavior and the multi-generation family structure. We teamed up with Project PEACE (Partnering to End Abuse in the Community for Everyone) to train childcare providers about psychosocial nuances of interpersonal violence. We provided cultural competency training to the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for children and the Children's National Hospital DC (CNH-DC).

# Raising Awareness of Social Inequities and Violence in Young Minds

We had opportunities to impact young adult minds, first at the North American Model United Nations (NAIMUN) with a talk on the intersectionality of social identity, status and systems and interpersonal violence, followed by awareness training on interpersonal and dating violence at Verona High School. The response was significant - Ashiyanaa received calls for support from young adults in an individual capacity.

## **Building Bridges**



### Watching Out for the Well-being of Seniors

Ashiyanaa explored and assessed facilities within and outside the community for the healthcare and socializing of our seniors such as Aastha, a daycare center that holds engaging activities for seniors, Home Well Cares, a resource for home care on demand and American Muslim Senior Society (AMSS). We also worked with therapists, and referred and coordinated services with county departments.

# Organizing an Empowerment Network for IPV Survivors

Several Memorandums of Understanding were signed. With Literacy Council of Northern Virginia for educational support, Emma's Torch for culinary skills training, Escala who give training and help to small businesses, Financial Empowerment Center who help families move towards financial security. Our mission and services were introduced to Career Catchers and Upwardly Global, enlisting support for job placement and career counselling for our IPV clients.

### Taking the Conversation to Powerful Forums

Our voice found a receptive audience at the World Bank Panel Discussion on NGOs where Ashiyanaa was a panel member. Later we were invited by the World Bank to officiate as the keynote speaker at their official annual gathering. Brown Advisory, who are financial advisors and believe in community engagement, reached out to us to sensitize them about South Asian cultural dynamics.

### Opening Dialogs within the Community

The South Asian community is diverse with many associations, many cultural centers and houses of different faiths. Ashiyanaa used several community events and gatherings to start dialogs and raise awareness on Interpersonal Violence, help in cross generational understanding and harmony, promote greater acculturation. The Women's Forum webinar with American Telugu Association put the focus on 'Revitalizing women's psychological, perceptive and personal well-being'.



## **Building Bridges**



# Training and Sensitizing Social Service Professionals

Our interaction with the mainstream social service sector spiraled in 2022. In respect of the mutual commitment to achieving better client outcomes, Cultural Competency Training was given to Asian Americans Against Family Abuse (AAAFA), Office On Violence Against Women (OVW), Domestic Violence Action Center (DVAC), Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP), Trauma Informed Community Network (TICN), Loudon County Women's Shelter (LAWS) and others.

# Knowledge and Resource Sharing with Sister Organizations

Resource sharing is fundamental to the UN convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), of which Ashiyanaa is a signatory. Vibrant exchanges took place in 2022, over panel discussions and conferences such as MNADV's 'Creating Partnerships Among Culturally Specific and Comprehensive Providers' and biennial conference 'Reimagine Justice', 'Effects of Covid', Fairfax County's 'Working with Immigrant Survivors'. In a different but critical area, we contributed to South Asian SOAR's panel discussion 'Financial Challenges for NGOs'.

### Social Integration and Participation

Two key events we participated in were Arlington Fair and National Night Out at Howard County, while SABA (South Asian Bar Association) featured us in their event 'Nonprofits that serve the South Asian Community'. Taking our agenda of social integration further, we signed an MOU with KAMA DC, a grassroots organization dedicated to promoting cultural exchange and celebrating the skills and stories of immigrants in the DMV.



## The Way Ahead



While we grapple with the ways to overturn our status of being an underserved community, it is heartening to note increasing conversations on diversity and inclusion. The latest census underscores this realization: more than two-fifths of Americans are now identified as people of color, and they are contributing to all US population growth. Interestingly, the Census Bureau published materials for the Census in 59 different languages apart from English, and they included Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Punjabi, Sinhala, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu.

Let's talk more, interact more, respect each other more, and share space with ease, understanding and peace. Let's work to integrate, with our own distinct identities.

#### MULTI COMMUNICATION CHANNELS BOOST AWARENESS & PARTICIPATION





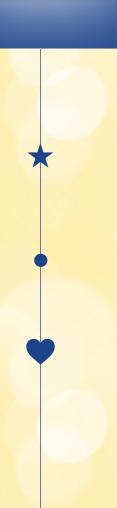




We pulled out all stops to reach our community and beyond. Posts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and website Blogs are now regular avenues to share information, perspectives and community affairs.



## **Team**



#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS (VOLUNTEER)**

All members of the Board have served the organization for several years, from its earlier days as ASHA for Women to the new identity as ASHIYANAA.

#### Priya Kulkarni - President

Priya Kulkarni currently serves as President and Secretary of the Board of Directors and serves as the Chair for the Executive Planning Committee. She has been with the organization for 14 years.

#### Lakshmi Aiyappa - Executive Director

Lakshmi Aiyappa retired as a Social Worker after working in the field for 25+ years. Since then she has been volunteering with several social service organizations. Lakshmi has been associated with the organization since 2005 and serves as a Board Member and has been the pro bono Executive Director since 2011.

#### Maya Virani - Treasurer

Maya Virani currently serves as Treasurer and the Chair of the Finance Committee. She joined in 2006 and has served in many capacities including being the Director of Senior Services.

#### Nalini Rajguru - Secretary

Nalini Rajguru currently serves as a Board Member and Secretary. She started volunteering with ASHA in 2001 and joined the Board in 2004. She was a past President from 2007-2011. Nalini is on the Executive and Planning Committee and has conducted strategic planning sessions in 2012, 2016, and 2020. She works as a law librarian at a DC law firm.

#### Jaya Nelliot

Jaya Nelliot is an Ayurvedic practitioner and holistic coach. She and her family have always volunteered with social service organizations. Jaya started volunteering with ASHA in 2009 as an advocate and now is a Board Member and the Outreach Director.

#### Meghana Chalasani

Meghana Chalasani is a public health professional in the DC metro area. Meghana started volunteering with ASHA in 2014, and joined the Board in 2021. She currently serves as the Chair for the Digital Media Committee.

#### **Amrita Jhanjee**

Amrita Jhanjee has over 40 years of professional experience spanning multiple industries and continents. She began volunteering with Ashiyanaa in 2008, and joined as a Board Member in 2009. She currently chairs the Volunteer Management Committee.

#### **Abraham Mathew**

Abraham Mathew came to ASHA after spending 22+ years as a banker. He has been a full-time volunteer and Board member since 2019, supporting Fundraising and Outreach activities. Previously, Abraham was Vice President at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, leading the Consumer Mortgage Department in the Mid-Atlantic region.

#### **AUDITORS & BOOKKEEPER**

Desai & Shah, PC, CPAs • Bookkeeper - Tanny Gordon (TGA Accounting Services, LLC)



### **Team**



## ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORK OF PROFESSIONALS + TRAINED VOLUNTEERS

Ashiyanaa's organizational network is a balance of skilled professional staff, highly experienced working board members (all volunteers) and motivated volunteers from different backgrounds and with diverse skills.

Volunteers undergo two levels of training and are assigned different functions depending on their professional and other capabilities.

Those who are deemed suitable are inducted into case work support on a discretionary basis, under the close supervision of Ashiyanaa's Client Coordinator.

For a long time, as ASHA for Women, the non-profit was fully volunteer driven. Now, with new programs and changing client profiles, Ashiyanaa is steadily increasing the ratio by inducting professional staff to better serve its clients.

## CONTINUED COMMITMENT DESPITE STRESSFUL NATURE OF WORK

Ashiyanaa's functionaries stay committed, even in the face of emotional stress, crisis management, and ever so often, threats to their personal safety by person(s) connected with the clients they serve. We are therefore very protective of the identities of the people who have chosen to put their security and comfort aside for the sake of others.



OUR LIGHT IS ALWAYS ON

## Action 2022



The year's first warm-up

# Advocate & Volunteer Meeting

to greet and discuss programs and schedules.



### MARCH

Ashiyanaa joins Fairfax County as they adopt Resolution on Women's Rights in support of CEDAW. Ashiyanaa is a proud member of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

#### APRIL

Training session and presentation on Domestic Violence and IPV held at Verona High School attended by responsive students, followed by an intense Q&A.

#### MAY

Tier Two Training, Fairfax 'Working with Immigrant Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence': Staff & Volunteer Training featuring experts from Ashiyanaa and other organizations. Discussion on the distinct needs, barriers and challenges faced by immigrant survivors.

### **JUNE**

### Welcoming You Home

Online Benefit Fundraiser put together by talented young volunteers engages viewers in a sparkling virtual show of South Asian music and art.

Funds raised over \$10,000.





## Action 2022







Panel representation on webinar with American Telugu Association - 'Women's Forum: Revitalizing women's psychological, perceptive and personal well-being'





We join in NATIONAL NIGHT OUT hosted by Howard County Law Enforcement. In addition to raising awareness about Ashiyanaa's work we create community roots and partnerships within Howard County.

#### SEPTEMBER

- We host a delegation of community activists and professionals from India under the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program, invited to learn and discuss best practices for preventing and eliminating gender-based violence.
- Webinar with SABA DC -
- 'Non-Profits that serve the South Asian Community: How you can help'



#### NOVEMBER

Stocktaking: On site meeting for all volunteers to meet and greet new staff, review clients, and update our database EmpowerDB.



Our Outreach Director wins The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence 2022 Outstanding Achievement Award

### OCTOBER <

- Staff Training conducted Tier One Training, Fairfax Oct 22nd & 29th
- NEW DIRECTOR AND CASEWORKER JOIN THE STAFF OF ASHIYANAA
- Participate in workplace charity campaigns with CFC and World Bank

### DECEMBER

Through our Holiday Wishlist Campaign, \$500 of purchased items donated to our clients and their families. Items include laptop, cookware sets, winter attire, kitchen essentials and toys for children.





### **ETHNICITY**



AFGHANISTAN BANGLADESH BHUTAN INDIA NEPAL PAKISTAN SRI LANKA 112

# HELPLINE AND EMAIL INQUIRIES ADDRESSED FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2022

- From clients, relatives, friends, local service agencies, shelters
- For assistance and information regarding legal referral, overseas abandonment, donation, volunteering, employment and more

## MAJOR ISSUES REPORTED BY CLIENTS SERVED

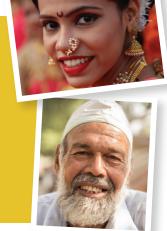
- Domestic violence/interpersonal violence
- Adultery and abuse
- Legal assistance shelter & divorce cases

#### **TOTAL CLIENTS SERVED**

**97**WOMEN
AGE: 25 TO 60

SENIORS
AGE: 60 AND ABOVE

84
CHILDREN
39 GIRLS 45 BOYS





#### **SERVICES | REFERRALS | FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

- Career development support
- Job search and employment referrals, interview prep
- Transportation: bus tokens, taxi fare, etc
- Translation of documents
- Court accompaniment to obtain Protection Orders, Child Support, etc.
- Relocation of clients to shelters/ apartments
- Assistance with child care arrangements
- Referrals for immigration and other legal counseling
- Referrals for psychological counseling
- Telephone cards for domestic and international calls
- Life-skills instruction: using public transportation, budgeting etc.
- Educational: tuition fees, donated computers, etc.
- Clothing assistance: emergency winter clothes, school uniforms, etc.
- Assistance with fees for medical care











#### **SENIOR PROGRAM**

Held regularly twice a month, Jan - Dec 2022

#### **WOMEN'S GROUP**

The Women's Group held
14 sessions
Total attendence 7 clients,
40 hours in total





#### **OUR LEGACY: THE VOLUNTEERING SPIRIT**

9325
TOTAL VOLUNTEER
HOURS

BOARD MEMBER VOUNTEERS 8883 HOURS

DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS
442 HOURS

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

37
INTERESTED VOLUNTEER
APPLICANTS

21
NEW VOLUNTEERS
ATTENDED ORIENTATION

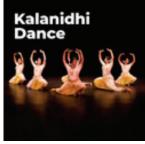
CLIENT ADVOCATES

## VOLUNTEERS ASSISTED IN THE FOLLOWING ROLES:

- Client Advocacy
- Career Counseling
- Outreach
- Interpretation
- Social Media

- Newsletter Writing
- Senior Program
- ESL Tutoring
- Zoom Events/ Tech Help
- IT Facilitation

#### **VOLUNTEER POWER!**







18 performing groups and artists and scores of young people came together in an online fundraising event for Ashiyanaa, a stupendous display of volunteer support and humanitarian concern



#### **OUTREACH ACHIEVEMENTS**



201
OUTREACH ACHIEVEMENTS
INCLUDING CULTURAL SENSITIVITY TRAINING
TO OTHER SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

# 25 MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING WITH OTHER SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AND CHARITIES

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS

TRAINING

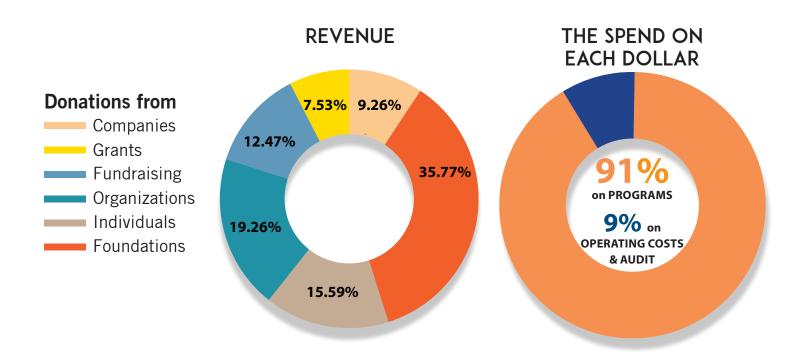
12

MEMBERSHIPS EVENTS





## Financials 2022



# Transparency & Accountability

Ashiyanaa is a federally tax-exempt organization, as described in IRS code section 501(c)3.

Our tax ID number is 52-2193753

PLATINUM RATING earned on GUIDESTAR attests our total commitment to transparency Platinum Transparency **2022** 

Candid.

# Memberships & Donor Gateways

The international charity through which donors can reach us with ease



United Way of the National Capital Area

United Way # 9371

The workplace giving program of the federal government





## **Stories of Hope**

Ashiyanaa's comprehensive, culturally-sensitive case management calls for determining individual needs, assessing safety, planning and coordinating referrals and services, evaluating and ensuring needs are met, and more. Sometimes a case needs to be nurtured for years to reach a reasonable conclusion. The ultimate goal is to help the individual become self-reliant, as in the case histories given here, in brief.

Pidhi a senior woman, was

homeless and living in her car with her disabled adult son when Ashiyanaa first connected with her.

We helped Vidhi and her son attain emergency housing and long-term relocation services to an apartment. Ashiyanaa also guided and assisted Vidhi to obtain government benefits to supplement her income.

Nadia and her son are both recent immigrants. Her abusive husband filed for divorce soon after they arrived in the US. She did not speak English and needed help finding a job and legal help. Nadia practiced conversational English with Ashiyanaa volunteers and worked with our Career Counselor. who coached her through job interviews. She was offered and accepted three jobs! Ashiyanaa also paired her son with an ESL tutor and helped her through her legal journey. With our help, Nadia received a green card and applied for citizenship.

All names given here have been changed to protect the privacy of our clients.



### Vivek, high school junior

"Ashiyanna played a huge role in my success in finding the best path for my future. Ashiyanna took responsibility to take initiative to find me resources and guidance for my needs. In the past Ashiyanna helped me and mom a lot with living necessities. All the help I received is more than I could ever ask for. ... helping me through ups and downs... helping me with all aspects of college including essays, scholarships, Financial Aids, etc. We have received ample amounts of knowledge and resources and mentors to help me with my career and opportunities. Thank you Ashiyanaa!"



## **Stories of Hope**

Deepti, a graduate student born and raised in the USA, decided

to leave her abusive boyfriend. Her family did not support her decision:
Deepti suffered PTSD and panic attacks. On approaching a crisis center for counselling, she felt the staff there could not relate to her. Finally she contacted us and we could guide her to a culturally-sensitive therapist. The sessions have helped her become emotionally stronger now and panic attacks have reduced. Deepti's life is back on the rails as she is pursuing her career goals once again.

ASPREET, a stay-at-home

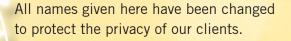
mother, wanted to start working outside the home but had no idea of how to go about it. Ashiyanaa's career development program helped Jaspreet to create a resume and practice interviewing skills. When she was offered a job as an IT professional, Ashiyanaa career counselors advised her on salary negotiations and benefits. Jaspreet is now employed and working her way toward self-sufficiency.

Meena, a senior woman,

faced years of domestic abuse and was subsequently abandoned by her husband. She struggled to fend for herself by catering Indian food from a kitchen that was in a very rundown condition. Ashiyanaa started a donor campaign for Meena and was successful in getting generous contributions for the purchase and installation of new kitchen appliances, including a dishwasher, stove and refrigerator. Meena's catering order book is now overflowing.

### **CLIENT OUTCOMES**

IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE AWARENESS SELF CONFIDENCE ABILITY TO TAKE DECISIONS





## Sentiments

### Sense of purpose and community

"The friend who originally suggested that I volunteer at Ashiyanaa thought I could be helpful to the organization. Having now worked there for the last three years or so, I realize that it is Ashiyanaa that has been helpful to me. It has given me a renewed sense of purpose and community. Being able to help women in need is tremendously fulfilling."

### On empowerment and support groups

"I have been volunteering with Ashiyanaa for almost 6 years. I love being part of this caring organization and use my skills to help our clients. It is so rewarding to see these women free themselves from their abusive pasts, get in touch with their strength and begin to thrive. It has also been very heartwarming to see how clients support each other in our support groups."

### Tribute from a senior client to her advocate

"(she) has been a source of inspiration and encouragement for me when I was facing some odd situation here. ... helped me immensely to get connected to several on-going on-line programs - which has been my daily routine since then. Ashiyanaa is doing a very good job helping seniors ... manned by dedicated volunteers is a gate-way to help seniors escape boredom and loneliness - which is so rampant among us seniors. Ashiyanaa has dedicated volunteers who are the backbone of the organisation..."

### Giving back to society

"I have been volunteering with ASHA for Women, now Ashiyanaa, since 2015. As a client advocate, I am able to give back to our community by helping women and children impacted by domestic violence. My belief is reaffirmed by personal experience that every person has a unique gift to present to the world when given a chance!"



## Friends of Ashiyanaa



We are deeply grateful for generous funding, generous volunteer hours, and many other forms of open-hearted support, understanding and cooperation that made it possible for us to continue providing critical, culturally sensitive services in 2022.

Our donors were big corporations, small enterprises, professional associations, private trusts and charities, and we received funds through government grants.

Our supporters were socially aware individuals, of all ages, not just from the South Asian community. They included lawyers, home-makers, business people, community leaders in houses of worship, college students, musicians, artists, software engineers and more... representing a richness of humanity.

### **OUR PARTNERS**























OUR LIGHT IS ALWAYS ON

## **Committed to a Vibrant Community**



Helpline: 1-888-417-2742



### **Ashiyanaa**

6701 Democracy Blvd, Suite 300 Bethesda, MD 20817 Phone: 571 645 3233 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday

Follow us on





