



CARTHA MEANS DOER

CARTHA is an acronym for Collaborative Arts in Research Translation for Human Advancement.

With a focus on **Social Innovation, Fusion Philanthropy, and Healthfulness**, our all-volunteer intergenerational team of scientists, physicians, artists, writers, and students, helps design program incubation partnerships and philanthropic approaches to bridge high-aspiration innovators across disciplines, sectors, regions, and ages.

VISION: To leverage academic-practitioner partnerships and innovations to create opportunities for advancing greater good, glocally

MISSION: To train, build, and empower networks of Collaborative Doers who enhance positive impacts by bridging the work of technological and social innovators

PROGRAMS: FELLOWSHIPS AND GLOCALIZERS

Utilizing our C2G2SM Training Model, we develop and deliver our programs by partnering with professional societies, campuses, conference organizers, and social service clubs. Our selected CARTHA Fellows receive non-traditional mentoring, financial support, and access to broader networks that keep them inspired in their aspirational pursuits. While we have sponsored several cross-broader gatherings and Study Abroad

CARTHA Programming Overview Building Collaborative Competence (C2) Within Multisector Partnerships for Global Good (G2)	
<i>Provide Tools for Innovators</i>	<i>Study Current Practice</i>
<i>Conduct Training and Development</i>	<i>Build Collaborative Competence</i>

initiatives, our recent Glocalizer dialogues have been organized around a wide range of topics such as using music and poetry to address unresolved grief; coping skills required to deal with loneliness, including during end-of-life phases; integrating mental health counseling into entrepreneurship training programs, etc. Because of COVID-related travel/gathering restrictions, we have pivoted to safe programming that continues, uninterrupted.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVES AROUND THE THEME OF MUSIC AND MEMORIES

CARTHA’s Iowa Corridor Sangeet (ICS) Partnership was launched in 2017 (under the leadership of Dr. Nitin Karandikar) to bring excellent South Asian performing arts and associated learnings to Iowa. ICS event series have led to so much memory-sharing through joyful music as well as film screenings. Knowing that loneliness itself is a public health epidemic, such programs with 100 to 400 attendees led to transformative impacts on overall community health by the cultivation of new and caring friendships. Reinforced by the success of ICS programming, CARTHA Founder conceived a new Musicality in Parks. Our overall aim is to encourage cities to consider the inclusion of musically-diverse Singing Nooks with outdoor musical instruments in public parks to foster the development of coping skills, creativity, and healing platforms by connect people intergenerationally and cross-culturally through music and memories. Given the extent of pandemic-driven grief burdens, especially upon younger children and caregivers, it is imperative for each of us to thoughtfully propose and find new strategies to reduce the level of unresolved grief and increase coping skills in our communities, everywhere.

CARTHA Board of Directors
Linda Harrar, Boston, MA
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Roger Williamson, Iowa City, IA
Usha R. Balakrishnan, Iowa City, IA



Dear Friends: Speaking engagements, guest lectures, and sheer word-of-mouth have robustly kept attracting new volunteers and well-wishers to CARTHA. Your gesture of support—in whatever form and at whatever level—will help us make a bigger difference in a caring and empowering, yet daring and everyday sort of way. Thank you!

Usha R. Balakrishnan, CARTHA Founder & CEO
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MUSICALLY-DIVERSE PARKS & PROGRAMS FOR COPING SKILLS & COMMUNITY HEALING

CARTHA’s Musically in Parks initiative led to a successful first pilot in collaboration with the City of Iowa City. There is now a beautiful Singing Nook at Willow Creek Park, and we have designed *Inspiring Creativity* educational workshops with field trips to the Singing Nook for school-age children (of Sudanese and Congolese refugees) under the care of Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County. Through a series of partnerships, we seek to expand our programming vision through partners at other locales in Iowa and elsewhere.



Each new pilot could be a unique design based on the vision of local volunteers and city administrators. Therefore, as one program direction, in 2022, CARTHA envisions a statewide effort to make Iowa a place known for its musical public parks. Our programs aims to enable thoughtful new approaches and design solutions to the inclusion of musical elements within parks and programming design that can lead to greater positive impacts and fulfillment of the needs of the community.

In a partnership with Humanities Iowa, our new Symposium Series titled “Seeking Intergenerational Healing and Grief Relief Solutions: Singing Nooks in Our Public Parks” enables **Study of Current Practices** by bringing together and sharing expertise of academics and practitioners who can enhance our understanding of relevant topics (e.g., history of local public parks; urban planning and design standards with regard to installations of outdoor musical instruments; the critical need for local involvement by parents/volunteer groups and social service clubs; impact of musical interventions on early childhood mental health; diversity of outdoor musical instruments; etc.). We **Conduct Training and Development** by designating younger academics and professionals as **CARTHA Fellows** (e.g., graduate students in Urban Planning, Child Psychiatry, Music Therapy, etc.). Our community outreach and thought leadership efforts at seminars and conferences (e.g., Rotary District 6000 gathering in December 2021; ABI Leadership Iowa NEXT event in January 2022; etc.) aims to **Build Collaborative Competence** across sectors so that culturally appropriate programs emerge to effectively address the need for coping skills across ages. We **Provide Tools for Innovators** via publications, accessible online recordings, curricular materials, etc.

We believe that outdoor musical spaces (Singing Nooks) could be designed in public parks in ways that serve as one of many coping/healing platforms which are desperately needed for our next generations of children to feel a sense of joyful togetherness and memory-making despite everything else going on around them. Once current pandemic restrictions are lifted and it is safe to organize intergenerational events, our intent is to host CARTHA gatherings in such Singing Nooks which will provide some random musical sounds combined with the laughter of children amid Mother Nature’s own moods of chirpiness and breeziness.

PLEASE SUPPORT CARTHA’S WORK AND VISION IN WHATEVER WAY YOU CAN!

- Make a tax-deductible donation to CARTHA. You can mail your check payable to CARTHA: **CARTHA, 85 Leamer Court, Iowa City, IA 52246, USA. Attn: Usha R. Balakrishnan, CEO**
- Use Zelle to make your donation to CARTHA at **Mobile Number 319-331-8103**
- Designate CARTHA as a preferred charity in your giving portfolio
- Designate funds at your organization, a local United Way or community foundation or college/university to invite and enable CARTHA programming in your locality
- Alert other prospective donors and your company’s Corporate Foundation, Community Affairs, or Social Responsibility Officer about the opportunity to support CARTHA
- Designate CARTHA among the charities that you support to leave a legacy and to celebrate, memorialize and honor those special family, friends, colleagues, and mentors whom you have cherished in your life

We thank you for your generous support to advance CARTHA’s mission to cultivate Collaborative Doers.



Background about how singing has enriched CARTHA Founder's life and enhanced her coping skills

CARTHA (www.cartha.org) was founded by Usha R. Balakrishnan in 2006, following her experiences as the founder of a collegial network called Technology Managers for Global Health—whose activities were supported under grants from The Rockefeller Foundation, Kauffman Foundation, and Gates Foundation in 2004-2006. Prior to that, Usha enjoyed a highly successful administrative career for 15 years at the University of Iowa in academic invention management, patent licensing, and corporate partnerships.

Usha received her BCom from Bombay University and MBA from the University of Iowa. She is a graduate of the 2001 Iowa City Chamber's Community Leadership Program and the 2002 ABI Leadership Iowa Class. She has served: as a gubernatorial appointee to the Iowa Economic Development Commission (2001-2005); Founding Board of Directors of the Community Foundation of Johnson County-Iowa; Iowa Biotechnology Association Board; Deputy Committee of the Iowa Business Council; and as the 2016-17 President of the Iowa City Noon Rotary Club. She was a member of the Community Foundations Leadership Team at the Council on Foundations and AAAS Committee on Scientific Freedom & Responsibility in Washington, DC.

Usha, who grew up in New Delhi and Mumbai, has lived in Iowa since 1986. Her husband Ramji is an Accounting Professor at the University of Iowa. They have two adult children. Usha sang throughout her pregnancy (and even during labor). Having grown up in a household where her mother sang all the time, Usha is a daily singer as well. She even celebrated her son and daughter-in-law during their wedding in 2019 with a uniquely-designed musical toast of Bollywood songs! A trained singer of South Indian Carnatic vocal music and performer of highly-popular song-and-narration pieces at the Indian Harvest Festival (a local gathering of 500 each Spring), Usha has designed and delivered guest "Singing Lectures" at undergraduate and graduate course offerings of South Asian Studies and Ethnomusicology professors to share cross-cultural singing experiences in ways that enable healthfulness as well as meaningful social interactions. Presenting herself as "The Singing Chef," Usha has taught South Indian cookery classes (titled *Healthful Cooking with Mindful Singing*) at the local organic food co-op as well as at her home. To optimize learning experiences, she encourages participants to de-stress themselves by singing aloud so that they can enjoy the art of cooking along with unfamiliar ingredients, stunning aromas, and fascinating stories from far-off continents!

Through her Healthful Singing Solutions project, Usha has sung in person, over the phone, as well as by the bedsides of hundreds of strangers and family members alike while they were suffering from illness, depression, loneliness, anxieties, etc. At conferences, she has spoken about how her music kept her comforted upon her migration from India to the US in 1985 at age 20 after an arranged marriage; and how she learnt to sing away her sorrows and grief after the loss of her parents in 2011 and 2018 respectively, and indeed, throughout the ongoing COVID pandemic.

By "glocalizing" herself, Usha's aspiration is to use her own musical experiences as one "singing platform" to share and thereby induce intergenerational conversations around the need for and development of coping skills through non-traditional supportive networks. While the idea of musical parks is not new, Usha's idea and rationale for Singing Nooks in parks is born from 30 years of multisector thinking and creative implementation experiences working across innovators, young and old. Most importantly, the conversations around the Singing Nooks idea seem timely, useful, and filled with extra meaning to keep Carthans and community members and professionals from very different backgrounds and sectors positively motivated. Coping skills are all-essential for all age-groups, especially during pandemic times, and hence Usha is firmly committed to sharing and advancing CARTHA's Musicality in Parks initiative.