

Tejas Kishan Gururaja
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Growing up in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Tejas has always excelled in his academic studies and pursued his musical interests while also passionately organizing hands-on community service initiatives and raising support for charitable causes.

Tejas became a CARTHA Fellow in December 2021 during his junior year at Linn-Mar High School in Cedar Rapids. He is now involved in many aspects of CARTHA's programming, including the Musicality in Parks initiative. Since 2017, Tejas has attended numerous programs organized under the CARTHA-Iowa Corridor Sangeet Partnership.

In 2020, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tejas organized a community effort named "Take Action United" to actualize his charitable intentions in the following realms:

- Planning food drives and raising financial support for the Catherine McAuley Center which serves refugee families in the local area.
- Coaching middle-schoolers in a Future City team competing to generate novel ideas based on STEM and engineering fields.

For this work, Tejas won the 2020 Outstanding Youth Philanthropist award from the Association of Fundraising Professional of Eastern Iowa; and the 2021 Outstanding Youth Volunteer Award from the Cedar Rapids Noon Lions Club.

Tejas is a budding musician participating in show choir (vocal) and orchestra groups (violin, piano) in Cedar Rapids as well as performing as an accompanying artist (mridangam-Indian percussion instrument) at South Asian Classical music concerts. To inspire younger children to pursue music, Tejas teaches them Indian classical music (South Indian Classical Carnatic violin, vocal, and percussion). Since 2019, he also serves as the main coordinator of "Carnatic for a Cause" (www.CarnaticForACause.org) which continues to raise financial support for multiple local charities and direct relief (e.g., PPE provisions to healthcare workers during COVID). Tejas designed the "Adopt a Musician Family" initiative which hosts online music events monthly to raise financial support for musicians whose livelihoods and families have been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

Tejas has also participated in the Linn-Mar High School's Science Olympiad and Tennis Team, and served as the Hugh O'Brian Student Ambassador in Summer 2021.