

When Isha Bhatt arrived in Georgia from India as an exchange student, in the late summer of 2017, she was prepared, not only for a year of study in a foreign country, but for the experience of soaking up new customs in a new land. How fortunate that her host for her year of study abroad was Amy Ovalle, a woman with an enormous amount of energy and with an imagination that would make it possible for Isha to immerse herself in the day to day life of a young American woman.

Ovalle is the one responsible for Girls Night Out, a once monthly get-together for women to explore what Macon has to offer in the way of entertainment. What better place to be! The town that has displaced Nashville as the Music Capital of the nation has something going on every night of the week – music, dancing, the arts and more. Ovalle contacted Paula East about showing the GNO group some basic dance steps. No sooner said than done. East scheduled the group's premier event at the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame and had some of her seasoned dancers on hand (Paul Kaprinez, Peggie Mullis, David & Debra Leathers, Ed & Carol Hughes, and Ellen Sapperton) to put the women at ease on the dance floor.

In that first event, the 16 year old Bhatt was part of the group, as Ovalle's guest, and was as enthusiastic as her instructor about learning traditional American dance steps. Now, with her year abroad coming to an end, Bhatt, who has been a dancer for most of her 16 years, has shared some of her traditional Indian dances with the Girls Night Out group and will return to her home to show off her new American dance steps. While everyone in the dance class wishes Bhatt well as she returns to her regular curriculum in India, it might be we will see her again if she decides to continue her college education in this country. What a way to enhance international relations - on the dance floor!