



Indo-American Center

The mission of the Indo-American Center is to promote the well-being of South Asian Americans through services that facilitate their adjustment, integration and friendship with the wider society, nurture their sense of community, and foster appreciation for their heritage and culture.

News and Events, Summer 2006

DEEPA MEHTA AT IAC ANNUAL GALA

Award-winning director-producer-writer Deepa Mehta will be the keynote speaker at the Indo-American Center's Sunday, October 8, 2006 annual gala at the Oak Brook Marriott.

Ms. Mehta, a graduate of the University of Delhi, has won critical acclaim for her works which have been shown in film festivals in North America, Canada, Europe, Australia, and Asia.

Her first feature film, the 1991 "Sam and Me," received an award at the Cannes Film Festival. This promising start was followed by the phenomenal success of her "Elements" trilogy. "Fire", "Earth" and, most recently, "Water", engage the emotions of audiences and critics alike, as they shake the foundations of social and political structure. Her works have won numerous international festival awards, and "Water" continues to receive accolades worldwide. Ms. Mehta was chosen one of five Directors of the Year by *Variety International Film Guide 2006*.

Known for her warm, down-to-earth manner, Ms. Mehta is sure to delight our IAC audience with her keynote address. In addition, a lively program with entertainment is in the works, and of course, a sumptuous meal—all in all, one fabulous evening in support of a great cause.

**Call 773-973-4444 ext. 103 to reserve tickets or to become a sponsor.
Sunday, October 8, 2006 5:00 pm at the Oak Brook Marriott, 1401 W. 22nd Street Oak Brook, IL**

Photo by Devyani Saltzman



Message from the President

Dear Friends,
As I write this note to you, the Center is energized and fully engaged in working to fulfill its mission. The unprecedented activity our programs are seeing indicates that we are very closely listening to the needs of our community.

This year we are very pleased to host Filmmaker Deepa Mehta at our Annual Gala! The Gala is our most important fundraising event. The proceeds will be used to provide much needed additional classroom space, install an elevator for seniors unable to climb stairs to attend our classes, and engage transportation so that the housebound elderly can participate in Center activities.

We thank you for your continued support and hope that you will join us at our Gala for an enjoyable evening with Deepa Mehta!

Warm Regards,
Vikram Sanghani

Coming up this fall

Night class for newly arrived parents - IAC staff will provide curriculum to familiarize and navigate US school system, starting after Labor Day.

Youth After-school tutoring, a part of South Asian Youth Empowerment Project, SAYEP, will start in the fall at IAC and at seven elementary school locations in Albany Park. Volunteers for after school tutoring are welcome; contact Nisar Naimi at the Center.

Events for Seniors
Festival at McCormick Place: Aug 17
Health issue workshops: Aug 24, Aug 31

Citizenship workshops to be held at IAC: Sep 9 and Nov 11

New Americans Democracy Project Voter Registration canvassing will continue until Election Day, November 7. Volunteers are encouraged to contact Chirayu Patel, NADP Fellow, at the Center.

For more info call the Indo-American Center

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Chirayu Patel

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From the Editor's Desk

In addition to numerous daily activities at the Center, our committed and enthusiastic service coordinators periodically organize special events and workshops to address the challenging issues in the social, financial and physical environments of our clients.

The Center thus continues to serve and improve the quality of lives in the community. I have attempted to bring your attention to some of these events.

See you all at the Annual Gala.

Warm Regards,
Basanti Banerji

HIGHLIGHTS

Evening with the Media
The Indo-American Center hosted an evening of conversation with the Chicago Tribune's Managing Editor of Foreign News, the Tribune's South Asia correspondent. Members of the community participated in discussion about policy issues of that region.

Honored by Chitrahah Cultural Academy
The Center was presented with the 2006 Community Service Award at Chitrahah Night on July 29, 2006.

We invite your comments and questions about the Center
(773) 973-4444

ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS

The New Americans Democracy Project
The New Americans Democracy Project (NADP), is a collaborative campaign with IAC, South Asian Progressive coalition (SAPAC), Albany Park Neighborhood Council (APNC) and Indo-American Democratic Organization (IADO) hosting a non-partisan voter registration drive at IAC, focusing on the South Asian population in the 50th Ward. Several State and City Officials attended a press conference and launch ceremony to encourage the South Asians to register to vote. You can register to vote at the IAC or at any one of our FREE upcoming NAI citizenship workshops at IAC or in the suburbs until Oct. 10.

The New Americans Initiative program is intended to link eligible legal permanent residents with our FREE monthly citizenship workshops at IAC or in the suburbs. Visit our website for a schedule of workshop dates in your area.

Civics classes educate the students to learn about the Government and prepare for U.S.citizenship.

English as second language program focuses on teaching alphabets advancing to conversation level English. The students here use the technique of hearing the sounds of words co-relating with the picture of the voice box.

Computer classes are held to teach basic computer skills in word processor, Excel and Internet. Young students use the PC lab for their homework assignments, while Seniors use it for reading newspapers in their native languages such as Hindi, Gujarati or Urdu, and sending E-mail to family back home.

Youth services
Summer fun program has been well-attended by approximately 50 children ages 6-14. The program brought opportunities to play sports, participate in field trips, enjoy Millennium Park International Game day and music and art workshops. The After school tutoring program starts in the 2nd week of September, please visit our website to register.

Cyriac D. Kappil Legal Clinic

Attorneys from Indian-American Bar Association and Chicago Volunteer Legal Services Foundation provide pro-bono legal aid to clients on issues involving immigration, social security appeals, landlord-tenant disputes, and limited Int.l adoption help in cases of family emergencies. The clinic is open every 2nd Saturday each month from 1-4 PM. Appointments are encouraged, but walk-in is okay.

Public Benefits

The service here has been assisting families obtain ALLKIDS health insurance program, so young children under 18 yrs. (including undocumented residents, no income limit) can have access to health care. The clients are helped with sending the applications, and by making follow-up calls to State's ALLKIDS program office till completion of the process.

For more information, call Mina at (773) 973-4444 ext. 109

Seniors Program

A service fair at Truman College provided the seniors with an introduction to methods of formal communication. This included writing résumés, loan applications and reference letters, skills they may need. The Seniors visited a temple (trip sponsored by the temple) to explore the "Science of Spirituality".

For information and schedule, call Gita at (773) 973-4444 ext. 107

Cultural Heritage Presentations

Discoveries about the linguistic, religious, and cultural diversity of Asian Indian immigrants living in the Chicago area are highlights of regular Neighborhood Orientation sessions at the Indo-American Center. In addition, groups enjoy the stories, participating in

yoga demonstrations, and watching a turban wrap. During May, members of this Committee introduced two large groups of staff members from the University of Illinois Extension to the ethnic community. Other visitors have come from Christopher House Family Literacy Program, East Village Youth Program, Fiske Boys' & Girls' Club, and Cultural Connections Parents' Initiative. In addition students from St. Mary of the Woods, NKO Charter School, and North Shore Country Day School have come to the Center and then enjoyed a Scavenger Hunt visiting merchants on Devon Avenue.

For information to arrange an educational activity contact Dorothe Shah at dorothe.shah@sbcglobal.net or 847-475-6853.

Hindi Lessons

Saturday 10 AM - 12Noon, register at IAC

Kathak Dance Lessons

By the Anila Sinha Dance Foundation at IAC on Sundays from 3pm-5pm. Call 847-985-9142 or visit www.Asfkathk.com

Newsletter Contributors

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Graphics and Layout by Arthi Subramanian

Museum Dream

The dream of a Museum showcasing the culture and history of immigrants from India and their descendants is taking shape thanks to groundwork by members of an ad hoc committee formed by Indo-American Center Cultural Heritage Education Program volunteers. Watch for announcement of a launch event in 2007.

Committee members envision a Museum of Indo-American Heritage that will promote understanding of the diversity, rich history, and dynamic culture of Indo-Americans by offering visitors of all ages a living learning experience; by documenting, preserving, and displaying immigrant history; by engaging youth in exploration and appreciation of cultural identity; and by facilitating cross-cultural exchanges.

Activities proposed to fulfill the mission of the museum of Indo-American Heritage will include a wide range of interactive exhibitions, performances, and collecting and archiving history of the ethnic community.

There are plans (1) to create displays presenting and interpreting the experience of Asian Indians in America; (2) to encourage immigrants to share their knowledge and experience in ongoing programs; (3) to host exhibitions of Indo-American and Indian art, film festivals, performances, book discussions, creative writing workshops, instruction in visual and lively arts, and other cultural activities; (4) to promote cultural understanding through educational programs and seminars; and (5) to partner with other ethnic and mainstream institutions.

The museum will provide a venue for melding the regional, linguistic, and religious diversity of the Indo-American ethnic population in stimulating, entertaining, and educational endeavors.

For more information about **Museum of Indo-American Heritage** planning activities, please contact Committee Secretary Happie Datt at happiedatt@gmail.com or Strategic Development Chair Surendra Shah ats-shah@northwestern.edu or call 847-475-6853.

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DO YOU KNOW...

1. Our seniors attended multinational "World of Games" day at Chicago Cultural Center, where the "Laughing circle", a regular program at the IAC, was a big success.
2. A Community Education Workshop was held at IAC to train Voter Registration volunteers.
3. To mark the end of the first phase of an oral history project, the South Asian American Policy and Research Institute (SAAPRI) held an event at the IAC. The project involved conducting interviews of immigrants from India, who came to U.S.A before 1965.
4. Target registration number for new south Asian citizens in the 50th Ward by Sept 10, 2006: 851
5. A new Parenting workshop sponsored by Asian Human Services held six sessions throughout Aug 2006.
6. A community service sponsored by City of Chicago, IAC staff participated in youth career training emphasizing learning skills such as time management and organization at work.

Indo-American Center 2006 Annual Gala

Sunday, October 8 5:00 pm
Marriott Oak Brook
1401 West 22nd Street, Oak Brook, IL

Keynote Speaker
Deepa Mehta
Filmmaker

For reservations and information:
Arthi Subramanian, Event Assistant
(773) 973-4444 ext. 103
arthi@indoamerican.org
Tickets: \$125 per person

New Center Hours

Beginning September 5, 2006 the Center will be *CLOSED on Sundays* and *OPEN on Tuesdays* from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The new Center hours are: M.T.W.Th.F.Sat from 10am to 5pm