

friends of the indo-american center celebrate investing in social capital

On Sunday, September 23 at 5:00 PM, friends of the Indo-American Center will gather at the Oak Brook Marriott, 1401 West 22nd Street, Oak Brook, Illinois for the 2001 Fundraising Banquet titled "Investing in Social Capital".

All who contribute to the Center by attending this year's banquet support the Center's mission to promote the well-being of Indo-Americans and actively invest in our community's social capital. Northwestern University Professor Mohanbir Sawhney, will present the keynote address. Professor Sawhney is the McCormick Tribune Professor of Electronic Commerce and Technology, the Director of the Center for Research in Technology, Innovation, and E-Commerce, and the Chair of the Technology & E-Commerce group at the Kellogg Graduate School of Management. He has published widely and addressed groups throughout the world regarding e-commerce strategy and technology marketing.

During the Banquet program the serious e-commerce perspective of Professor Sawhney will be balanced with the humor of stand-up comedian, Melvin Durai, who uses e-mail to distribute his humor to thousands of people in more than 70 countries around the world. His column is published widely in dozens of newspapers including the India Tribune and Voice of Asia. Recent University of Illinois engineering alumna, Anjali Rangaswamy, who has just released her first CD, entitled "Offerings", will punctuate the evening's events with melodious song accompanied by guitar. The combination of academic savvy, rib-tickling commentary, and lilting song will make the evening in Oakbrook memorable for old friends and new supporters of the Indo-American Center.

Many possibilities await those anticipating concrete rewards for their contributions to the Indo-American Center during the banquet. Dinners at Gaylords in both Chicago and Schaumburg, United Airlines tickets, weekends at the Oak Brook Marriott and Fairmont Hotels, and five hours of private yoga lessons will be raffled. A Medos Custom Tailored Men's Suit, a pair of cruise tickets and Air India business class flight tickets to India will be auctioned to the highest bidders.

For reservations to this year's banquet contact the Indo-American Center at 773-973-4444.



Indra Johnson enjoys a light moment at the 2000 IAC Banquet

gandhi/king essay contest winners to be honored at october luncheon

Winners of the 2001 Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Legacy Essay Contest will be honored during a program from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Saturday, October 6 at Columbia College, 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago. All contest entrants and their parents are invited to join area high school teachers at this event. United States 9th District Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky has been invited to speak. Lunch will be served.

The contest sponsored by the Dharma Foundation, the Indo-American Center, and The Center for Asian Arts and the Media at Columbia College invites students in grades 9-12 to describe their own experiences and to show how they relate to the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Indo-American Center Mission

The mission of the Indo-American Center is to promote the well-being of Indo-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

Contributors

Faisal Hadi, Veena Iyer, Hector Lobo, Itsuko Mizuni, Nirav Pandya, Padma Rangaswamy, R.S. Rajan, Vikram Sanghani, Dorothee Shah

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indo-american center renovations

Visitors to the Indo-American Center will notice several improvements that have accompanied a face-lift at the Indo-American Center. Freshly painted walls, replacement of damaged ceiling tiles, newly installed carpeting, and buffed tile floors brighten the interior. Ceramic tiles and new fixtures update each of the washrooms. Hopefully, new entry doors will also greet visitors in the near future. A recently framed story scroll detailing episodes from the legendary life of Krishna enhances Room One. K-12 Teachers who participated in the 1997 Fulbright-Hayes funded study-tour of India selected this extraordinary object by P. Narayandas, an artist from Orissa, as a personal gift to the Indo-American Center.

Removal of a partition between a former storage room and the office opposite the library has produced a spacious office where three desks with computers and phones accommodate coordinators of the Senior Sangam Program and the Literacy Program and provide space for a third member of the staff.

Servicing of the heating and cooling systems and roof repairs soon to be completed will assure comfort of the staff as well as dozens of people who utilize the facility at 6328 North California each week. Volunteer Sachin Anand conducted a study of the HVAC system and assisted in the evaluation of the bids received for the work. He also closely monitors progress on the work.

Phone and computer system networking have also been improved tremendously due to the efforts of volunteers Raj Madugula and Paritosh Desai and Program Coordinators Faisal Hadi and Nirav Pandya. The Building and Infrastructure Committee of the Board of Directors under Ned Gauri's leadership is working closely with Administrative Director R.S. Rajan who is supervising the construction crew to achieve these major improvements.

iac to conduct identity workshop for network of indian professionals conference

IAC Board Members, Volunteers and Staff participated in an exciting, interactive workshop at the NETIP Annual conference held over the Labor Day weekend in Chicago. The session, held on Sunday, September 2 at 1:15 PM, explored different dimensions of identity and sought answers to such intriguing questions as:

How do you perceive yourself?

How do others perceive you?

What is your role in society?

How do you connect with other people?

What do your affiliations reveal about you and your place in the world?

The session featured film clips and get-acquainted activities and also provided an opportunity for further research through readings in the history and literature of South Asian American experiences. To learn more about this session and obtain information on readings, check out the Indo-American website at www.indoamerican.org.

iac education project addresses lucent & asian language institute

Indian Americans now number over 1,700,000 in the United States. According to the 2000 census Chicago is home to nearly 117,000. The rapidly growing population is prompting many individuals and organizations to seek understanding of distinctive aspects of this ethnic group.

The Education Project of the Indo-American Center is well equipped to respond to inquiries and recently made presentations at Lucent Technologies and the Chicago Public Schools Asian Language Institute.

Lucent engineers and Japanese and Chinese language teachers learned how Asian Indian businesses enable immigrants to savor ethnic cuisine, purchase traditional attire and jewelry for festive events, view Indian language films or videos, and attend performances by Bollywood pop stars and classical musicians and dancers. They enjoyed seeing the "secret of the sari" as one of their colleagues was wrapped in traditional dress.

Similarities to the United States in India's secular, democratic political system and religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity were emphasized at each session. An overview of Indo-American Center immigration services and literacy and citizenship classes was provided by a brief video produced by Northwestern journalism student Amy Rao. Each presentation concluded with a lively question/answer session.



Dorothie Shah and Lakshmi Menon conduct a sari demonstration at the Chicago Public Schools Asian Language Institute

iac teen group joins city-wide community building project



Alpa Parbadia, CAAELI, briefs teens on Community Building Project

Local area teens at the Indo-American Center now have the opportunity to participate in a youth program designed to cultivate student leaders in the community. Part of the CAAELI (Coalition of Asian African European and Latino Immigrants of Illinois) Community Building Project, the new teen group at the Indo-American Center seeks to empower local South Asian American youth through leadership training and opportunities for community involvement and service. Most IAC teens involved in the program are students at nearby Senn and Mather High Schools, part of the Chicago Public School system. Teens in the program have also been actively volunteering with a variety of projects at the Indo-American Center over the summer months.

Other groups organized throughout the city as part of CAAELI's Community Building Project include the Pine Tree Senior Council at the Chinese American Service League in Chinatown, a Korean Seniors group at the Korean American Senior Center on the Northwest side, and a Student Council at El Centro de Educacion y Cultura in the Logan Square neighborhood. Some of the longer running groups created through the program, such as the Golden Age Club at the Chinese Mutual Aid Association whose members recently organized their own annual banquet, have achieved a high level of community leadership and self-organization.

Part of the CAAELI Community Building Project's goal is cultural exchange among its diverse constituencies. The Indo-American Center teen group will be engaging in joint activities with the Korean Youth Group at the Korean American Resource and Cultural Center, located nearby.

Recently completing a series of intergenerational videos featuring interviews with community members on youth issues, and developing an Indo-Pakistani Unity March on Devon Avenue for local teens, the Indo-American Center's group of young community leaders is off to a great start. To learn more about the program, or for information on joining or working with the group, please call Faisal Hadi at (773) 973-4444 or email fhadi@indoamerican.org.



Secretary of State's Office visit to a Senior Sangam Milan

senior sangam program developing community at iac

In the first few months since the Indo-American Center's Senior Sangam Program has officially started, after a series of focus-groups held with local area elders, a community of older South Asians has been steadily participating in a wide range of activities offered on a weekly basis at the Center. While interacting with one another, seniors in the program have also been engaged in a variety of services offered at the IAC, including the IMACF's free Sunday morning clinic, adult English literacy classes, citizenship classes, and INS info.

Each Monday, seniors are offered the opportunity to take part in a special Internet computer class designed especially for elders in the community. Seniors are assisted in setting up email accounts for themselves and are encouraged to correspond either with each other or with family members across the country or around the world. Some seniors have also used the network access to chat virtually on-line with family members in India or Pakistan. The Senior Sangam Program seeks to use the world wide web and email communication to help alleviate some of the social isolation area seniors face.

Each Wednesday and Sunday, yoga classes are also offered for seniors both as a health benefit and as an opportunity to meet regularly with other seniors in the program. Chandra, of the local Sivananda Vedanta Yoga Society, teaches a class specifically for seniors on Wednesday afternoons. Meera Sanghani, an independent yoga instructor, leads a class for all ages each Sunday afternoon. All classes are offered free of cost and are available to all interested in the community.

The Senior Sangam Program's Senior Milan, a weekly get-together for all program participants, generally features a speaker and discussion on a topic of particular interest to Senior Sangam members. Milans are held each Thursday and also feature light refreshments from local food vendors. Past Milans have featured speakers from the Illinois Secretary of State's Office, Illinois Department of Public Aid, Illinois Department of Human Services, United States Social Security Administration, White Crane Senior Wellness Center, Cook County Sheriff's Office, and the Chicago Department on Aging. Speakers focus on services available to seniors or on issues affecting the community as a whole.

Recent trips and intergenerational activities IAC seniors have participated in recently include a visit to the Chicago Botanical Gardens, a tour of City Hall, a screening of classical Indian dance at the Chicago Public Library, a cultural festival at the Chicago Children's Museum, a community documentation project, and a puppetry activity with children in the IAC's Summer Fun Youth Program.

g.s. punia celebrates 75th birthday at indo-american center

This August, Mr. Gurdev S. Punia celebrated his 75th birthday. As he has been steadfastly doing for over a decade, Mr. Punia, IAC's INS Coordinator, continued to work at the IAC and help community members with immigration questions on his birthday. Mr. Punia has also been a dedicated participant in IAC education outreach activities, and lends his expertise whenever needed by others around the Center.



Mr. Punia lends a hand in wrapping a turban for a visiting student

iac computer program sees continued growth



Volunteers Raj Madugula, Zohaib Ahmed, & Paritosh Desai help network a lab

The Indo-American Center has recently completed its ten-week summer computer class sessions with over fifty students, ranging in age from five to eighty-five years old, completing the various levels and programs.

Under the leadership of computer literacy coordinator Nirav Pandya and dedicated teachers Asma Asif and Azra Hussain, the Center has been able to provide community members three hours of computer instruction every day. Four levels of classes are now offered, doubling what was offered at the Center in the past. The children's class (ages five to twelve) seeks to introduce children to computer basics and the various ways in which technology can aid them in their schoolwork. The adult beginner

class introduces adults, who may have never before used a computer, to the computing world with an emphasis on gaining typing proficiency and basic operating skills. The adult advanced class concentrates on giving students in-depth knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher, Power Point, and Access. Finally, the Internet/Web Design class concentrates on gaining knowledge for use of the Internet including browsing, E-mail, Instant Messenger, and web design. A comprehensive curriculum has been developed for all four of these classes.

Currently, the Center has over twenty computers that are utilized for instruction. Our advanced lab has five new Dell computers that were networked over the summer and are connected to the Internet through a DSL Line. In addition, the beginner lab has been newly renovated with fifteen fully functioning 486 SX computers. For more information about computer classes, please do not hesitate to contact the Center at (773) 973-4444.

iac literacy students enter night of 1000 stars event

Four of the IAC's adult literacy students lit up the stage at the Northside Literacy Council's Night of 1000 stars on May 3. Amna Aziz, Esra Aziz, Ashok Baxi, and Usha Sishodia wrote and edited their prose pieces with English teachers A.J. Barot, Suleman Nathani, and Prakash Verma. They also practiced their delivery with several literacy volunteers before performing in front of the 100 person strong audience at the Night of 1000 Stars.

We thank all of the teachers, family, and volunteers who supported these students, and most of all, we congratulate the students for their accomplishments!



IAC staff, volunteers, & students at this year's Night of a Thousand Stars celebration

weekend summer fun for kids at the indo-american center

The Indo-American Center's Summer Fun program was a resounding success with twenty-five to thirty community youth (ages five to twelve) attending events every Saturday and Sunday for three hours from June 9th to August 19th. Under the guidance of staff members Bindhu Vijayan, Faisal Hadi, and Nirav Pandya, and with the help of young professional volunteers and teens from local high schools, the program provided diverse, enriching activities for the children.

On Saturdays, the children participated in the "Reading is Artrageous" program at Northtown Library, reading books with volunteer tutors and engaging in storytelling with library staff. In addition to the program at Northtown Library, the program invited outside guests to do workshops with the children. Workshops this year included a puppetropolis performance, Brazilian martial arts instruction, a theater activity with Steppenwolf Arts Exchange, a Salsa dancing workshop, and puppet making with the Red Moon Theatre Company.

A unique aspect of the program this year was the opportunity for the young children to interact with seniors in the Center's Senior Sangam program. This included intergenerational activities in which the children interviewed the seniors about their life experiences, collectively took pictures of the Devon area in an attempt to document community life, and made greeting cards. Several intergenerational field trips were held. Sixty-five people spent a day at the Passport to South Asia program at the Chicago Children's Museum. Eighty-five enjoyed a trip to the Museum of Science and Industry.

In addition to the library program, workshops, and field trips, the children also took part in a scavenger hunt on Devon, a Science Olympiad competition, a field day in Mather Park, and cricket games.



summer fun students take part in a Brazilian Capoeira workshop



Veena Iyer & Ahalya Satkunaratham lead a dance workshop at museum

indo-american center collaborates with chicago childrens museum

The Indo-American Center Education Project collaborated with several other organizations which took part in the Passport to South Asia program at Chicago Children's Museum on Navy Pier during May and June 2001. Culmination of the affiliation was a visit to the museum of 65 seniors and children from the IAC Summer Fun program on Festival Weekend Sunday, June 10. Indo-American group visitors enjoyed Kathak Dance, cello, sitar, and tabla performances and created miniature rangoli (kolam) designs.

Thanks to cooperation of numerous volunteers, an IAC Indian Marketplace provided activities for children and their parents on four separate afternoons. Designed by Cristina Chopra based on a similar display at Sears School India Cultural Fair in Kennilworth, the Marketplace introduced visitors to ingredients for vegetarian dishes, the aroma of freshly ground spices, kitchen utensils, and rhythm instruments. Proud parents and grandparents snapped photos of their children dressed in traditional Indian outfits.

Volunteers who manned the exhibit included Nafisa Bandukwala, Virbala Desai, Tasneema Ghazi, Amy Paul, Dorothea Shah, and Bindhu Vijayan. Other IAC Education Project programs included exploration of stories and myths through the expressive gesture of South Indian classical dance by Veena Iyer and Ahalya Satkunaratham and a presentation of Bengali tales by Basanti Banerji and Devipriya Roy.

The Indo-American Center established contacts with several other Children's Museum Passport participants including the Chenda Troupe from Kerala which led the Passport Festival Procession, a Garba Raas Dance group from Northwestern led by Shivani Patel and Ankur Shah, Nancy Lesh, who performed Indian classical music on the cello, sitarist Sundanda Bose with Angshuman Chatterjee on tabla, rangoli/kolam artist Bharati Dev, yoga instructor Meera Sanghani, and Anila Sinha Foundation Kathak Dancers.

iac invites photographs from community for a pictorial history

The Pictorial History project, a joint undertaking of the Indo-American Center and Arcadia Publishing, is well under way with the first photographs having been contributed by community organizations such as India Catholic Association and Indo-American Democratic Organization. We are eagerly awaiting photos from many other community organizations.

This pictorial history will be a landmark publication which captures the history of Asian Indians in Metropolitan Chicago from 1900 to the present. Your help in making it as comprehensive and fully representative as possible is vital.

Photographs will be welcomed at the Pictorial History Project Table at the Indo-American Center's Annual Banquet at the Marriott Oakbrook on September 23rd. Bring your photos to this gala event to make a contribution to an important historical document.

Photographs should be of good quality and should be labeled with a name, address, and telephone number. Include information about subject: Who? What? Where? When? Context? Significance?

1. If you belong to an Asian Indian community organization, please ask the person in charge of communications or publicity to contact Padma Rangaswamy at (630) 654-0168 for further details on the project.

2. We are especially looking for photos in the following categories: Family Life and Events, Holiday Celebrations, Regional Diversity, Religion, Occupations, Recreation, Politics, the Arts, Service Organizations, and Outstanding Individuals.



Hector Lobo of the Indian Catholic Association of America sent in this historic photo of Joseph Cardinal Bernardine, Archbishop of our Lady of Victory Church, Chicago, March 6, 1994 for the pictorial history

3. Search through your family albums to find photos depicting unique, interesting, and important events. We need photographs that tell personal stories of family reunions or "the day you landed at O'Hare" as well as those which document major events.

4. If you submit photos of Outstanding Individuals, be sure to indicate why you consider them outstanding and describe the nature of their contributions to the community.

Collection of photographs is scheduled to continue until October 31, 2001. Be sure to select and send your contributions as soon as possible. All photographs will be returned.

neera walsh presents community hate crimes workshop at iac



Neera Walsh, Deputy Supervisor of the First Municipal District of the Illinois State Attorneys Office, recently presented a community workshop on hate crimes. Please visit www.indoamerican.org for info

gandhi/king essay contest continued from page 1...

Winners of the 2001 contest include Sutton Crawford, a student of Kelly McKee at Evanston Township High School, Gabriel Gastor, a student of Ms. Hsu at Walton Payton Preparatory High School, and Vanessa Soto, a student of Richard Sauer at Lincoln Park High School. Each received five shares of Disney stock from the Dharma Foundation and a scholarship for a three hour course in the Columbia College High School Summer Institute. Winning essays were submitted for the Prudential Spirit of Community Award.

In addition, six students received honorable mention and gifts from Nike. Recipients were Joelle M. Roche, Senior High School, Davis, California, Alexandra Orozco, St. Scholastica High School, Chicago, Vanessa Wells, Lincoln Park High School, Adam Dolkert, Evanston Township High school, Manali Rathod, Council Rock High School, Newtown, Pennsylvania, and Shuvra Gupta, Don Bosco School, Calcutta, India. America On Line has provided a link to the Indo-American Center web page www.indoamerican.org where details about the 2002 contest are posted.

indo-american center banquet 2001

Sunday, September 23, 2001, 5:00 PM
Oak Brook Marriott
1401 West 22nd Street, Oak Brook, Illinois
Contact the Indo-American Center for reservations
(773) 973-4444 or visit www.indoamerican.org



IAC Banquet 2001:
Investing in Social Capital

featuring:

Professor Mohanbir Sawhney
Northwestern University
Kellogg Graduate School

Melvin Durai
Comedian

Anjali Rangaswamy
Singer/Songwriter



Past IAC Banquets: Rono Dutta, 2000 Keynote Speaker, and Chenda musicians

INDO-AMERICAN CENTER
6328 N. California Avenue, Chicago, IL 60659
(773) 973-4444 fax (773) 973-0157
www.indoamerican.org

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