



The Sahara Insider

VOLUME IV

2011

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Sahara History: 2004 to 2011

Sahara of South Florida, a vibrant women's organization has been working since 2004 to reduce the incidence of violence against women in Asian communities. Sahara meaning "support" in Hindi and Urdu is a Miami based community group working to combat domestic violence and support to women in distress within the South Asian communities of South Florida.

Violence against women is an epidemic that knows no cultural, class, race or religious boundaries; however South Asian women in particular face unique challenges. Many South Asian women experience isolation and cultural inhibitions to report domestic violence. Language as well as cultural barriers and lack of knowledge regarding community resources makes it increasingly challenging for those affected by domestic violence within South Asian communities

Sahara was born out of an urgent and increased need for culturally sensitive and appropriate information to be made available to South Asian women of Miami Dade and Broward Counties. Sahara was founded in 2004 as a joint project of Miami-Dade Asian American Advisory Board (AAAB) and Women's Advocacy Project (WAP) of Women's Fund of Miami to address lack of awareness of domestic violence issues and paucity of resources in Asian communities. In the last seven years, Sahara has grown from a small group of South Asian women who were responding and assisting survivors of violence and women in distress in their ethnic and religious communities into a well organized and strategic organization, whose core programs include raising awareness about violence against women in South Asian communities and, providing culturally sensitive advocacy and support to survivors. Sahara also strives to develop women's leadership and educate service providers and the community at large regarding the empowerment of South Asian women.

Sahara is very proud of its accomplishments in the past seven years. From outreach events to fund raisers, domestic Violence trainings and discussions, we continue to spread awareness regarding the occurrence of domestic violence in South Asian communities and strive to provide intervention as well as prevention.

Dear Friends of Sahara,

Our sincere gratitude to all of you for your continued support towards making Sahara a vibrant organization. Wishing you a happy holiday season and a wonderful year ahead.

- TEAM SAHARA

Sahara of South Florida 2011 Gala

Dancers perform a "Giddha" folk dance.



*"You are not
alone..."*

saalt
SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS LEADING TOGETHER



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About one hundred and fifty guests filled the banquet hall of Palace Indian Restaurant in Davie on February 19, 2011 to attend the Gala and show their support for Sahara. The colorful dresses adorned by the participants, the enchanting Sitar and Tabla melodies, and the fabulous "Gidda" folk dance presented by the Punjabi Association made the evening regal and vibrant.

Naila Boodhoo, a former Miami Herald and WLRN reporter, did a commendable job as the mistress of ceremonies. Dr. Shahida Shakir and Dr. Shashi Jagadish shared the work of Sahara in confronting domestic violence Issues and informing the audience about the challenges faced by survivors in the South Asian communities of Miami and Broward Counties. For many, it was the first time they learned about Sahara's contributions. They were impressed to learn how Sahara has managed to meet this challenge with meager resources.

Marcia Reisman, Esq., an attorney with Legal Aid Society of Miami, was recognized for her dedication and commitment to several South Asian women referred by Sahara by representing them in legal proceedings.

Between the dinner proceeds, raffle tickets, silent auction, and live auction conducted by our exciting auctioneer, Victor Swaroop, Sahara was able to raise eight thousand dollars. We would like to convey our special thanks to all of our community members and volunteers who made this event a success.

FLORIDA COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE www.fcadv.org

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