



# The Sahara Insider

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

WINTER 2008

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

**Shashi Jagadish LMHC**  
(President)

**Shahida Shakir, MD**  
(Vice President)

**Lakshmi Subrahmanian, LMHC**  
(Treasurer)

**Vidya Prakasam**  
(Secretary)

**Shveta Kulkarni Esq.**  
(Secretary)

## DIRECTORS:

**Monalisa Gangopadhyay-Roy**

**Tehsin Siddiqui**

**Manju Kalidindi Esq.**

**Mohammad Shakir**

**Billo Jolly**

**Bhavani Nirmal, JD**

**Vasanti Puranik, MD**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**President's Message** 1

**Upcoming Events** 1

**Prose Corner** 2

**WID's SafeWalk 2008** 2

## President's Message

Dear Friends,

Happy holidays! As 2008 comes to a close, I am happy to reflect on the progress Sahara has made, with the support of volunteers, board members, and the community at large. This year, we not only repeated the success of 2007 with our 2008 Jazz Yatra, but also held our annual bazaar, both of which were extremely well-attended events, attracting almost 1000 people! We held 5 successful workshops on domestic violence and participated in India Fest.

We have also increased our presence on the national stage, by attending national conferences organized by South Asian Women's Organizations such as the Aarohan conference in New Jersey. In addition, we have tried to further integrate ourselves in the Domestic Violence community by participating in local DV walks. Even while participating in all of these events, I am proud to note that we have still been able to continue our most important function of providing services to 20 women who were victims of domestic violence- the people that need our help the most.

I would like to emphasize that none of these accomplishments would have been possible without the dedication of our Sahara volunteers and board members, and the generosity of the community at large. I wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season, and look forward to further success in 2009. Thank you, Team Sahara!

Sincerely,  
Shashi Jagadish

## Upcoming Events...

- Tuesday, December 16th, 2008, 6:30pm - General Body Meeting  
RSVP: [info.at.sahara@gmail.com](mailto:info.at.sahara@gmail.com)
- Tuesday, January 13th, 2009, 6:30pm - General Body Meeting  
RSVP: [info.at.sahara@gmail.com](mailto:info.at.sahara@gmail.com)

## DECEMBER 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## Prose Corner

### Sisters of Survival

The two women sat on the park bench, not touching, not speaking. As people walked past, they saw two women sitting side by side, who could not have been more apart, in appearance, in social status, and perhaps, destiny. One wore an air of privilege, marked less by her elegant accessories and more by her demeanor and posture. Her hair gleamed, her skin glowed, her manicured nails shone as she picked at the pale skin on her ring finger where till recently rested a much envied wedding ring. The other stared at the pale skin on her friend's finger and then glanced at her own bare hands. Her quick bitten nails lay still on the rough material of her thrift store skirt. Her neatly plaited hair had never seen the inside of a Fifth Avenue salon. Her narrow feet were shod in scuffed shoes with cracked heels. If their lives were to

be laid side by side, the contrast would be startling. Education, family background and social status would have assured that their paths would never cross except perhaps as strangers in the street or in a polite conversation between the served and the server.

And yet they sat together on that bench, connected as few would ever be, as friends, as sisters of the skin. Skin that bore the marks of rampant abuse that had now triumphed by healing. They were sisters of blood that had been shed as they protected their children from the fists of their husbands. They were sisters of screams that had been muted so that the neighbors would not hear. They were sisters of tears that had once shimmered in their eyes as they questioned God and their destinies. And then they

became sister warriors as one braved social stigma within her privileged life and the other the ravages of poverty to emerge victorious from their private hells. They became their children's heroes who took on the world so that they could breathe. They became advocates for other women trapped in the minefield of anger and pain.

As the sun started to set, the two women stood up and walked towards the park entrance, still not speaking. And yet they were an unseen connection, an unspoken conversation. After all they were sisters of survival, sisters of triumph.

- Monalisa Roy



*“If you judge  
people, you have no  
time to love  
people”*

- Mother Theresa

#### EMAIL:

Info.at.saharافل@gmail.com

#### WEBSITE:

www.saharافل.org

#### HELP LINE:

1.866.567.7635

## WID's SafeWalk 2008

Members of Sahara participated in the Women in Distress SafeWalk 2008 on Sunday, October 26th, 2008. Team Sahara raised \$590 in donations for WID. Shown here: Sandeep Seshadri, Amera Zareen, Vidya Prakasham, and Monalisa Roy.



*Sahara is a Miami-based organization working to combat domestic violence in the Asian communities of South Florida, and to provide support for Asian women in distress. Sahara has provided support to victims of Domestic Violence from Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani backgrounds. Sahara is dedicated to assist domestic violence victims irrespective of their country of origin. Sahara's membership is open to both men and women.*

*Sahara is a joint project between Women's Fund of Miami-Dade & Miami-Dade County Asian American Advisory Board.*

**WOMEN IN DISTRESS BROWARD** [www.womenindistress.org](http://www.womenindistress.org)

Hotline: 954.761.1133

**FLORIDA COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** [www.fcadv.org](http://www.fcadv.org) Florida  
Toll-Free DV Hotline 1.800.500.1119

Miami-Dade Shelters: **SAFE SPACE** 305.758.2546 and **THE LODGE** 305.693.1170