

# Indo-American Heritage Museum

## June 2010 Newsletter

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### SAVE THE DATE!...

This summer, IAHM invites you to join us for these exciting upcoming events:

**"Talking About...Identity"  
July 10, 2010**

*How do you identify yourself?*

This question is the focus of the HAPA project, a theme inspired by the Field Museum's current exhibit [Kip Fulbeck: Part Asian, 100% Hapa](#). As part of this project, IAHM is asking community members to discuss their unique ethnic, cultural and personal identities in an innovative dialogue series, "Talking About...Identity," presented in collaboration with the [Chicago Cultural Alliance](#), the Field Museum and the Cambodian American Heritage Museum (CAHM).

***This event will take place at***

Dear Friends,

It is with great pride that I would like to announce the success of the first fundraiser that was hosted by Indo-American Heritage Museum. The presence of our community members, media, donors and sponsors assured us of your continued and ongoing support. We thank you for your trust and promise to seize the moment to move forward.

We recently concluded the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) in association with The American Association of Museums. The MAP helps maintain and improve operations through a confidential, consultative process. MAP gives guidance in meeting priorities and goals and understanding of how a museum compares to standards and best practices. Last month we received a report showing us that we were poised to launch ourselves and position ourselves with the likes of other community museums.

IAHM is defining its role in the community. This year our focus is to follow the guidelines laid out by the MAP program. This year, more than ever, it is time to build a strong foundation, identify our goals and resources needed to visualize IAHM's growth in the next two, five and ten years.

As a core member of the Chicago Cultural Alliance (CCA) we are collaborating with them to preserve our cultural heritage and linking this heritage to contemporary issues. Our vision is to use our strength and our voice to increase awareness in our community. This summer we are participating in 3 of their best programs to promote social change and public understanding of cultural diversity. The participation in these programs will be by invitation only and we encourage you to ask your friends and family to

*the Field Museum from 9-11 am.*

### **Internal Community Dialogue August 1, 2010**

Immigrant narratives form a rich and integral part of Chicago's cultural fabric. This public dialogue event provides an opportunity to showcase the diverse voices of the local South Asian community. Join IAHM and neighborhood volunteers as we hear different perspectives on the immigration experience and explore themes of cultural integration and identity.

*Please check our website at [www.iahmuseum.org](http://www.iahmuseum.org) for forthcoming event details.*

*Get involved! IAHM is eager to recruit community volunteers to engage in these illuminating projects. To find out more about IAHM's role and how you can participate in the events listed above, please visit our website or contact us at [info@iahmuseum.org](mailto:info@iahmuseum.org).*

### **Quick Links**

[IAHM's Home Page](#)  
[Visit our Gallery](#)  
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sign up for our newsletter so that we can hear their views and voices.

We count on your support as always. We wish you a great summer ahead.

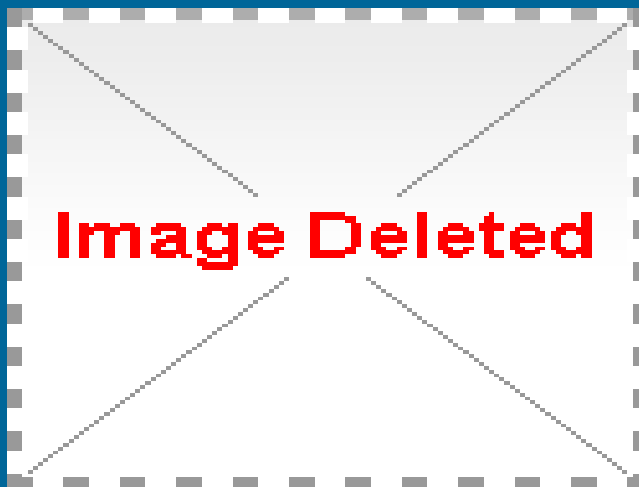
Best wishes,

Jagriti Ruparel

President

Indo-American Heritage Museum

### **A Sensational "Spring Into Comedy!"**



The Indo-American Heritage Museum hosted an unforgettable evening of laughter with the "Spring Into Comedy" fundraiser on April 18th. The event was a momentous success, generating media publicity and raising over \$15,000 in funds for the museum.

The occasion, which took place at IIT's Hermann Hall, began with a warm welcome and introductions from IAHM President Jagriti Ruparel and Emcee Kamal Hans, after which critically acclaimed comedians Vidur Kapur and Dan Nainan took the stage, regaling the audience with humorous adaptations of the cultural practices, lifestyles and attitudes of Indian Americans. Vidur was recently featured at the

New York Comedy Festival as one of ten top finalists in the "New York's Funniest Stand Up '09!" contest, and was also nominated in 2008 for an MTV Network award as "Brink of Fame: Comic" ([www.vidurkapur.com](http://www.vidurkapur.com)). Dan has recently performed at several inaugural events in Washington as well as the Democratic National Convention in Denver ([www.danielnainan.com](http://www.danielnainan.com)). While their performances made the evening exceptional, IAHM regrets the absence of Shazia Mirza, who was unable to attend the event due to international travel delays caused by the recent volcanic eruption in Europe.

On behalf of the Board and program volunteers, IAHM cordially thanks the more than 350 people who attended the fundraiser, and anticipates hosting additional high caliber events in the future. Please visit <http://www.iahmuseum.org/events.php> for more details and upcoming event information.

### **IAHM Hosts Presentations During Asian Pacific Heritage Month**

With May being [Asian Pacific Heritage Month](#), IAHM's popular Ethnic Dialogue sessions were in even greater demand than usual. Through the personal stories of volunteers, this cultural outreach program offers an orientation to the Asian Indian community and sets the context for an exploration of the business district on Devon Avenue.

IAHM volunteers [Dorothie Shah](#), [Nafisa](#) and [Mannan Bandukwala](#), [Rima Mukherjee](#), [Basanti Banerji](#), [Rani Desai](#), [Shailja Khatri](#) and [Lakshmi Menon](#) shared information about the community with visiting groups ranging from third graders to university students. Some were from schools within IAHM's neighborhood, while others came from the suburbs and even as far away as Michigan.

Upcoming sessions include a collaboration with the [Swedish American Museum of Chicago](#) summer camp, and a teacher workshop for 20-30 K-8 Chicago Public School teachers who are interested in integrating knowledge of the

South Asian world into their teaching of general subjects.

Share your immigrant story and exchange ideas with enthusiastic visitors who are eager to learn about the Asian Indians in their midst. Sign up to volunteer for IAHM's Ethnic Dialogue sessions at the [Contact Us](#) section of our website, [www.iahmuseum.org](http://www.iahmuseum.org), or drop us a line at [info@iahmuseum.org](mailto:info@iahmuseum.org).

### **Chicago Cultural Alliance Presents 'MOSAIC'**

As a Core Member of the Chicago Cultural Alliance, IAHM was proud to participate in their 3<sup>rd</sup> annual fundraiser, "MOSAIC: A Celebration of Chicago's Ethnic Communities" at the Irish American Heritage Museum on April 29, 2010. The event supports CCA's role in connecting ethnic museums throughout the Chicago area in a strategic partnership to effect social change and expand cultural integration.

The Mudra Dance Academy, directed by Kshama Shah, represented IAHM in the entertainment segment of the program with a classical Indian dance performed by Susan Abraham. IAHM also contributed two items to the Silent Auction in addition to selling the most tickets for the occasion. In recognizing IAHM's enthusiastic participation and commitment to CCA's mission, the Alliance has granted the museum a one-year membership to the Donor's Forum in addition to a free workshop. Please visit [www.chicagoculturalalliance.org](http://www.chicagoculturalalliance.org) for more information on the organization and forthcoming events.

### **IAHM Presents Workshop: "Gateway to India in Chicago"**

On May 15, the Indo-American Heritage Museum hosted a presentation about the "Gateway to India" tour for the Chicago Cultural Alliance and other ethnic museums to share its experience in developing this innovative project. Board members Lakshmi Menon and Dorothea Shah led a

discussion on the tour, which was developed through long-term collaboration with the CCA and Burnham 100 Celebration. The purpose of the presentation was to introduce CCA's core partner museums and institutions to the project, while offering IAHM's tour model as a guide to constructively showcase cultural neighborhoods. The agenda concluded with an orientation to the ethnic community and a tour of the Asian Indian commercial district on Devon Avenue, followed by lunch at the Indian Garden restaurant for participants.

### **Upcoming Events: Summer 2010 Calendar**

*This summer, the Indo-American Heritage Museum is excited to cooperate with the [Chicago Cultural Alliance](#) in a series of groundbreaking projects focusing on themes of community, cross-cultural dialogue and climate change.*

The "**Talking About.... Dialogues**" program is a two-part series of public panel sessions in which members of Chicago's ethnic communities are invited to discuss significant contemporary issues through the lens of their cultural heritage and experiences. For the first part of this project, IAHM will work in close partnership with the [Cambodian American Heritage Museum \(CAHM\)](#) to organize a cross-cultural dialogue on the subject of Identity, a theme inspired by the Field Museum's current exhibit "[Kip Fulbeck: Part Asian, 100% Hapa](#)" which explores the question "*How do we identify ourselves?*" The discussion will bring together diverse voices from each community and involve approximately sixty volunteers from both organizations. *This landmark event will be held at the [Field Museum on July 10, 2010 between 9-11 am.](#)* For additional information on Kip Fulbeck and the HAPA project, [please click here](#)

The **Internal Community Dialogue** program is the second half of the "Talking About..." series and aims to provide better insight into the immigration stories of distinct ethnic communities. IAHM, along with CCA's other core museums, will host individual dialogue sessions with an inter-generational group of community participants, who will share and critically discuss their perspectives on the experience of immigration. *This fascinating event will take place on August 1, 2010;* please check future news items

on our website at [www.iahmuseum.org](http://www.iahmuseum.org) for forthcoming details on venue and time information.

**"Telling Our Stories: Environmentally Friendly Communities"** is a program initiative developed between the Chicago Cultural Alliance and the **Division of Environment, Culture and Conservation (ECCo)** at the Field Museum, a primary partner institution of CCA. As part of the project, IAHM and other core ethnic museums 'will elicit community narratives about heritage-related values and practices that can be revived, reinvented, validated, and encouraged to help communities become more sustainable.'

In fulfilling this objective, IAHM board members and volunteers will engage in multiple workshops to develop a portrait of their ethnic community's contributions in shaping a uniquely cultural approach to eco-friendly action. This includes brainstorming activities to encourage awareness and long-term change in the community, as well as suggestions to promote innovative business practices on Devon Ave, such as finding a substitute for paper plates in local restaurants by adopting the tradition of eating on banana leaves, or encouraging the use of reusable shopping bags in grocery stores.

For further information on these programs, please visit the Chicago Cultural Alliance online at <http://www.chicagoculturalalliance.org/projects/default.asp>

*To learn how you can participate in these projects, please visit our website ([www.iahmuseum.org](http://www.iahmuseum.org)) or contact us at [info@iahmuseum.org](mailto:info@iahmuseum.org)*

## About Us

**The Indo-American Heritage Museum promotes understanding of the diversity, history, and culture of Indians living in America. We are dedicated to increasing awareness and appreciation of our rich cultural heritage and showcasing our outstanding contributions to the building of America.**

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