A Fundraiser to Benefit Saheli
Sunday, December 8th, 2019 from 3pm to 7pm

Burlington Marriott
One Burlington Mall Road, Burlington, MA 01803

Brought to you by the Saheli Gala Committee

All proceeds will support Saheli mentoring and educational programs designed to put women and children on the path to independence.

NIRBHAYA: Life free of violence
Best Wishes to Saheli

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**Message from the President and Co-Executive Director**

Supriya Saurabh  
President, Saheli Inc.

It gives me immense joy to welcome you all to our Fundraising Gala, Nirbhaya 2019. We are so excited to share with you all the strides Saheli has made in past two years since we last met for Nirbhaya, 2017. At each Nirbhaya, we bring to you everything that Saheli has been able to do with your love, guidance and encouragement for us. Our biennial gala also gives us a platform to celebrate our wonderful Domestic Violence survivors, whom I like to call “Warriors”, who have been a true inspiration for the community. I remain indebted to each one of our Donors, Supporters and well-wishers of Saheli, whose outpouring of love and encouragement has helped us survive and thrive in the past twenty-three years. Lastly, my sincere thanks to all members of Nirbhaya committee, whose relentless efforts and time brought us to this exuberant event. I hope you enjoy Nirbhaya 2019!

Divya Chaturvedi  
Co-Executive Director

It is an honor and privilege to serve Saheli as the Co-Executive Director. Domestic violence is often a silent and hidden problem in our community even as it impacts families from all backgrounds, culture and faith. For over 23 years, Saheli has given voice to countless women and has enabled them to get the help they need to lead a safe and happy life.

But more still needs to be done. The harmful gender norms in the society and the overall acceptance of abuse needs to change and, collectively we can make this happen. We can create a positive society where women and children can lead a life without fear and reach their full potential.

On behalf of Saheli and the Nirbhaya gala committee, I would like to welcome you to an evening of inspiration and hope. We are grateful for your support and thank you for your contributions that has enabled vulnerable families to live a life of dignity and optimism.

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**Nirbhaya 2019 committee**

It is my pleasure to introduce our 2019 committee members. These are the heroes of the production. Managing an event of this magnitude is a big undertaking. I know it could not have been possible without the dedication and vision of these volunteers, I thank you all from bottom of my heart! - Neelam Wali

Neelam Wali (Chair)  
Gouri Banerjee  
Meenakshi Garodia  
Rita Shah  
Divya Chandra  
Anu Chitrapu  
Usha Vakil  
Priya Murali  
Shalini Kakkar  
Divya Chaturvedi  
Manju Sheth  
Ramila Thakkar  
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Saheli Scholarship Fund 2019
VANDANA and VIVEK FOUNDATION

Scholarship for the education of a South Asian Girl

EVA BANERJEE Scholarship
for the education of a South Asian Girl

“No country can ever truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women and deprives itself of contributions of half of its citizens.” Michelle Obama
Kesha Ram
Former Four-Term Representative to the Vermont State House

Kesha Ram grew up in Los Angeles, California. After graduating from high school, she moved from California to Vermont to attend the University of Vermont and was awarded a Truman Scholarship. While at the University of Vermont she served as Student Body President. Her first elected position was as Student Council President in fifth grade.

Kesha served four terms in the Vermont House of Representatives from Burlington Vermont, her first three years as the youngest state legislator in the country. Last year, 2018, she graduated from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government with a Master of Public Administration degree. While at the Kennedy School, she was a Sheila C. Johnson Leadership Fellow in addition to her Cheng Fellowship. In her state, she has been a Civic Engagement Specialist, participated in Steps to End Domestic Violence as the Legal Advocacy Director, and currently consults on policy equity and environmental health. She also serves on the boards of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England and the Vermont Natural Resources Council.

In Vermont she has run for Lieutenant Governor, served on several committees in the Vermont House, Housing, Military Affairs, Ways & Means and Natural Resources & Energy Committees. She is a Morris K. Udall and Harry S. Truman Scholar, and serves on the boards of the Center for Whole Communities, Emerge Vermont, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, and the Vermont Natural Resources Council. Kesha’s future plans are to focus upon community-led projects in distressed areas in Vermont. She will be working with a network of social innovators across the country seeking the best models for accelerating growth and prosperity in rural America.

A Rubenstein School alumna, Kesha delivered the Rubenstein School’s 2019 Commencement Address on Sunday, May 19, 2019.

Latha Mangipudi
Four Term State Representative, New Hampshire State House

Latha was born and raised in Mysore, Karnataka and immigrated to the US in 1985. She trained at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Hospital as an Audiologist and at Fernald State School as Speech Language Pathologist.

Latha was elected to the New Hampshire State House following a high-profile election in Nov 2013. She is the first Indian-American to be elected to the NH State House. She was re-elected in 2014, 2016, and 2018 and continues to represent Ward 8 in Nashua, NH. As a fourth term Legislator, Latha has served on the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, and currently serves on the State, Federal, and Veteran’s Affairs Committee. Latha has organized and chaired several round table sessions to bring American and Indian business leaders together. In this effort, she is working closely with the Indian Consulate General in New York. She has also worked on bringing innovative ideas in early education, early intervention for special needs students and mental health and wellness in NH.

With the goal of sharing her rich Indian heritage at a state level she brought the Presenting Harvest Festival of Sankranti, built awareness of Yoga and meditation, and International Yoga Day, and the Indian Independence Day as a day of Celebration of Peace in the community. She sponsored a sculptor from Bangalore, India to the Nashua International Sculpture Symposium and enabled the celebration of Diwali as part of Nashua Holiday Stroll, attended by more than 30,000 people. Latha has served on many boards — New Hampshire Chapter of USINPAC, non-profits such as the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Akshaya Patra USA, Chinmaya Mission in Boston, the Nashua Interfaith Council, and the Greater Nashua Mental Health Association.

Latha received the Spirit of New Hampshire Award signed by the Governor of New Hampshire in 2015 for outstanding contributions to volunteerism. She was twice recognized as one of the top twenty most influential women in New England by India New England News, has been nominated twice for the Pravasi Divas Award and once for Padma Shri.

She credits her success to her public service and giving back to my community that has been her home for many years.

“I am very honored to be able to be part of this great community here in Nashua and being able to connect with my constituents at a personal level. In this day and age, when communities are socially isolating yet, give you a sense of connectedness, via virtual world, I have been able to keep in touch with people by being deeply involved. Food brings people to our dinner table often where we have invigorating discussions and, and at the end, connecting people and resources has been a great opportunity for me.”

- Latha Mangipudi
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and many more...

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Awardees

KAPLESH KUMAR, JD, Sc. D. Dr. Kaplesh Kumar is a U.S. Registered Patent Attorney. He is a member of the bar of the U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. District Court for the First District of Massachusetts, the State Courts of Massachusetts, and the U.S. Patent Court. He is the general Counsel at Mayflower Communications Company, Inc. He obtained his Juris Doctor (JD) Magna Cum Laude from the New England School of Law and is a Doctor of Science (Sc. D) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Kumar has been integral to the establishment of Saheli twenty-three years ago as the President of the India Association of Greater Boston and has participated actively in each phase of Saheli's growth in the role of strategic adviser, election commissioner, and community activity.

Dr. Manju Sheth Dr. Manju Sheth is known for her work in media in the South Asian community as the President & CEO of India New England Multimedia, the New England Choice Awards (NECA) and the interview series “Chai with Manju and “Dreamcatchers.” In addition to her medical career, she is passionate about women empowerment. She is a member of Saheli Advisory committee and has led fundraising teams at Saheli. She is the Community Ambassador for Akshaya Patra in New England, and a trustee of the Indian American Forum for Political Education.

As the Director and hostess of "Woman of the Year," she has honored twenty women in varied fields for 17 years. She herself has received numerous awards for her community work and advocacy and was voted “Woman of the Year” in 2011, featured as a “Notable Bostonian” in the Boston Globe, and was chosen in the “150 Women of Influence” by the YWCA Boston and amongst fifty most influential Indians in NE in 2012.

Manju Sheth has a distinguished medical career as well. She was the co-chair of Indian Women Physician's Forum, served on the Clinical Advisory Committee at Harvard Pilgrim Health Care and was appointed to the prestigious Patient Care Assessment Committee in 2018. She co-founded the New England Health Expo in 2013 with India New England News with its associated video series titled “Health Talk” and wrote a successful series for local media leader Lokvani titled "Movers and Shakers in Medicine." She is married to physician Dr. Dipak Sheth and has a daughter Shaleen, a senior at Babson College.

ANU CHITRAPU Anu Chitrapu is Senior Vice-President and Executive at Bank of America. She has won awards at the bank for exceptional performance, been named to the high potential women leaders group and has been nominated to the Diversity & Inclusion Council. She is a seasoned and dynamic business leader with a track record of motivating teams to step up their performance and a natural evangelist and influencer with the ability to get people excited about an organization and its mission.

Women empowerment, eliminating gender-based violence, education for girls and protecting the environment are causes that Anu is passionate about. It was this passion that led to the creation of Nyrvaana, a social enterprise founded by Anu and her two sisters, with a mission of saving fabric from landfill while providing employment to disadvantaged women. Writing has been a longstanding passion for Anu and she hopes to increase awareness about social issues through her writing. Her story, “The Legacy”, shone a spotlight on inequity and social justice and was awarded second place in an international short story competition. She is also a columnist for India New England News. Anu holds an MBA from MIT Sloan School of Management.

JERRY TUTOR Attorney Jerry (Gerald) Tutor is Saheli’s family law advisor and legal trainer. He is a member of the Access to Justice Fellows Commission. Jerry retired recently from Corrigan, Johnson and Tutor, PA. He is a Member of the Massachusetts Bar since 1974, was admitted to United States District Court (District of Massachusetts) and First Circuit Court of Appeals and is a former member of the Massachusetts Academy of Trial Attorneys. He concentrates in civil litigation in all state and federal courts in the Eastern District of Massachusetts, with emphasis on personal injury and family law. For the past two years Attorney Tutor has offered legal training to Saheli staff and advocates who accompany women to court to provide legal advocacy. He also offers free legal consultations to women who need advice in family law disputes.
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- Student & family counseling

www.learntoloveinc.org

LTL is a US 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Donations made to LTL are tax deductible to the extent allowed by U.S. law

Wish you Happy Holidays, Laughter, Health, Peace & Love - Brady, Anokhee, Anita, Amol, Sweta, Chetan Mepani

“Kapoor family opens a new restaurant”

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SAHELI’S VISION

A SHELTER FOR SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN

In 2018-2019 forty-nine South Asian women and children in Massachusetts became homeless after the breakup of marriage. Homelessness is a serious problem among abused women in our community and in the month of October 2019 alone, at least four South Asian women resided in a shelter with their child. Women in immigrant communities, with limited family and support structures, are extremely vulnerable to homelessness. Often, the person who drives women away from home is their sole source of economic security.

Saheli’s strategic goal is to establish a fund dedicated to housing homeless women and children. Between 2017 and 2019, state funds provided Saheli a small housing stabilization fund, but the need was far greater than what we could provide. It will take time to build up sufficient funds. Starting in January 2020, Saheli will build a network of community donors, state and federal grant funders, other supporters and stakeholders to support a South Asian shelter. Saheli will set up a restricted fund of $10,000 called the “Shelter Fund” as seed money. We hope generous community members will help us to get started.

How will we sustain the cost of the shelter?
1) Seek community support every year
2) Apply for state shelter funds
3) Apply for federal funds
4) Nirbhaya gala fundraiser every two years and other smaller fundraising events

To achieve this goal, we have connected with South Asian owners of motels, hotels, landlords of low-cost rental housing, and directors of established shelters. Sustainability is critical and a single state or federal grant can support the shelter for 2 to 3 years. Much will depend upon building up the initial fund and showing the rising need in the community.

Scholarships for South Asian Girls for Higher Education

Saheli will give scholarships to two girls from low income families to attend college
The value of the scholarships will be $3,000 and $5,000

In 2016 Saheli established a “College Readiness Program” for low income South Asian girls at Watertown High School. Created at the initiative of the Assistant Principal at the High School it received widespread support from the Superintendent of Schools and faculty. The problem facing the school was the low rates of graduation of South Asian girls who were married, or kept at home at age 16, to continue the tradition of early marriage. Parents were recent immigrants, many were low income, and mothers did not work outside the home due to language and barriers. To the faculty, marrying girls at such a young age was considered abuse. Some families said, they could not afford higher education for their daughters.

The Saheli program prepared girls for higher education, be it community college or a four-year institution. At weekly meetings run by Saheli volunteers, girls learned how to prepare for college, find a college, write an application, do the required coursework for a career, participate in community service, and write the personal essay. Many more girls graduated. Three girls returned to the Saheli program as leaders in October 2019 after successfully completing 2-year college in business at Bunker Hill Community College and enrolling at UMass Boston for a 4-year degree. They spoke eloquently about how the Saheli program had changed their lives.

Based on this experience, Saheli will dedicate funds to two scholarships in 2020. Girls will be required to meet motivational, academic, and financial criteria to qualify. If you know someone who will benefit, write to “Scholarship” at info@saheliboston.org.

All the best to Saheli Gala 2019

“to call woman the weaker sex is a Libel; It is man’s injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man’s superior: Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of Endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her, man could not be.
If Nonviolence is the law of our being, the future is with woman.”

Mahatma Gandhi.

We are proud to be associated with Saheli.
Saheli has dedicated itself in providing services to the women and families to help them live a safe and violence free lives. Women are pillars of our society and deserve Respect

Gita Muni, M.S. M.T (ASCP), Executive Vice President
ROMEGR Therapeutics, LLC
400 Trade Center Suite 5900, Woburn, MA 01801
email: Gmuni@romegrx.com
Phone: 781-569-5866
**Stories of Saheli’s Survivors**

Saheli empowers South Asian women and their families to live safe and healthy lives. To achieve this goal, we provide services to members of the South Asian community who are survivors of domestic violence, empower the families with financial aid and undertake programs that reduce violence in their homes. Saheli is uniquely focused on the needs of immigrants with roots in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Headquartered in Burlington, MA we offer an array of free services to our survivors including counseling, resources, workshops and educational programs in Waltham, Watertown, Quincy and Shrewsbury.

**The Red Doll**

It was Aanya’s birthday today. She had just turned seven. Her parents did not have the money to arrange for a birthday party, but she gleefully chirped around the house, dancing with a red doll her mother gifted. As she sat on the couch combing her doll’s hair, the door opened and her father entered. She went to hug him, but he pushed Aanya aside and in a thunderous tone directed her mother to serve him dinner. He seemed to be in a bad mood, again, thought Aanya. “You know, Daddy does not even remember my birthday,” she whispered in her doll’s ear. Crestfallen, she leaned against the wall. Pressing her little frame on it, she held the doll from its legs, waving it in circles. From the corner of her eyes, she saw the doll dangling, with its hair upside down. The doll was smiling at her, blooming in its red dress. Aanya looked at it and grinned. She bounced it in the air and started singing a birthday song to herself, “Happy Birthday to Aanya, Happy...” merrily hopping around the house. Suddenly, a loud noise startled her. Clutching her doll, she ran towards the kitchen. She was petrified by what she saw.

Aanya’s mother lay sprawled on the floor with her face bruised. Her father stood next to her, his body trembling with rage. There were fragments of glass everywhere. Fear gripped Aanya and her body froze. A chill went through her tiny spine as she uttered the word “Ma...” But the words got stuck in her throat, as an uncontrollable stream of tears trickled down her cheeks, streaking her chubby face. Aanya held the doll to her heart, and slowly began to inch closer to her mother’s unconscious body. Her father yelled at Aanya and suddenly her sobs began to vigorously shake her whole body. Fearing his wrath, she ran. Her tiny footprints left their mark on the floor, engraving the trail of Aanya’s painful childhood journey on our society’s subconscious, marred with the unspoken terror of domestic violence.

This is one episode from the life of an innocent victim who grew up with family violence. As violence grips their everyday reality, they are scarred for life. At Saheli, we are dedicated to holding the hands of victims and have pledged to put an end to their trauma. We empower mothers, so that they can save their families from trauma and abuse. **We provide financial and legal aid, help with job searches, English language, computer skills, counseling sessions, support groups, housing assistance, all free of charge, creating safe transformative spaces.**

Nobody needs to suffer in silence, especially helpless victims, who remain the most vulnerable part of our society. We at Saheli are there to listen to all the spoken and unspoken sobs that emanate from their innocent hearts. Are you?

- Shalini Kakar, Volunteer at Saheli

This fictional story is inspired by numerous survivor accounts that detail the impact of domestic violence. Please help victims such as Aanya’s mother by supporting Saheli. Your donation to our new Shelter Program will go a long way in putting smiles on survivor’s faces and in lighting up their lives.

U.S. government statistics say that 95% of domestic violence cases involve women victims of male partners. The families of these women often witness the domestic violence.
Twenty-three years ago, in 1996, eight South Asian immigrant women, “Sahelis” just friends, with no funds, no offices, or community support, sparked discussions about gender inequality in Massachusetts and mobilized the community in an anti-violence and empowerment program for women. Today, Sahelis advocate for legal, social and economic justice for women, immigrants and low-income people.

Middlesex County has the largest Asian population of 14 counties in Massachusetts and it was here in Burlington, often called “Little India,” that Saheli gained the loyalty of a growing South Asian community.

As the number of immigrants grew in suburban and rural Middlesex, we expanded mission, increased programs for low-income people, and promoted approaches to educate people about domestic violence interventions that help survivors. Today, in 2019, we retain our focus upon women, anti-violence and helping the most vulnerable in society by working in the administrative, judicial and legislative arenas.

Our vision is a world where women are free from abuse and violence.

Thank you from Saheli for your unconditional service to Nirbhaya 2019

Upendra Mishra, Managing Partner India New England News
Dr. Anil Saigal, Producer, Lokvani News
Meenakshi Garodia for Table Center pieces
Paresh Motiwala for Photo booth Pictures
Ganesh Davuluri for videography
Rasik Mehta for Photography
Sonal and Satish Khakhar for delicious Ice cream
Ramakrishna Penumarthi and the team for AV services
Malkiat Gill (Bollywood Grill) for delicious food
Burlington Marriott Hotel for venue and services
Printing and Graphics Services for Printing Services
Blueprint Occasions for Day of event co-ordination
Law Office of Elizabeth A. Harling, Attorney/Mediator

Community Partners
Consulate General of India, New York
Friends of Indian Senior Citizens Organization (FISCO)
India Association of New Hampshire (IANH)
India New England News (INEN)
Indian American Forum for Political Education (IAFPE)
Indian Americans of Burlington (IAB)
Indian Americans of Lexington (IAL)
Indian Circle of Caring (ICC)
Indian Medical Association of New England (IMANE)
Indian Society of Worcester (ISW)
Lokvani
New England Bangladeshi American Foundation Inc (NEBAF)
Prabasi of New England
Sewa International

Foyer Entrepreneur’s Display

Meenakshi Garodia – pottery
Anu Chitrapu – Nyrvanna – gifts made of recycled cloth
Jacqueline Denise Uhlmann – Rodan and Fields Skincare products
Saheli’s Community Programs 2018-2019

Domestic Violence Intervention Programs
Domestic Violence Support and Confidential Counseling, Bilingual Helpline, Legal and Court Advocacy, Shelter/Housing Advocacy, Mental and Physical Health Advocacy, Family Counseling, Transnational Advocacy, Domestic Violence Crisis Funds

Empowerment of Girls and Women
Economic Empowerment Funds for Education and Skill building, Support Groups for Survivors in Burlington, Quincy and Shrewsbury, Financial Literacy Workshops, Computer Classes, Job Search Assistance and Referrals, Career Counseling and Public Speaking

Prevention of Abuse and Violence
Healthy Relationship’s Workshops, Youth & Parenting Workshops, Programs to Empower Girls, Collaboration with Hospitals, Other Agencies and Police, Workshops and Presentations at Schools and Universities, Cultural Training for courts and other agencies

Funds Raised at Nirbhaya 2019 will support
• A Dedicated Fund towards establishing a shelter by the year 2022 for women and children who become homeless
• Scholarships to attend a college or training program in 2020 for two South Asian girls from low-income families
• A Legal Assistance Fund for South Asian women to pay partial fees for court representation to obtain justice in the legal system
• Remaining funds will support Saheli’s Critical Domestic Violence Programs, the Economic Empowerment of Girls and Women and the Prevention Programs for abused South Asians

Where Does Saheli Obtain Funds to Support its Programs for the South Asian Community?
1. Community Donors: Nirbhaya Gala every two years, Community Donors across Massachusetts and smaller fundraisers throughout the year.
2. Private Foundations: funds obtained by grant applications to foundations that support charitable organizations and social justice agencies.
3. A contract from the Massachusetts State Department of Public Health that pays the salaries of seven part-time staff members (from 2017-2020) and some operational and housing support costs.

List of Foundation Grants Received by Saheli 2018-2019
• Access to Justice Fellows Program Commission
• Blue Cross Blue Shield Catalyst Fund
• CHNA15
• Harry Dow Memorial Legal Assistance Fund
• Lahey Hospital and Medical Center
• Lenny Zakim Fund
• Massachusetts Bar Foundation
• Muslim Community Support Services (MCSS)
• She Will Foundation, Brandeis University
Play: **Hidden No More**

Written by: **Meenakshi Garodia**

Music by: **Anish Khanzode**

Inspired by true stories, this short play explores how domestic violence occurs based on the thinking and perspectives of perpetrators and victims.

Dr. Singh: Jharna Madan

Asha: Eesha Ingle

Abbu: Ajay Jain

Abuser: Ajay Jaisingh
Milestones in Saheli’s History

1996, 27th October – five women join together informally, and with support from India Association of Greater Boston, establish SAHELI, Support and Friendship for South Asian Women

2002 – First Saheli helpline 1-866-4SAHELI and the first computer and English as a second language classes for economic empowerment in Cambridge and Burlington are established.

2003 – Saheli receives its first 2 foundation grants from the Haymarket People’s Fund & the Kraft Foundation

2005 – Saheli is registered as a 501 C 3 non-profit agency; community engages in open discussions about domestic violence; Gouri Banerjee chosen Woman of the Year by INEN; and first 5K Walk Against Violence is held in Burlington

2006-2010 – steady growth of programs and clients; increased community financial support, increased foundation grants. Holds first Domestic Violence conference in Wellesley and receives Jane Doe membership

2008 – Saheli received funding to offer cultural competency training to police officers in Burlington

2010 and 2011 – First Saheli Fundraiser “Lights on,” followed by second fundraiser. An advisory committee of distinguished community leaders is appointed to guide Saheli’s growth and increase visibility

2013 – First Nirbhaya Fundraiser and Saheli’s Men’s Initiative are launched

2014 – Emotional Wellbeing Symposium, a large community symposium on physical and mental health is held

2015 – Saheli rents its first office space; Usha Vakil receives the INEN Lifetime Achievement Award; second Nirbhaya is held in September

2017 – Saheli receives its first contract for domestic violence prevention services from the Dept. of Public Health; appoints six part time staff members; and, holds third Nirbhaya Fundraiser in December

2018 – Saheli expands legal services and starts offering bi-weekly legal consultations. Saheli has its first Mother’s Day Gift Basket event.

2019 – Saheli expands services to Quincy and Worcester; and fourth Nirbhaya Fundraiser is held in December.

Gala Committee Volunteers

Anjali Wali
Ambika Wali Patel
Humsha Naidoo
Manish Patel
Nisha Wali
Rekha Palriwala

Saheli Program Volunteers

Annika Luk, Annika Savla
Ayushi Chotai, Cathy Beyer
Forum Chotai, Geethika Bathini
Gul Shamim, Haider Ghausuddin
Helly Patel, Haider Ghiasuddin,
Humza Hussain, Jey Banerjee
Lillian Hartman, Mahmuda Islam
Mary Matthews, Sejal Menon
Sumana Bhatt, Vandana Sharma
Shilpa Kulkarni, Yashvi Khakhar

In fond memory of my mother, Mrs. Sudershan Bedi who was a staunch believer in education as being key to empowering women!

- Amrit Chopra MD
Sunayana Kachroo Bhide is a poet, film writer, and lyricist. Born and brought up in Kashmir, Sunayana moved to the US in 2000 and published her first book *Waqt Se Pare-Beyond Time* in 2013.

Sunayana has been a dialogue writer for many films - *In Search of America* (selected for Cannes Short Film Corner in 2015), *Half Widow*, Dadasaheb, *The Illegal* (dialogues and lyrics, premiered at MAMI 2019) and *Gaash*.

She was the producer, writer and wrote poetry for *Pashmina*. Sunayana has written the theme song of Ekai Vidhyalaya, sung by Anuradha Palakurthi and Hariharan. Her work has been used by multiple Grammy award winners such as Elliot Schneider and Bob Ludwig. Sonu Nigam recited her poem *Tu Zarra Hai* for *In Search of America*. Her latest song *Subha Dekh Lii* was sung by Ankit Tiwari of *Akhiqui*. Zee Music and Tourism of Kashmir have used her song *Yumbarzaloo* written by Sunayana to promote tourism in Kashmir.

She was a participant in the prestigious Bangalore Literature Festival in 2014 and has performed at the Consulate General of New York.

Mohan Subramaniam is a well-known singer of Hindi Film music in the Boston area. He along with his wife Meera have produced several successful shows like “A musical journey with Hrishikesh Mukherjee”, “Awaaz-e-Jazbaat Shankar Jaikishan ke Saath” and “Khandan-e-Kapoor”. More recently Mohan collaborated with Shri Ameen Sayani a legend in the Hindi Film World for two programs: “Aashiq-e-Sadabahar” and “Geetmala ke Char Amar Sangeetkar”.

Mohan's deep love of music stems from being exposed to classical music at a very young age as he comes from a family of musicians. Mohan learns Hindustani classical vocal music from Dr. Dattatreya Velankar of Bangalore. He has also received mentoring in music from Smt.Tara Anand.

In his other life Dr. Mohan Subramaniam is a Strategy Professor at Boston College.

Accompanying Dancer

Shamoyita is a versatile Odissi dancer who has more than 20 years of learning, practicing and performing experience in India and United States. She has learnt her art form from Smt Susmita Bhattacharya in Kolkata India and has done numerous workshops from the leading performers and dancers of the form.

She has performed at various prestigious festivals and programs in India and US including Mass dance festival, Trinethra festival, Odissi international festival, Disha festival. She has also represented India in US for ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations) in 2009.
In appreciation of SAHELI

And the work you do by lighting the road to a better life and guiding those in need

with best wishes,
Nalini & Raj Sharma
THANK YOU

to all our sponsors, without whose support this event would not be possible!

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Testimonials

From the Burlington Police Department - a community partner

The Burlington Police Department has had an official collaboration with Saheli since 2002. Saheli has been instrumental in assisting the Burlington Police Department with reaching out to victims of domestic violence. Saheli members have responded immediately when asked for assistance by a member of the police department. It is the hope of the Burlington Police Department to continue and expand our collaboration with the members of Saheli.

From the Coordinator of the Domestic Violence Initiative of Beth Israel and Lahey Health, Ms. Merle Kushner

A highlight and privilege of my career as a social worker at Beth Israel Lahey Health and as the coordinator of our Domestic Violence Initiative has been the collaboration with SAHELI.

SAHELI never gives up. SAHELI is a “Go To” organization, SAHELI makes a difference. The caring, professional, and dedicated staff and volunteers attend Domestic Violence Initiative meetings, consult with Lahey staff, and develop and participate in educational forums. In addition, SAHELI as the recipient of multiple mini grants through Lahey’s Community Benefits Initiative, has brought creative, programming and been a bridge between medical care and key agencies in the community, and facilitated access to services for victims of violence.

Merle Kushner, LICSW
Kidney Transplant Social Worker
Behavioral Medicine and Psychiatry

From the Harvard University South Asian Association

Thank you so much for your time and effort in putting together a beautiful Mental Health workshop for South Asian Students at Harvard University. We are eternally grateful for the event and the work the organization does in general. It is a privilege to work with organization, and know about the impact you have made in the community.

From Jiya Nair, a South Asian student - graduate from UMass, Amherst

I worked with Saheli during the summer of 2017 as an organizational development intern. This experience was nothing short of transformative. By creating a culturally-sensitive approach rooted in community, Saheli is able to build trust with clients and long-lasting connections that empower women with skills aiding self-sufficiency. In my internship, I was exposed to a variety of issues such as immigrant rights and community advocacy strategies coupled with skills ranging from fundraising to database management and digital media creation. Moreover, I was connected with strong mentors who nurtured my personal growth.

Through Saheli, I was connected with other South Asian advocacy organizations, even participating in the South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) Young Leaders Fellowship concurrently. I am now a Fulbright-Nehru Scholar studying community engagement initiatives in Mumbai through Saint Xavier’s College. I can’t underscore how beneficial my time at Saheli and since has been to personal growth. I would strongly recommend volunteering or interning if you are interested in South Asian issues.

From a survivor

Thank you for bringing the support group to Quincy. I met advocate at Saheli right after I got the restraining order against my husband two years ago. She was there for me since that time. Whenever I need to talk to somebody she will come and meet me or will talk over the phone. With no relatives or close friends around me, the advocate became that friend you can tell anything or the sister you get an advice.

Support group really helped me to change my thinking and be strong to take decisions to move forward. Young advocates and all the young survivors who stood up for abuse inspired me a lot. I appreciate everything Saheli is doing to help the survivors of abuse. With the help of awesome, dedicated staff, I know I will be able to heal and reach my life goals.

You all are angels! Thank you so much.
1st Saheli Art Auction

S. Mark Rathinaraj
Poppy Awasthi-Charnalia

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Gayathri Ganapathy

By Renu Tewarie

मैं औरत हूँ
मैं क्यों?
मैं औरत हूँ, मेरे रूप अनेक, निर्मल हूँ मैं, कोमल हूँ मैं, प्रेम की प्रतिविर्भ में, आस्था हूँ मैं, विश्वास हूँ मैं, फिर भी परेशान हूँ मैं।
माँ भी मैं, बेहेत भी मैं, पत्नी भी मैं, प्रेमिका भी मैं, फिर अकेली क्यों हूं मैं?
प्रेम दीवानी राधा भी मैं, देश प्रेमी ज्ञाती की रानी मैं, लोक प्रेमी मदर देरेसा मैं, फिर भी पहचान तू न्द्र मैं।
मैं कहा
तू औरत हैं कमज़ोर नहीं, दुरारा भी तू, काली भी तू, दो शब्द "माँ" तू, जननी तू, पालनहार तू, जीवन का आधार तू, रिश्वत हैं इस संसार की तू।
तू है माहान!!
तेरी यह पहचान,
तुझे प्रणाम,
तू औरत हैं।

By Renu Tewarie
Birth is not only about making babies. Birth is about making mothers - strong, competent, capable mothers who trust themselves and know their inner strength.

- Barbara Katz Rothman -

Lahey Health

is proud to support Saheli and their mission to empower women and their families to live safe and healthy lives.

LaheyHealth.org