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SHAI: OUR 5775 REPORT

As we enter 5776, on behalf of SHAI's Board of Trustees, I would like to wish all of you a happy and a healthy new year; a year brimming with new possibilities, and a renewed sense of responsibilities.

This past year SHAI entered its 24th year as the premier non-profit organization catering to the local needs of the Iranian American Jewish Community of the Greater New York.

With the help of our benefactors, we expanded our traditional programs while at the same time introduced new ones to fill growing needs within the community.

The cornerstone of our activities, the SHAI Scholarship Fund, continued funding scholarships with a renewed focus on secular higher education. We also expanded our advocacy in the local schools with deeper partnership with the Great Neck School system.

We continued supporting our seniors with programs organized under the umbrella of the Great Neck Social Center, with more than 150 seniors attending regularly.

Our Youth Activities center grew in size as we doubled the number of children in the Summer Youth Activities program.

We expanded our partnership with other local organizations and officials by creating various forums and programs, such as the most recent in the series of Environmental Forums, Persian Dance classes, cultural programs, and more.

This past year we also created a Cancer Support Group in order to help and provide support to cancer patients and their families.

Looking into the future, with continued support from our friends and benefactors, we hope to sharpen our focus on supporting the domestic needs of the community through expanded programs and partnerships with other organizations and professionals. As always, we welcome your ideas and resourcefulness.



With best wishes to a year of community growth and partnership.

Raymond Eshaghoff
President




SHAI MEETS WITH GREAT NECK BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SUPERINTENDENTS

Members of the Great Neck Public School's Board of Education, led by President Barbara Berkowitz, recently showcased an intimate screening of the 200th Anniversary video of the Great Neck School Systems to SHAI's Board of Trustees. Dr. Tom Dolan, the recently retired superintendent of the Great Neck School District, and longtime friend of SHAI, and his successor, Dr. Teresa Prendergast, also attended the meeting. In the opening remarks, SHAI's board reiterated our community's commitment to education, praising the many parents who regularly volunteer their time and resources to our school system. An open and stimulating discussion followed the presentation, centering on pressing issues presently concerning many parents in our community. For starters, Dr. Dolan heavily challenged the rationality of standardized testing as a vehicle to evaluate the performance of teachers and students. On the issue of anti-Semitism, the Superintendent and the Board of Education reiterated their desire to further develop educational programs to increase awareness and eliminate hateful statements. With regard to its decision making policies, the Board of Education responded that it is open to evaluate existing procedures to better notify, solicit and subsequently incorporate parental input prior to rendering resolutions. Dr. Prendergast, who first worked as a math teacher and climbed the academic ranks to a position of the Assistant Superintendent for curriculum and instruction for Garden City Public Schools, expressed her enthusiasm for becoming the news superintendent. She noted the importance of community involvement in education and underscored the school district's strong alliance with SHAI.

Since its inception, education has been one of the cornerstones of SHAI, serving as a liaison between the Great Neck community and the School District. The SHAI Scholarship Fund continues to grant students who demonstrate a financial need with scholarships for higher education in the United States or Israel. On May 5, 2015, SHAI, in conjunction with the UPTC, presented an historic discussion regarding public education featuring an unparalleled panel of Great Neck's School District's past (Dr. Shine), present (Dr. Dolan) and future (Dr. Prendergast) superintendents. Organized by SHAI's vice presidents Rebecca Sassouni and Pargol Khadavi, and President of UPTC Lori Beth Schwartz, this historic panel attracted many of the school system's educators and staff as well as parents within the community.



SHAI & UPTC
Total Community Involvement Committees
Present
An Historic Discussion Regarding
Public Education Upon the
200th Anniversary of The Great Neck Public Schools
Superintendents of Yesterday,
Today and Tomorrow
in Conversation about Our Children's Education



Dr. William Shine Dr. Thomas Dolan Dr. Teresa Prendergast





5TH ANNUAL PERSIAN DANCE CLASSES FOR CHILDREN

As part of its Cultural Series, enrollment to SHAI's Persian Dance classes is in full swing for Fall 2015. Initiated and organized by SHAI Trustee, Tania E. Friedberg, this program has successfully attracted curiosity in our youth to explore the various forms of art within our Persian Heritage. With instruction by Michelle Taboroki, Confidanzé's director, the program is offered to children of ages ranging from four to eleven for dancing to energetic music from popular Iranian artists. Bring your children and grandchildren to learn and experience the various traditional dance steps and unique movements of our ethnicity and culture. We look forward to grow and reach many more children to enhance and preserves many of the beautiful artistic and historical elements of our Sephardic heritage.



SHAI SEPHARDIC TEEN LEADERSHIP SUMMER PROGRAM



SHAI's Teen Leadership Program successfully concluded its third summer program. Directed and organized by Rabbi Yamin Levy, this program was designed for youth between the ages of twelve and fourteen, and operates from within Beth Hadassah Synagogue's summer camp. For six weeks during the summer months, the camp

participants learn the values of community and charitable work while enjoying the many fun activities. Each week the teens visit the Great Neck Senior Center and engage in activities with our seniors. Once a week they partake in recreational trips such as paint balling, rock climbing, beach, water parks and the like. This past summer, due to overwhelming demand, SHAI doubled the size of the camp participants from 25 to 50 youngsters. Should you wish to enroll your children next summer or receive more information please contact SHAI.

SHAI IS PROUD TO BE THE LARGEST NON- GOVERNMENT SPONSOR OF THE GREAT NECK SOCIAL CENTER



SHAI is pleased to announce that the number of participants regularly attending activities in the Great Neck Social Center (formally, The Great Neck Senior Center) has reached 150. Three times a week, our seniors socialize, dine, and exercise while interacting with their peers. They also receive vital health care and educational information, including information regarding various available social service programs. The Social Center is open at no charge to anyone seeking companionship and social interaction.

Thanks to SHAI's Trustee, Parvaneh Khodadadian, and a wonderful group of volunteers, SHAI's involvement with our community's seniors has grown steadily over the years. Programs sponsored by SHAI include trips (most recently to the Nassau County Holocaust Memorial Center), park outings, and holiday parties.

SHAI encourages anyone seeking information and/or advice regarding Medicaid, Medicare, and other social service benefits to contact 311 and request Farsi-speaking liaisons who are available to residents as part of the Town of North Hempstead's Project Independence.



SHAI CANCER SUPPORT PROGRAM

This past year SHAI introduced the SHAI/JCC Cancer Support Program. Modeled after the Sid Jacobson JCC's decade-old Strength to Strength program. Our gathering meets once a week to provide services to cancer patients and their families. Led by SHAI's Trustee, Farangis (Ferry) Sedaghatpour, JCC's qualified professionals, Randy Hight, L.C.S.W., and Bonnie Oringer, P.T., C.E.S., we offer structured support and guidance in ways to deal with cancer to those in need of emotional and physical support. To introduce this program, SHAI held an informational forum in late February 2015. More than 125 people attended the event on a brutally cold winter night as five community members described their journey through battling cancer. Added to their emotional testimonies were related remarks by JCC professionals and open conversations.



SID JACOBSON JCC/SHAI CANCER WELLNESS PROGRAM
 Discussion and exercise specific to the needs of cancer survivors. Offered by a professional social worker, certified cancer exercise specialist and a related health practitioner who is a member of the Roman community.

At Great Neck House
 14 Amherst Ave., Great Neck
 Every Wednesday, May 13
 9:30am - 11:00am
FREE

For more information, contact Randy Hight, LCSW, Nancy Marx Strength to Strength Cancer Wellness Coordinator, 212-864-1245, or 212-464-9149.
 "A new program designed to help community members with cancer and survivors understand cancer, manage their lives through treatment and recovery, and find the emotional support they need. The program is directed by a certified cancer exercise specialist, social worker, and a Farsi-speaking natural health practitioner."
 JCC Federation
 www.facebook.com/strengthtostrength

SHAI YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

The SHAI Youth Activities program is offered most Saturday nights during the school year. The program is supervised by Rabbi Yamin Levy, and is based on a simple concept: Offer our youth better social alternatives, including sports programming and leadership skills. SHAI's capital investment in sports equipment, including basketball hoops and soccer equipment, has

proven well spent with weekly attendance exceeding one hundred boys and girls ranging in age from seven to fourteen. Interestingly, this program has also evolved into a social venue for their parents. Attendance is open to all without advance reservation or charge.

Should you be interested in this program for your children, kindly email sports@bhgn.org or call Ryan Anvari 516-445-7742



SHAI KEEPS PERSIAN CULTURE ALIVE - SHABE YALDA



As part of its Cultural Series, SHAI, under the leadership of its liason, Kamran Hekmati, organized a successful Shabe Yalda concert late last year. The event which was attended by well over 100 members of our community featured the Amir Vahab Ensemble. Vahab, a Persian music master, recited poetry and played traditional instruments for a rapt audience.



YOUNG SHAI PROFESSIONAL EVENTS

The Young SHAI division is dedicated to bringing our younger Sephardic generation together at various events held throughout the year. Under the leadership of Trustees Erika Goldstein-Kashi and Raffi Farzan-Kashani, Young SHAI plans special events to bring together our young community in a fun, safe and relaxed environment. These events regularly attract 200 to 300 single young professionals without cover charges. The events included various exclusive rooftop venues in New York City, holiday brunch gatherings on Sundays, and the finest parties throughout the year that give our younger generation many opportunities to stay united, meet new friends, and keep connected with one another.



SAVE THE DATE

SHAI's Biennial gala tentatively set for March 16th, 2016

2015 ANNUAL SHAI ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE: AN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FORUM



On May 21, 2015, SHAI held its annual Environmental Health Forum, which was organized by Trustee Michael Harounian, and moderated by Carol Frank. The panelists included Laura Weinberg, President of Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition, Nicole Lalezarzadeh, Great Neck North High School Student and science intern, and Erin Reilly, Town of North Hempstead's Chief Sustainability Officer. The discussion was very informative and triggered much interest within the audience.

The event included a discussion of three main topics. The first topic exposed that contrary to general thinking, the Federal and Drug Administration hardly regulates cosmetics and over the counter skincare products. Environmental Working Group (EWG) a non-profit organization, has published a list of ingredients often appearing in such products which have been proven to be cancerous. This group is heavily lobbying Congress to require such products to disclose the potentially cancer causing ingredients.

The second topic of discussion was the type of plastics to avoid. The last topic discussed in the event was our daily exposure to Wi-Fi radiation.



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ISRAEL IN OUR HEARTS 67 YEARS SHAI MARCHES FOR ISRAEL!

About 200 SHAI members, led by Vice President Shahram Delafraz, enthusiastically marched with our SHAI banner and waved Israeli flags up Fifth Avenue in New York in support and celebration of the State of Israel. The Iranian American Jewish Federation and SHAI co-sponsored the float resembling Esther and Mordechai's tombs in Hamadan, and showcasing Cyrus's Cylinder. The float was filled with Israeli boy scouts and community members singing and dancing to lively music.

