



SHAI
SEPHARDIC
HERITAGE ALLIANCE

*Celebrating Our
20th Anniversary!*



SEPTEMBER
2012

VOICE OF SHAI

OFFICE ADDRESS

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Great Neck, NY 11024

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Dear SHAI Family,

SHAI celebrated its 20th Anniversary Gala this past spring at Temple Israel of Great Neck. With a room filled to capacity, SHAI shared two decades of community achievement in a magical evening highlighting our organization's many worthy endeavors. Our Keynote Address was given by His Majesty Prince Reza Pahlavi II.

Over the last two decades, SHAI has moved to continuously meet the ever-changing needs of the local Persian Jewish community. As SHAI's tenth President, I am pleased to report that SHAI's organizational capacities are broad, resolute, and strong. As we look forward to the next twenty years and beyond, I feel it is important to highlight a few of our most fulfilling initiatives:

- SHAI's commitment to education initiated the establishment of the need-based SHAI Scholarship Fund which has distributed over \$1.5 million to more than 1,000 financially deserving students in the U.S. and Israel.
- SHAI's dedication to our seniors has resulted in our partnership with the Great Neck Senior Center. SHAI is proud to be the single largest non-profit donor to the Great Neck Senior Center.
- SHAI's support for our youth has nourished the growth of a vibrant Young SHAI division which promotes social and professional networking for our young professionals. SHAI is also proud to have established a tremendously successful school-year Youth Activities Program, our summer SHAI Teen Leadership Program and additional programming geared toward families with young children.
- SHAI's commitment to the community-at-large has resulted in increased programming for health and wellness, environmental concerns, educational forums, and local charity.

SHAI looks forward to preserving our rich history and cultivating the vitality of our future generations. May the new year ahead bring with it a renewal of all that is good within our community.

Thank you for your continued support as we give back to a community that has given us so very much. It is because of your generous and unyielding support that SHAI has been able to achieve this milestone.

May you all be inscribed in the Book of Life for a year full of health, happiness, and prosperity. L'Shanah Tovah Tikatevu!

Sincerely,
Pargol Khadavi
President

SEPHARDIC HERITAGE ALLIANCE INC.

SHAI MARCHES FOR ISRAEL!



SHAI proudly marched in the Celebrate Israel Parade once again this year.

With overflow crowds on our buses and hundreds more who met up with our contingent in Manhattan, our SHAI tradition was as evident as our banner and flags waving up Fifth Avenue.

Special thanks to immediate past president Shahram Delafraz for coordinating this wonderful event again.



**SHAI
ESTABLISHES
A YOUTH
LEADERSHIP
PROGRAM**

SHAI initiated a thriving program for teens this summer. Twenty-five local male and female teenagers, aged twelve to fourteen, participated in SHAI's Teen Leadership Program, under the supervision of Rabbi Yamin Levy. Rather than pass the summer idly, the teens had a fun and productive vacation. The program combined summer camp activities with leadership training and community and *chesed* work.



The participants spent mornings pitching in at the Beth Hadassah camp with its young campers. Afternoons were spent on community service. Each week the teens visited the senior citizens at the Great Neck Senior Center. While there, teens played Bingo, did arts and crafts, and conversed with the elderly clients. SHAI is the largest not-for-profit donor to the Senior Center, and according to our Vice President, Mrs. Parvaneh Khodadadian, who coordinates the Senior Center's offerings, having the teens visit there was a home run!



To develop their leadership skills, the teens participated in weekly interviews of local leadership success stories. Each of the interviewees graciously answered questions regarding their paths to success. The teens also worked on identifying *chesed* projects, and fundraising for them. The students held a lemonade stand, baked and sold challah every week. Once a week, the participants went on recreational trips, such as to paint balling, rock climbing, the beach, and a water park. This program was due to the beneficence of SHAI and its supporters. We hope to expand the offerings next year!



**SHAI LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
Summer 2012
Visit:
SHAI Sephardic Leadership
Program on Facebook**

SHAI RECEIVES CONGRATULATORY SENATORIAL PRAISE ON TWENTY YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT



CHARLES E. SCHUMER
NEW YORK

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 27, 2012

COMMITTEES
JOINT ECONOMIC
AFFAIRS
SUPPORTING
JUDICIARY
RULES
FINANCE

Dear Friends:

Please accept my warmest greetings and congratulations as you gather for the Sephardic Heritage Alliance, Inc.'s 20th Anniversary. I am grateful for the opportunity to recognize the exemplary work of the Sephardic Heritage Alliance, Inc. and your honorees for their dedication, leadership, and hard work.

Established in 1992, Sephardic Heritage Alliance, Inc. or SHAI has provided a welcoming, cultural institution for all to come together and celebrate their religious commonality. Through programs and community events, SHAI promotes time-honored values and traditions of the Persian-Jewish community and helps the next generation of Sephardic Jews reach their full potential. As a strong force in New York City, SHAI under the leadership of its board and its officers, has and continues to be a guiding light that unites the community and provides spiritual and cultural guidance to the members of this community. I applaud your leadership, understanding and dedication to SHAI and the larger Sephardic community members in New York State and across the country.

Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate tonight's honorees; Honorable Jon Kaiman, Supervisor, Town of North Hempstead and Dr. Thomas P. Dolan, Superintendent, Great Neck Public Schools, recipients of the SHAI Award of Merit; Honorable Anna M. Kaplan, Councilwoman, Town of North Hempstead, recipient of the Parviz Ohebshalom Leadership Award; Marc Eshaghpour and Isabelle Sakhaie, recipient of Albert Massachi Award of Merit; Michelle Hackman, recipient of the Eli Sassouni Memorial Scholarship; and Rojeen Kohan-Aho, recipient of the Dr. Moussa Brookhim Award of Merit. I am honored to join everyone gathered here today. Their humanitarian spirit is an inspiration to us all.

Again, congratulations and thank you for your hard work and dedication on behalf of all New Yorkers. Best wishes for a wonderful event!

Sincerely,

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND
NEW YORK



UNITED STATES SENATOR

March 27, 2012

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to send greetings to each of you attending The Sephardic Heritage Alliance Incorporated's 20th Anniversary Gala. I am especially pleased to join my voice with yours in honoring this year's keynote address speaker His Majesty Reza Pahlavi II.

The Sephardic Heritage Alliance Inc. (SHAI) has worked tirelessly to support Persian and Jewish communities throughout the United States and in Israel and Persia. New York thrives on its diversity and the Persian and Jewish American communities continue to make many contributions to the state's greatness and prosperity. New York has a rich and vibrant Persian and Jewish American community that plays a vital role in our nation's economy, culture, and government, and will continue to be an integral part of New York's thriving future.

I am grateful for your efforts to honor the Sephardic heritage and preserve the Persian and Jewish culture. We cannot improve the quality of life without improving the soul of life-and culture is the soul of life. Culture is what gives us roots, give our lives meaning, and brings us together. It is my hope that each of you will take this unique moment in time to ensure that we pass on to our children, and great-grandchildren both the symbols and gifts of liberty and creativity that make us who we are.

I send my best wishes for a wonderful event and much future success.

Sincerely,

Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator



Great Neck Record

Founded 1917
Published by Antin Newspapers

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

Serving Great Neck, Great Neck Estates, Great Neck Plaza, Kensington, Kings Point, Lake Success, Russell Gardens, Saddle Rock, Thomaston and the Unincorporated Areas

SHAI Celebrates Twentieth Anniversary with His Majesty Reza Pahlavi II as Keynote Speaker

by Pargol Nazarian Khadavi

SHAI commemorated its 20th Anniversary Gala on March 27, 2012, at Temple Israel of Great Neck. SHAI (Sephardic Heritage Alliance Inc.) is a non-profit organization dedicated to meeting the needs of the local Persian Jewish community. To that effect, SHAI has created relationships with local government, local schools, synagogues, and other non-profits for the embetterment of the Persian Jewish community and the community-at-large. Throughout the last twenty years, SHAI has distributed over \$1.5 million in need-based scholarship to over 1,000 financially-deserving students in the US and in Israel, through the SHAI Scholarship Fund. SHAI's community-wide environmental forums, educational panels, health and wellness seminars, holiday toy and clothing drives, blood drives, Persian cultural and language awareness programs, and senior citizen programming at the Great Neck Senior Center, have all enhanced the community's well-being.

Among the approximately 750 gala attendees were New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, Town of North Hempstead Supervisor Jon Kaiman, Nassau County Legislator Judi Bosworth, Town of North Hempstead Councilwoman Anna Kaplan, Town of North Hempstead Councilwoman Lee R. Seeman, Kings Point Mayor Michael Kalnick, Village of Great Neck Mayor Ralph Kreitzman, Village of Great Neck Plaza Jean Celender, Superintendent of Great Neck Public Schools, Dr. Thomas P. Dolan and members of the Great Neck Board of Education, and Mr. Bernard Kaplan, Principal of Great Neck North High School. Congratulatory letters were received from United States Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand.

The evening's Keynote Address was given by the son of the late Shah of Iran, His Majesty Reza Pahlavi II. His Majesty, who has been in exile since 1979, focused his remarks on the current situation in Iran. His desire is to achieve a peaceful solution to the threat of a nuclear Iran through change spurred from within the country based on internal, non-violent civil disobedience. He discussed the high cost of war in terms of lives lost and stated that war would severely set back the cause of democracy in Iran. His Majesty spoke of the importance of the support of the international community in advocating for human rights, freedom and democracy in Iran.

SHAI's bi-annual gala highlights the exceptional achievements of students from the Persian Jewish community. Award recipients this year included Intel Talent Search second place winner Michelle Hackman who was presented with the Eli Sassouni Memorial Award, National AP Scholar Marc Eshaghpour and All-County Music Festival bass clarinetist Isabelle Sakhaie who were awarded the Albert Massachi Award of Merit, and National AP Scholar Rojeen Kohan-Ano who was awarded the Dr.

Moussa Brookhim Award of Merit. Citations for each honoree were received from Nassau County Executive Ed Mangano and Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel. Student honorees also received an Israeli bond in the amount of \$500 from SHAI. Certificates for each student honoree were received from Councilwoman Anna Kaplan, who herself was awarded with the Parviz Ohebshalom Leadership Award, which is awarded to a member of the Persian Jewish community who has proven outstanding leadership abilities.

To commemorate SHAI's two decades, SHAI presented the SHAI Award of Merit to two members of the community-at-large who have been true friends of SHAI throughout the years. Town of North Hempstead Supervisor, Jon Kaiman has been a long-time friend and supporter of SHAI. Supervisor Kaiman has been a tireless advocate for SHAI's partnership with the Great Neck Senior Center, under the leadership of SHAI's Vice President, Mrs. Parvaneh Khodadadian. SHAI is proud to serve as the Great Neck Senior Center's largest non-governmental donor. Supervisor Kaiman is responsible for instituting Project Independence, a town-wide program to help senior citizens "age in place," and access information of basic services such as health care, social worker assistance, and community programming. As an advisory Board member of the Senior Center, Supervisor Kaiman has worked to broaden outreach to the entire community. Central to his efforts to facilitate the Town's day-to-day operations has been the 311 Constituent Response System which now offers a Farsi translator.

The SHAI Award of Merit was also presented to Great Neck Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Thomas P. Dolan. Since its inception in 1992, SHAI has reached out to develop a true partnership with the local school systems. Over the years, SHAI has enjoyed close relationships with each of the Great Neck Public Schools superintendents and Dr. Dolan's arrival three years ago solidified that relationship even further. At SHAI's request, Dr. Dolan has addressed the community-at-large during several SHAI sponsored community-wide educational panels, the next of which will be held on Monday evening, May 21st. (Details to soon follow.) Dr. Dolan's open-door policy is unparalleled as he has built a lasting relationship with SHAI's Board of Trustees. SHAI appreciates that again, and again, Dr. Dolan has demonstrated his respect and understanding for the cultural and religious diversity that is Great Neck.

The SHAI gala brought to light two decades of dedicated service to the local Persian Jewish community and the community-at-large. The SHAI Board of Trustees looks forward to the next twenty years of service and beyond. For more information about SHAI, please visit www.shaiusa.org



***SHAI'S TWENTIETH
ANNIVERSARY GALA
CELEBRATING SHAI'S
COMMUNITY OUTREACH
& FEATURING KEYNOTE
SPEAKER HIS MAJESTY
REZA PAHLAVI II***

In 1992, a group of 13 friends in their mid-30s, found themselves at a crossroad frequently visited by immigrants of a new land. Having left Iran as young adults the group established their lives in a new homeland, New York, rich with opportunity and democratic freedoms. Yet, amidst their success, they were concerned about maintaining their ancestral legacy. Would America soon assimilate their young children into her great melting pot? Would their stories of a past life in a distant country, with snow-capped mountains and rich Farsi maxims, suffice to sustain the next generation? Seeking to instill a meaningful balance for their young children, these forward thinking friends moved to establish a platform, for the future, by which the Persian identity and heritage would be preserved and passed down from generation to generation. And so, the Sephardic Heritage Alliance, Inc, SHAI, was born.

Two decades later, SHAI remains committed to its founders' core vision. Education is the cornerstone of SHAI's mission. As such, this commitment to keep its youth cohesive, well rounded and focused has evolved into a strong collaboration with local educational leaders, local government, and other non-profit organizations and institutions. The SHAI Scholarship Fund awards financially-deserving students with the means to pursue their education and obtain the tools for life. Remarkably, to date, with the help of the community, by distributing in excess of \$1.5 million, SHAI has assisted over 1,000 deserving students in the United States and in Israel in achieving their educational goals.

SHAI takes seriously its commitment to cultivating the next generation of leaders. SHAI's thriving Young SHAI division supports its young adults' professional and social networking ambitions. SHAI takes pride in the fact that these events have resulted in closely knit bonds of friendship and the like.

SHAI underwrites programs designed to expose young children to Persian music, language and culture with Persian dance and Persian language instruction and has also worked to secure Farsi language instruction in the Great Neck Public School district. SHAI also underwrites the cost of a weekly Youth Activities Sports program to



provide a fun and safe sports environment for kids. In addition, SHAI piloted a very successful Teen Leadership Program which will be offered again next year.

In its second decade of existence, SHAI mobilized to serve the needs of its senior population. SHAI is proud to be the largest non-governmental sponsor of the Town of North Hempstead's Great Neck Senior Center. SHAI is pleased to support the vitality and independence of the one hundred and fifty matriarchs and patriarchs of the community who attend. Three times a week, at no cost to them, seniors socialize, dine, and exercise. They also receive vital health care, educational information, and county social services.

SHAI proudly hosts an annual holiday Coat and Toy drive, a community-wide forum on the environment, a blood drive, educational panels in collaboration with local schools, parenting workshops, and health and wellness seminars. SHAI is also honored to organize a robust, multi-generational contingent of over 350 people each year in the Celebrate Israel Parade in Manhattan. Marching up Fifth Avenue, SHAI's unique 20 x 30 foot Israeli flag always gets aerial media coverage.

SHAI has made an innumerable impact on the lives of many. All those who have served on SHAI's Board over the past twenty years have integrated diversity of opinions and energy into a sustainable organization that prides itself on transparency and democracy. The vision of a group of 13 young immigrant parents has resulted in a 20 year journey to preserve, educate and elevate an entire community of children, parents, families, and institutions.



SHAI REACHES OUT TO GREAT NECK PARK DISTRICT WITH IMPORTANT COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS, AND THE HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL AND

SHAI continues to build relationships with important community institutions, including the Great Neck Park District. Following last summer's devastating microburst, SHAI contributed a Cherry Blossom tree to the Village Green which blossoms there still.

This year, SHAI supports the Great Neck Friends of the Parks Foundation in its efforts to fundraise for a new playground apparatus which will be accessible to children of all abilities, regardless of mobility, sightedness, or other impairments.



Pictured above standing from left: SHAI board members, Robert Gilardian, President Pargol Khadavi, Commissioner Robert Lincoln, Shahram Delafraz. Seated from left: Ruth Tamarin, Rebecca Sasouni and Farnaz Delafraz.

SHAI also supported the Park District's annual Persian concert. This year the parks and the Town of North Hempstead collaborated to host acclaimed performer Faramarz Assef.



Pictured above: SHAI President Pargol Khadavi, along with Town of North Hempstead Supervisor Jon Kaiman, Parks Commissioners Ruth Tamarin, Bob Lincoln, and Dan Nachmanoff.

SHAI and Temple Israel of Great Neck Present
Gina Nahai, author of "Caspian Rain" and, "Cry of the Peacock"
Wednesday November 7, 2012, 8PM
at Temple Israel of Great Neck 108 Middle Neck Rd.

*AND CONTINUES TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
INCLUDING THE GREAT NECK PARK DISTRICT
TOLERANCE CENTER OF NASSAU COUNTY.*

Abdol-Hossein Sardari

The "Iranian Schindler"

Diplomat and Rescuer of Jews during the Holocaust



عبدالحسن سرداری (شندلر ایرانی)
دیپلمات و ناجی یهودیان در دوران هولاکوست

Reception and Program ~ Sunday, October 14, 2012 at 1:30 pm

With Distinguished Scholar Dr. Fariborz Mokhtari

Holocaust Memorial & Tolerance Center of Nassau County

100 Crescent Beach Road, Glen Cove, NY 11542

RSVP: 516-571-8040 x 111 or www.holocaust-nassau.org/sardari





YOUNG SHAI EVENT



On August 22nd, Young SHAI hosted another successful "After Hours" social event. Over 300 promising students and young Jewish Iranian professionals crowded Glass Bar Rooftop of Hotel Indigo- a record number of guests! As its name suggests, the affair started after typical work hours ended. Guests began arriving at 6:30pm and many more stayed until after midnight. Upon entrance to Glass Bar, invitees were not only treated to a panoramic view of New York City's skyline but were welcomed with meet-and-greets with Executive SHAI board members where they learned more about what it means to become a Young SHAI leader. SHAI would like to thank Glass Bar of Hotel Indigo for generously sponsoring their venue for the evening and for donating a portion of the bar proceeds to our organization.



SHAI is proud to continue organizing young professional networking events and to forge connections with the growing youth leadership, and between the attendees, of the Sephardic community at future after Hour events. To learn more about how to get involved in upcoming events and Young SHAI leadership, please look at our wonderful Facebook page www.facebook.com/SHAIUSA



Event Co-Chairs: Ashley Emrani, Raphy Farzan-Kashani, & Erika Goldstein
Photographer: Shauna Delafraz





Great Neck Record

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

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SHAI and UPTC Host Education Panel Discussion

By REBECCA YOUSEFZADEH SASSOUNI
SHAI (Sephardic Heritage Alliance, Inc.) and UPTC (United Parent Teacher Council) recently presented an important panel conversation entitled, A Conversation on Community, Childraising, Choices, and Consequences. What are some of the unintended consequences of our expectations of excellence?

Despite soggy weather conditions and a last-minute power outage which necessitated a change of venue, nearly 100 parents from across the age, cultural, gender, socio-economic and religious spectrum came together to discuss their concerns regarding educating the next generation of adults with the esteemed panel. Panel participants were each well-known to the Great Neck community: Thomas Dolan, superintendent of Great Neck schools; Monique Bloom, president United Parent Teacher Council and incoming member of School Board of Trustees; Monsignor Brendan Riordan, Saint Aloysius Church; and Rabbi Howard Stecker, senior rabbi, Temple Israel of Great Neck.

The conversation was moderated by SHAI Vice President Rebecca Yousefzadeh Sassouni, who also organized the event. A public school parent, she is a former chairperson of the JFK Elementary School Shared Decision Making Committee and incoming chairperson of the UPTC Legislative Committee.

The event was seminal for the Great Neck community insofar as it brought together Christian and Jewish clergy with public school representatives and parents to discuss broadly education and ethics from the vantage points of various stakeholders.

After introductions of the panel, the audience viewed an excerpt of a video prepared by the Great Neck Public Schools

earlier this school year for viewing at its annual UPTC training workshop. In the video, students of all ages from the Great Neck Public Schools were asked to answer the question, "How will you know if you had a successful Great Neck education?" It was noted that the preponderance of the students responded with "I will get into a good college" and "I will have a good job."

Following the video, Dr. Dolan invited those in attendance to visualize their children 20 or 30 years hence. He asked, "How will you know if your children received a good education in Great Neck?" Parents in the room were asked to process their thoughts while members of the panel addressed some of the underlying issues. Rabbi Stecker noted that often we give our children "mixed messages" regarding how well we expect them to do rather than about how much we value their learning. How often, he asked, do parents inquire, "What did you get on the test?" rather than "What did you learn?" Monsignor Riordan spoke about the increasing disconnect within families, where parents and children do not communicate honestly with one another. Ms. Bloom spoke about the complexity of parenting. Audience members chimed in regarding their visualization of their children as adults. Parents shared their ambivalence regarding the relative affluence in Great Neck, the difficulty of maintaining that in the next generation, their hopes for their children to be self sufficient, resilient, to do good not just do well. A frank question and answer session with anonymous questions submitted ensued.

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, SHAI places value on education and community. For more information about SHAI visit its website www.shai-online.org.



In preparation for the upcoming panel discussion on May 21, panel members met to review the issues (l. to r.): Rebecca Yousefzadeh Sassouni, vice president, SHAI; Monique Saphin Bloom, president, UPTC; Rabbi Howard Stecker, Temple Israel; Dr. Thomas P. Dolan, superintendent, Great Neck Public Schools; and Monsignor Brendan P. Riordan, Saint Aloysius Church.

SHAI sponsors another Wellness Workshop
Wednesday October 24 at 8:30 PM
Great Neck House
"Naturally Jump Start Your Body: Be Energetic Happy and Stress Free"
Led by licensed acupuncturist, herbalist, and reiki healer Claudine Sarraf Amirian

SHAI Forum Highlights Exxon Mobil MTBE Investigation

Excerpted from an article by Carol Frank

"Full text available at <http://www.greatneckrecord/news/21208-sbai-forum-highlights-exxonmobil-mtbe-investigation.html>"

Plume Has Not Hit Drinking Water Wells or Hurt Air Quality

The environmental forum, recently sponsored by the Sephardic Heritage Alliance, Inc. for the community, provided a rare opportunity for the public to meet some of the experts who are involved in the investigation and eventual clean-up of the ExxonMobil gasoline leak containing methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) that has sullied the uppermost level of our aquifer system. While the investigation is ongoing, we do know that the plume has not reached drinking water wells.

There was also much information shared about measures homeowners can take to make their homes healthier by avoiding the use of pesticides and certain products that are proven to be carcinogenic.



At the SHAI forum (l. to r.): back row, SHAI board members Raymond Eshaghoff, David Obekshalom, Ben Kohanmeh, Tania Eshaghoff, Parisa Bokhour, Environmental Chairperson Michael Harounian, President Fargol Khadavi, Mike Delafra, Lee Harounian and David Pour; and front row, panelists Lara Weinberg, president Great Neck Breast Cancer Coalition; Dr. Jed Myers, senior project manager for ATC Environmental Group; Christopher Engelhardt, Division of Environmental Remediation at the DEC; Gregory Graziano, superintendent Water Authority of Great Neck North, and moderator Carol Frank, Great Neck Record. Photo by Neil Harounian



*Celebrating Our
20th Anniversary!*

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SHAI YOUNG FAMILY OUTREACH

SAVE THE DATE:

*Family Outing to
White Post Farms
Fall Festival*

Sunday, October 21st at 12:30 PM

\$10 admission

(regularly \$15) includes:

*Petting Zoo,
Inflatable Bouncers,
Pumpkin Picking, Hayrides,
Live Shows,
PLUS Kosher Pizza Lunch
Info@shaiusa.org to reserve*



SHAI is pleased to continue its Persian dance series featuring the next generation of Persian dancers.

