



# VOICE OF SHAI

September 2017

## SHAI: OUR 5777 REPORT

As the summer of 2017 comes to an end and we prepare for a new high holiday season, SHAI's Board of Trustees would like to wish all of you a happy and a healthy new year, full of good health, happiness, and prosperity.

I am happy to report that during the past year, SHAI continued its support of our senior citizens, our youth, and our entire community with enhanced programming and increased energy.

The SHAI Social Center activities continued to flourish with enhanced programming for a larger number of seniors. The SHAI Teen Leadership program had another banner year with a fully enrolled camp and a waiting list. Our cornerstone program, the SHAI Scholarship Fund continued its support of our community's students.

This past year as the Great Neck community went through an identity search in regards to the direction of the local schools, SHAI played an integral role in educating the larger community and disseminating information to parents and other resident voters.

As we embrace the new year, SHAI looks to continue its election tradition as we invite new members to join the Board and as we re-energize our board by rotating and electing new officers.

In the coming year we hope to use the momentum of the new board to enhance our programs, including, enabling more scholarships, increasing the number of youth accepted in the SHAI Teen Leadership program, benefiting more senior citizens at the Social Center, partnering with other community organizations, and uniting the community while preserving our Persian Jewish values.

SHAI welcomes your input. There are many ways you can get involved and support our mission. Please visit our website [WWW.SHAIUSA.ORG](http://WWW.SHAIUSA.ORG), attend our events, and consider contributing to our Support-A-Senior, Support-A-Student, and Support-A-Camper initiatives.

With many thanks to our supporters and benefactors,

Raymond Eshaghoff  
President

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## SEPHARDIC HERITAGE ALLIANCE, INC



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.



## SHAI IS A CHAMPION FOR CHARITY

On Thursday, December 1, 2016 SHAI held an exclusive Champions for Charity private cocktail party at Americana's Gucci. From December 1-4, Gucci and Americana donated 25% of Champion Card presented purchases to SHAI. SHAI personally thanks all the participants who shopped and dined - you enabled us to raise nearly \$5,000 for SHAI! SHAI will participate in Champions for Charity again this fall. Look for more publicity and save your purchases to benefit SHAI. This fall's Champions for Charity Fundraiser will take place on December 1-3, 2017. Mark your calendars!



## SHAI AND UPTC PRESENT SOCIAL HOST LAW FORUM

In December, nearly 100 students and adults attended SHAI and United Parent-Teacher Council's (UPTC) forum at Great Neck North High on Nassau County's Social Host Law - a law that aims to prevent alcohol consumption by minors in private homes. Spearheaded by social worker and SHAI board member Rebecca Harouman Cohenmehr, the panelists included Executive Assistant District Attorney Maureen McCormick, Kings Point Police Sergeant Jim Dalgish, Great Neck North High School Principal Bernard Kaplan, Great Neck North High School Assistant Principals Patricia Hugo and Dr. Daniel Krauz, and Great Neck Public School district social workers Shahnaz Goldman, Joan Greenberg, Malka Rahmanan, and Oana Scholl. Principal Kaplan pointed out that studies show the longer adolescents delay drinking, the more beneficial it is to their lives. Developmentally, the part of the brain responsible for decision making,

the prefrontal cortex, is not fully developed yet in adolescents, and thus often times leads to poor judgments.

Furthermore, Kaplan discussed the importance of students participating in after school activities and family time (family dinners, family vacations, etc.) as resilience factors.

The social workers informed parents that some adolescents "pre-game," drinking before social gatherings, in order to loosen themselves up. In the long-term this leads to an increased tolerance to the alcohol, which in turn may lead to changes in personality and even depression. Children need clear limits and boundaries in order to know what is expected of them. Children want to please their parents, and if it is expected of them not to drink, most likely they will not.

To learn more about the social host law please visit [www.nassaucountyny.gov/2014/social-host-law](http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/2014/social-host-law)



APPLICATIONS  
FOR SHAI  
EDUCATION  
SCHOLARSHIPS  
ARE AVAILABLE AT  
WWW.SHAJUSA.ORG



*Congratulations  
to our Vice President  
REBECCA SASSOUNI  
on being elected as a  
Trustee of the  
Great Neck Public Schools  
Board of Education.*

LOOK FOR  
SHAI'S  
NEXT  
GALA  
MARCH  
2018

## SHAI HOSTS PANEL PRESENTATION ON PRE-KINDERGARTEN

On February 7, 2017, SHAI, together with United Parent-Teacher Council and Great Neck Chinese Association, held a panel presentation on pre-kindergarten education. Parents were taught about tuition-free preschool and its curriculum aligned with NY State standards. The panelists included Great Neck Schools Superintendent Dr. Teresa Prendergast and Assistant Superintendent Kelly Newman, and kindergarten and pre-kindergarten teachers. The audience included a diverse representation of Great Neck's families. A question and answer session followed the panel presentation.

SHAI, UPTC and GCA  
invite you to an education event

**Prekindergarten: The Journey and Its Impact**  
Learn about tuition-free preschool  
and its common core aligned curriculum

Speakers:

- Dr. Teresa Prendergast, Superintendent, Great Neck Public Schools
- Ms. MICHELLE BOK, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Schools
- Ms. Karen Fogarty, Principal, P.S. 144 Elementary School
- Ms. Debra Shuler, Principal, Pre-K/Early Childhood Education Center
- Ms. Michele D'Amico, Kindergarten Teacher, Saddle Brook School
- Ms. Robin Brantner, Prekindergarten Teacher, Pre-K/Early Childhood Center
- Ms. MICHELLE BOK, CHAIRPERSON, PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT

**Tuesday, February 7, 2017 at 7PM**  
E.N. Baker School Auditorium  
44 West Hill Road, Great Neck, NY 11040

Seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis.  
Reservations requested +48 hours prior.  
CONTACT: MICHELLE BOK, CHAIRPERSON, PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT  
OR A MEMBER OF OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

www.shaiusa.org | www.uptc.org | www.gnpsd.org

Poster: Bill Brantner

## SHAI YOUNG PROFESSIONALS EVENTS

SHAI Young Professionals hosted over 200 people at its annual summer kickoff event on June 1, 2016. The event was held at DL's exclusive venue. With a great DJ, our young professionals danced the night away. On April 2, 2017, SHAI Young Professionals held an intimate brunch at Promenade, a kosher Sports Bar in Manhattan. A special thank you to Sharon Ahdout, Linda Baharestani, Shauna Delafraz, Raphi Farzan, Kashani, Daniela Goldstein, Erika Kashi, Jeff Kashi, Natalie Sanandaji, Shahruz Shahery, Mike Shakoochi, Neda Shokrian, Nora Shokrian, and Charlene Yomtobian.



SHAI YP is thrilled to announce our newly revamped and passionate board comprised of young professionals from our community from various ages and backgrounds. In addition to our classic events, we are excited to introduce new events this year!

Welcome new SHAI YP Board!

Co-Chairs: Erika Kashi

Linda Rasekh

Board Members: Mitch Ahdoot, Sharon Ahdout, Elena Delefraz, Doris Farahnik, Raphi Mahgehrefteh, Bahareh Pourtavoosi, Nathaniel Rahimzadeh, Bobby Shamsian, Nora Shokrian, Charlene Yomtobian, and Sharon Zarabi.

### Look For:

- ❖ Chanukah Brunch Party - December 2017
- ❖ Spring Shabbat Dinner
- ❖ Annual Summer Rooftop Event

For all SHAI Young Professionals events and exact dates please see our Facebook Page and

### Our Next Event

SUMMER ISN'T OVER YET!  
Wednesday, Sept 13  
2017  
7:30 at CRAVEN  
Open Bar 7:30-8:30  
Free Admission



## SHAI LEADS THE ANTI-BDS CAMPAIGN AGAINST ISRAEL

SHAI, together with Iranian American Jewish Federation and United Mashadi Jewish Community, organized its annual Anti-BDS events in the summer of 2016 and 2017. Presented by experts from StandWithUs and Jerusalem-U, local college-bound students, parents, and community leaders gathered for special events on understanding and defeating the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. Attendees heard from student leaders who have experienced anti-Israel and anti-Semitic activities on their college campuses, watched video clips of BDS events, and were taught about their rights and the tangible steps that they can take to counter this movement.



# SHAI

## Support - A - Camper



**\$ 500 per student, per summer**



- Support SHAI camper CIT program
- Help Campers enjoy the summer productively and advance through obtaining
  - Leadership skills
  - Team building skills
  - Personal growth
  - Community volunteering
  - Socializing
- Camp includes fun activities such as:
  - Weekly day trips
  - Swimming
  - Group activities
- Program donors; can
  - Sponsor one or more campers
  - Choose to receive regular updates throughout the season
- Donations are tax deductible

**Payment options:**

- Pay now by credit card or check



# SHAI

## Support - A - Senior

**\$ 1,000 per Senior, per year**

- Sponsor Iranian-American senior enrollment at the Great Neck Social Center
- Enhance programming for in excess of one hundred regular patrons at the Great Neck Social Center
- Funding directly benefits the seniors without administrative costs
- Increase attendance
- Enhance programming, stimulate and support entertainment which includes:
  - Mother's Day and Father's Day events**
  - Outings such as trips to Atlantic City, museums, and parks**
  - Daily activities, including exercises**
  - Kosher meals**
  - Entertainment and games**
- Donors can sponsor one or more seniors
- Choose to receive regular updates throughout the year
- All payments are tax deductible

Payment options:

• Pay now by credit card or check

• Pledge now and pay on a later date



# SHAI Support - A - Student



**\$ 1,500 per Student, per semester**

Support an Iranian-American student attaining higher education

Funding directly benefit students, no administrative costs

Sponsorship confidential to protect student and donor privacy

Choose to receive regular updates throughout the year regarding your student(s)

Choose to earmark funding to specific categories:

- Specific Schools
- Specific degrees
- Secondary education or post secondary education
- Medical students
- Yeshiva students
- Specific research areas
- -Donations are tax deductible

## Payment options:

• Pay now by credit card or check

• Pledge now and pay before academic school semester begins





## Young Families Welcome the Class of 2032 to the White Post Farm Fall Festival Kickoff Event



On November 6, Tania Friedberg and Erika Kashi revamped SHAI Young Families with their wildly successful White Post Farm Fall Festival kickoff event. Over 120 young parents and children from all over NYC and Long Island arrived at White Post Farms. A professional photographer captured the day for our SHAI families. Parents can find their family portrait shots on our Facebook Page [www.facebook.com/pg/SHAIUSA/photos](http://www.facebook.com/pg/SHAIUSA/photos).

Lunch was served and our community members participated in many different activities, including the petting zoo, bouncy house, train rides, and hay rides. The program was subsidized by SHAI and special patrons Setareh Adelipour, Monika Amirian, Aviva Azizi, Tania Friedberg, Melody Kalimian, Erika Kashi, and Nicole Waxman, whose generosity underwrote program costs.

With exceedingly high attendance and requests for the White Post Farm Fall Festival to be an annual event, it is clear there is a tremendous calling for SHAI to continue in our efforts to bring and maintain community among our SHAI Young Families.

### Look For:

- ❖ White Post Farm Fall Festival  
Sunday, October 29, 2017
- ❖ February 2018 Date Night  
Moms and Dads of young children, with a very special guest speaker, Expert on Childhood Development and Behavior. NYC and Long Island locations
- ❖ For all SHAI Young Families events and exact dates please see our Facebook Page and [www.shaiusa.org](http://www.shaiusa.org)

## SHAI SPONSORS MULTICULTURAL SHABBATON AT QUEENS COLLEGE

This past spring, SHAI sponsored its second Sephardic-themed Multicultural Shabbaton held at CUNY's Queens College on March 31 - April 1, 2017. The Shabbaton included Friday night Sephardi *nusach* services, a delicious Colbeh-catered dinner, post-dinner activity, Shabbat morning Kiddush, potluck lunch, and other activities. Persian students were empowered to take leadership roles and helped plan and implement this important Jewish event. Students of all backgrounds attended including Persian, Bukharian, Moroccan, and Iraqi Jewish descent. Students' feedback revealed the Multicultural Shabbaton was a meaningful and special Shabbat experience for them.



## SHAI CELEBRATES AND MARCHES FOR ISRAEL

On Sunday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, SHAI continued its annual tradition of proudly marching in the Celebrate Israel Parade. We celebrated the 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the State of Israel. Hundreds of SHAI members passionately marched up Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, showing our pride and support for Israel with our SHAI banner and Israel flags waving. We also waved our flags on our float the Cyrus Cylinder, together with the Iranian American Jewish Federation of NY.



## SHAI MARCHES IN GREAT NECK MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

On Monday, May 29, SHAI marched in Great Neck's 93<sup>rd</sup> Memorial Day Parade. SHAI members proudly marched up Middle Neck Road with our SHAI banner. SHAI honored the military men and women who selflessly perished defending our country and protecting our freedom. Some of the guests of honor included Councilwomen Anna Monahemi Kaplan and Lee Seeman, Mayors Pedram Bral, Jean Celendar, and Steve Weinberg, and school trustees-elect Rebecca Yousefzadeh Sassoumi and Jeff Shi. The parade was dedicated to Great Neck resident Arthur Seidman, 100, who served in the U.S. army as first lieutenant during World War II, and earned a Bronze Star and Purple Heart.



## SHAI'S TEEN LEADERSHIP SUMMER PROGRAM



SHAI's Teen Leadership Program doubled its size to 50 participants this past summer! Directed by Rabbi Yamin Levy in Beth Hadassah Synagogue's summer camp, for six weeks teenagers from our community come together to learn about their heritage, give back through community service, and develop their leadership skills. Some of the activities the campers participated in this year included a trip to Adventure Land, visits to the Great Neck Senior Center, and Challah baking.



## SHAI'S SENIOR SOCIAL CENTER

Nearly 150 seniors from our Persian community attend the programming at Great Neck Senior Center every week. Run by SHAI board member Parvaneh Khodadadian, activities include movies, exercises, tai-chi, day trips, dances, tea and conversations, English classes, card games, speakers, art classes, backgammon, and Bingo. Some of this year's highlights included celebrations. The Social Center celebrates Chanukah and Purim with holiday baskets for their seniors, purchased from Long Island Hebrew Academy. This Purim over 100 students from North Shore Hebrew Academy visited the center and made the holiday even more joyous with their singing and presence! Nearly 350 guests attended this year's Father's Day

celebrations at Steppingstone Park. There was a DJ, snacks, prizes, and kosher lunch was served. This celebration was featured on Mrs. Soleimani's Ma Va Shomah television programming.

Some of this year's day trips included a trip to Atlantic City and Bar Beach. The seniors attended an exciting bus trip to Atlantic City. It was a happy occasion with fun and laughter on the bus and many winners. The seniors ended the summer with Monday Fun Day at Bar Beach, where they enjoyed kosher lunch and ice cream. They also attended the Antique Car Show at the beach.

SHAI is proud to be the largest underwriter of the Great Neck Social Center.





Dear Friends of SHAI:

In accordance with SHAI's by-laws, elections for SHAI's new Board of Trustees shall be held on October 3, 2017. Trustees are expected to attend at least 75% of monthly meetings and to participate in organizing, promoting, and attending SHAI's multiple programs and activities as ambassadors of SHAI.

If you are interested in serving on the Board for the next three-year term, please send us a completed copy of this application form. Return it to us by email to [info@shai-online.org](mailto:info@shai-online.org), by mail to P.O. Box 1025, Great Neck, New York 11021, or by fax to (516) 829-2535 no later than September 15, 2017.

We urge you to participate in the election process and to consider assuming a leadership position in our community. Although serving on the Board demands time and effort, the rewards of serving our community far outweigh such commitment. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions.

Very truly yours,

SHAI BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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#### Application for Nomination to SHAI's Board of Trustees

I would like to nominate myself as a candidate in the election for SHAI's Board of Trustees

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_