

Multi-Cultural Festival coverage by Tri-City Voice

Unity Festival by *By Venkat Raman*

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"We started organizing Unity Dinners right after the events of September 11, 2001," said Jeevan Zutshi, founder and chairman of IACF. "It was important to bring people of different backgrounds and cultures together to foster unity in the community." Although the dinners were successful, Zutshi felt that since they were indoors and in the evenings, attendance was limited. The group decided to try something different; to make the event available to a larger audience. Zutshi commented that, "It will be good to have an outdoor event like this festival that can bring more people together."

The IACF, together with Ohlone College, Citizens for Better Community (CBC), Hispanic Heritage Council and American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPIO) will host the first Unity Festival in Fremont. For a nominal entry fee of \$3, visitors can enjoy various cultural programs including Bollywood and Hollywood expressions, Bhangra, Chinese Fantasia Performing Arts, Koto Oaktown Japanese and World Jazz Fusion, Omei Martial Arts, Lisa's Dance and Performing Arts, Japanese drums and Hispanic dances.

Over 30 booths will offer, a variety of ethnic foods and arts and crafts including custom jewelry, and a Mehndi booth where patrons can paint colorful patterns on their hands with special henna leaves (a temporary tattoo).

On Sunday, additional attractions will be added. A free Health Fair, sponsored by AAPIO, will take place from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and will include consultations with various medical specialists, screening for cholesterol and diabetes, and CPR training. An Immigration Fair follows from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., where visitors with immigration-related questions can obtain advice.

Garrett Yee, past president of CBC, welcomes the idea of a unity festival. Yee said, "The more opportunities we give our community to get together, the better. This event supports the mission of Citizens for Better Community, which is to encourage community involvement."

Fremont Councilmember Steve Cho believes in the idea of bringing people of different backgrounds together and has helped the cause by arranging for three of the performing groups participating in the festival.

"We are making a small beginning with this festival idea," said Zutshi. "Hopefully it will be successful and grow in popularity and scope in the coming years."

Tri-City Voice is proud to be one of the sponsors of the first Unity Festival, a celebration of unity in diversity. Admission is \$3 per person, and tickets may be purchased at the gate. Parking is free on the campus during the festival.

Please visit www.indocommunity.us or contact Jeevan Zutshi (510) 589-3702 for additional information,

booth reservations and program participation.

Unity Festival
Saturday and Sunday, October 15-16
10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Ohlone College
43600 Mission Blvd., Fremont