

Mother's Day May 12, 2002 - A report by India-West

Bay Area Federation Celebrates Mothers' Day Santa Clara, 12 May 2002 The Indo-American Community Federation (IACF), a Non-Profit public benefit corporation, celebrated Mothers' Day in style tonight at the Mayuri Banquet Hall. The event started off with an introduction by the convener Dr. Naresh Sharma, followed by a slide presentation by IACF secretary Dr. Subhash Garg, who noted that Jeevan Zutshi founded the organization in 1994 making significant contributions. Recent events by IACF include the International Kashmir Symposium and Cultural night in June 2001, which brought together the entire range of opinion leaders on this urgent issue, and the highly successful Unity Dinner in January 2002, attended by 400 people including prominent elected officials at all levels as well as fifteen mainstream organizations. An hour-long children's program followed, featuring a diversity of tributes to mothers. Students from the Nrithyollas Academy in Fremont directed by Shrimati Indumati Ganesh performed three Bharatnatyam dances on the theme of motherhood. The dedicated talent enthralled the audience including the stunning costumes of high school students Akshaya Ganesh, Priya Shankar, Ramya Vaidyanathan and Rohini Venkatraman. This was followed by ex-tempore youth discussion entitled "About My Mom" moderated by Garg, featuring a panel of six high school students including Priya and Ramya plus Nidhi Sharma, Monica Verma, Akash Ayare and Nikhil Sharma. The panel responded to informal questions about their mothers. Their candid and often amusing comments ended with each panelist stating what they value most about his or her Mom. The children's program concluded with a solo performance by Shally Garg, who also sang at the Unity Dinner. Dr. Swaroop Patnaik from the IACF Board introduced her as an accomplished young vocalist and high school senior who placed second in a college-level pop vocal competition held last April. Shally's spirited rendition of "I Turn to You", Christina Aguilera's 2000 hit honoring her mother, met with thunderous applause. The new Indian Consul for Community Affairs, Mr. Vinod Kumar, addressed the audience briefly about motherhood in Indian tradition and Mothers' Day. Dr. Rameshwar Singh who originally founded the FIA, and IACF director Keshav Ayare distributed certificates of recognition to youth participants. The remainder of the evening was filled with enchantment by Alka Bhatnagar's troupe, including Jag and the Sargam Orchestra, who sang a number of songs and provided live dance music until midnight. The personal touch of a live orchestra performing rousing numbers of the sixties and seventies as well as the latest hits appealed to the mostly over-forty crowd. It was a refreshing change from the usual Bhangra pop and DJs. The Mothers' Day celebration drew over 200 people, including members of FIA, FIBA, Sunnyvale Hindu Temple, past AAPIO president Dr. Subroto Kundu and TiE co-founder Dr. Devendra Verma. The organization will next celebrate Independence Day on July 4th.