

# Indo-American Community Federation (IACF) Celebrates Unity Dinner in Milpitas, CA

IACF marked its 25th Anniversary Unity Dinner with an AI Forum, Public Service Awards, and a gathering of community leaders



Community leaders onstage at the awards ceremony. Mayor Gary Singh of Union City being honored by Jeevan Zutshi and Mayor Raj Salwan of Fremont, CA. On the left is Mayor Carmen Montano of Milpitas and Mayor Larry Klein of Sunnyvale, CA (image source: IACF)

On Friday, April 3rd, the Indo-American Community Federation (IACF) hosted the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its signature Unity Dinner, attended by nearly 400 community leaders and public officials at the India Community Center in Milpitas, CA.

IACF was founded in 1993 by Jeevan Zutshi to help Indo-Americans engage more fully in mainstream civic life and to build bridges across communities through dialogue, civic participation, and public service.

The evening featured a mix of discussion panels, awards, and entertainment. The event began with a session focused on AI's impact on society, jobs, governance, security, trust, and the role of business and local government in shaping responsible AI. Moderated by Tas Jalali, CISO and AI Governance Leader, the panel featured Moinul Khan, Co-Founder and CEO of Aurascape; Krishnan Chellakarai, CISO of Gilead Sciences; Lily Mei, former Mayor of Fremont; and Murali Srinivasan, Sunnyvale City Councilmember.

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Next, six leaders were recognized with Public Sector Leadership Awards for their impact across transformation, innovation, service delivery, operations, cybersecurity, equity, and public service.



Ambassador Shefali Razdan Duggal with her Pride of Kashmir award. Left to Right: Jeevan Zutshi, Uphaar Kotru, Miss Kotru, Shyla Zutshi, and Ambassador Duggal. (image source: IACF).

Vice Mayor Chantel Walker presented the Transformational Leader of the Year award to Khaled Tawfik, CIO of the City of San Jose, and the Equity, Accessibility & Community Impact award to Beverly Greene, Chief Government Affairs Officer at VTA.

Ahsan Baig, CIO of AC Transit, received the Innovation & Service Delivery Excellence award from Sunnyvale Mayor Larry Klein, who also presented the Operational Excellence & Reliability award to Derek Calhoun, COO of BART.

The Cybersecurity, Risk & Resilience Leadership award and the Rising Leader in Public Service award, presented by former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, went to Tas Jalali, CISO of AC Transit, and to Nicole Guttridge, CIO of the City of Elk Grove and MISAC President, respectively. 11-year-old Shyla Zutshi presented Ambassador Shefali Razdan Duggal with the Pride of Kashmir award.

The evening's entertainment, anchored by Anjali Shaykher Zutshi, began with the national anthems of India and the United States sung by Amrita Kar. The show also featured Tinny Arora Juneja of Bollywood Connections, and Bay Area singers Puja Purandare and Shayanti Ghoshal, who sang Bollywood songs. Dinner was supplied by Raja Sweets.



The evening was anchored by Anjali Shaykher Zutshi (image source: IACF)

Attendees included Indian Consul Abhishek Kumar Sharma, and mayors Montano (Milpitas), Raj Salwan (Fremont), Mike Hannon (Newark), Lisa Gillmor (Santa Clara) and Gary Singh (Union City) who was honored for promoting diversity and inclusion.

Nearly 36 public officials including City Councilmembers, County Supervisors, and Assemblymembers were at the event alongside, representatives from Senator Dave Cortese, Congressman Sam Liccardo and Ro Khanna.

Public announcements included a recorded message from Congressman Ro Khanna's on IACF's role in uniting communities, while Alameda county district Attorney Ursula Jones Dixon and Santa Clara county District Attorney Jeff Rosen spoke briefly about efforts to stop hate and crime.



Keynote speaker, former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa (image source: IACF)

Keynote speaker, former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, reminded the gathering to take pride in their roots and love America.

"We are all immigrants who came to America from somewhere. We are as American as anyone is. Let us take pride in our roots and be great Americans," he said.