

## **GRANT APPLICATION FOR SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH**

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Vedic Cultural Centre is a Registered Charity

Year of Incorporation : 20 June, 1978

Charitable Registration Number : BN 11926 5882 RR0001

Our Organisation Serves the Arts and Cultural Sector mainly but do support social, human sectors too.

We have approximately 280 Full Time and about 55 Part Time Volunteers working for the organization.

We are applying for grants for a community based program called South Asian Heritage Month that is recognized and promoted within the province of Ontario.

We are applying for this Grant for the month of May 2008 (details of previous years program is attached) We are hoping to collect funds more other sources too.

VCC have celebrated the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual South Asian Heritage Month in the year 2007 and have relied on funding from community sources only, however this year we intend to get support of the Town of Markham too.

The Program is always well attended by the various community populace, leaders of the communities, Ministers, MPPS & Town of Markham Mayor together with the Councillors.( Copies of the Marketing Materials for Previous Years are available on request)

### **Mandate**

The Vedic Cultural Centre (VCC) was established in 1996, in response to a growing South Asian population and their need for a dedicated space to congregate, celebrate and promote shared values, teachings and talents of the ancient Aryan (South Asian) culture. As a cultural hub for South Asians, Indo Caribbean peoples and newcomers, VCC mandate is to offer enriched opportunities for cultural assimilation through music/arts training and performances, recreational and social programming as well as act as a pivotal base for group gathering, interfaith discussion and community events.

### **Vision:**

To continue to be a source of inspiration to future generations living in Canada by providing cultural training in music, dance, vocals, as well as recreational and social

services to the newcomer community with special emphasis on services to women youth and the elderly.

To continue to address the social and cultural needs of youth, children, women and seniors through the provision of culturally appropriate support tools.

To continue to be the central point of referrals for new immigrants in the Markham and York regions

To continue to reach out and build relationships with other communities/groups to access opportunities, share best practices, discuss emerging trends and address issues facing the South Asian and Newcomer communities such as poverty, isolation unemployment, youth training opportunities and language barriers.

Some of the key activities that are undertaken at the Vedic Cultural Centre.

### **YOUTH AND CHILDREN**

(a) Weekly Music Classes: Over 30 youth currently participate in instrumental music classes (Tabla, Dholak, Harmonium, Dhantaal ) on a weekly basis. An additional 10-12 students participate in Vocal Classes (see Appendix A for description of instruments). These are offered at no cost to students by professional music teachers.

(b) Annual Summer Youth Camp: Over 125 youth participate in an annual four day Summer camp along with over 75 parents This Summer camp has been active for the past 20 years.

(b) Summer Kids Camp: Offered since 2003, this 2 week summer camp provides over 80 children with a wealth of outdoor and fun activities.

(c) Vedic Cultural Centre Youth Scholarship Program was established in 1997 to help remove barriers to post-secondary education and to help them realize their dreams are achievable and show them the path as leaders of tomorrow.

Annually, five scholarships ranging from \$500-\$1500 are offered to Ontario High School Students entering Universities. South Asian Youth with an 80 % average in 6 OAC credits and a record of volunteer service are encouraged to apply. An additional Achievement award is also offered.

Ernst & Young has a national strategy Partners and staff team with outside organizations through events such as Leaders of Tomorrow to reach minority student populations across Canada.

(d) Matsubayashee Karate Classes. These classes have been offered weekly since 2001. The classes accommodate a maximum of 25 students who meet weekly on Monday nights from 7-8.30pm in 12 week cycles.

(e) Youth Outreach Activities: In 2007, over 50 Youth were engaged as both active planners and participants in the following activities:

- The Stephen lewis Foundation Exhibition
- The Duke of Edinburgh South Asian Chapter
- Professional Pathways Speakers Series

This initiative is part of the annual Leaders of Tomorrow motivational talks and one-on-one conversations with senior professionals from Corporations with similar

backgrounds as they shed light on post-secondary educational opportunities. Through interactive workshops motivational business leaders are invited to provide information and offer students the chance to ask questions, highlight concerns, and create solutions. The goal is to encourage students from priority neighbourhoods to think beyond high school and help them understand the many opportunities a post-secondary education can provide.

'and inspire these bright young students to believe in themselves."

-The Caribbean Children Foundation

-Ottawa Parliament Building Trips

## **SENIORS**

Programming Activities for seniors take place the first and third Tuesday of every month between 2-5pm. It includes the following recreational, social and educational activities:

(a) Recreational: Yoga and meditation classes are organized specific for seniors.

(b) Health Workshops, Educational talks, Specialists, Lectures. Regular workshops are arranged by the SSN, York Region. We are affiliated with OCSCO, an umbrella body of the seniors club of Ontario. We also partner with CICS, Carefirst, The Town of Richmond Hill and The York Region Indian Seniors Club affiliated with the Bayview Hill Seniors Program.

(c) Social Networking Activities to address seniors isolation, depression, loss of companion, friends, relatives. Many come on wheel chairs and say they look forward to the regular meets. They enjoy socializing and getting out of their homes to volunteer and participate in arts and cultural activities such as writing, traditional singing, acting, dancing, cooking and knitting. They appreciate the opportunity to participate in "Yog-Sadhna".

(d) Day Care for Seniors. Transportation is usually arranged by volunteers. 20-30 Seniors participate in an afternoon tea social and workshops with guest speakers.

(e) Partnering and building relationships with other senior organizations: Visiting other Seniors organizations in Oakville, AWIC, Grey Tigers are also part of the activities we engage our seniors in.

Although approximately 50 seniors actively attend, we are still faced with the task of reaching others in isolation as they don't have access to transportation.

Currently the club has a core group of 75 volunteers with 50 active participants, some of whom elect to work as committee members, while others are engaged in planning and implementing various activities and projects.

### **We offer these and other activities to promote diversity and community spirit within the town of Markham & York Region.**

All of our programs and community events are accessible to all as they are delivered in English and are widely advertised in communities such as Markham, Richmond Hill, Thornhill, Scarborough and Pickering. These advertisements successfully generate mainstream interest and enrollment in Yoga and Meditation workshops.

In addition, over the past few years the Vedic Cultural Centre has engaged its youth, seniors and adult members in a series of local and international outreach activities. We strongly promote and support volunteerism, we welcome volunteers engagement in supporting homeless/poverty relief causes, or in creating awareness on women abuse, or in supporting earthquake ravaged countries such as India etc. The following represents a few of the projects we have undertaken in the past:

- (a) Support through fundraising efforts to help earthquake victims in both India and Pakistan in 2006. Support was also provided to the Gujarat Earthquake relief effort.
- (b) Fundraising efforts to help Tsunami victims in 2005
- © Orissa and Guyana Flood Relief Support
- (d) Support to bring about awareness of the Caribbean Aids Prevention Program
- (e) Support to Youth entering University via the Annual Vedic Cultural Centre Scholarship awards
- (f) Support for the Malaria Eradication Project in Guyana
- (g) Organization of monthly local food drives to feed the homeless in downtown Toronto
- (h) Organization of in kind donations to support the local Food Bank Spring, thanksgiving and Christmas drives
- (i) Partnership with other cultural and faith groups to organize and host annual multicultural events to celebrate our diversity.
- (j) From time to time, we host special community events featuring workshops on Yoga and meditation, traditional crafts, vegetarian cooking, and open it up to various community groups. We also invite prominent members of the community( Mayors, MP's, MPP's, Councillors) to visit our center, to meet with our members, participate in our traditional feasts and festivals, develop projects of interests and share resources, with the ultimate goal of contributing towards a more inclusive Canada.

**These are some of the Groups that we have worked with since our organisation was established in 1978.**

We work closely with cultural, social service, youth, seniors and women organizations as well as with various municipal, provincial and federal government agencies to share resources, access resources and best practices as well as partner with them to celebrate or promote events that benefits the communities we serve. We are also fortunate to have forged strong relationships with many businesses in the community who have help with sponsorships of several of our multicultural events. The following represents a few of the partnerships:

**Community Health Workshops**

- 1 Diabetes and Pre-Diabetes Screenings in partnership with the Diabetes Association, the South Asian Healthy Eating and Living Initiative and the London Intercommunity Health Centre At our recent clinic we had a nutritionist in attendance, cholesterol testing, blood pressure testing and a light breakfast. Over 50 members of the community were in attendance.
2. Healthy Heart Presentations and workshops are offered regularly in partnership with the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Heart disease is one of the leading cause of death amongst South Asians.
3. Blood Donor Clinics are run out of the centre bi-monthly and it is in conjunction with the Blood Bank

#### Community MultiCultural Events

1. South Asian Heritage Month: The VCC was one of the founding pillars to be credited for their role in the official recognition of "South Asian Heritage Month". This is a very large community celebration that attracts the participation of schools and local politicians, as well as cultural agencies. Partners include the Devi Cultural Sabha, the Canadian Museum of Hindu Civilization and the Indo Caribbean news media
2. Scarboro Mission Service- Interfaith dialogue, events and Interfaith Contemplative Walk following the Labrynth are jointly organized.
3. Hindu Cultural Institute- Lectures on Philosophical Conections between East and West are jointly sponsored for the larger community
- 4 World Peace Harmony Run, a global event held in partnership with Club Budapest in 2007
5. Annual celebration of the festival of lights in partnership with the Devi Cultural Sabha and the local South Asian community.

#### Youth Patnership Events

1. A Unique 3 month Summer Heritage Program ahas been developed for youth- a collaboration with the Yoga Sadhana Group and the Arzoo Dance Theatre
2. Youth Scholarship Program in partnership with local businesses and high schools. At the banquet, keynote speakers included media personalities Suhanna Meharchand and Sunil Joshi, as well as the Dean of the University of Waterloo Dr. Sujeet Chaudhri and Consul General of India Shri Chandra Mohan Bhandari.
3. Participation for the first time in the Duke of Edinburgh award.
- 4, Development of a Peace Tree to present to the Stephen Lewis Foundation Exhibit.

Statistics Canada recent population statistics point to the increasing number of South Asians settling in the GTA. These upgrades will allow the Centre to serve thousands of residents in Markham and surrounding communities.

In addition, programming at the Vedic Cultural Centre also attracts members of the mainstream community. Hence, the timing of this cultural project is of particular significance, to address the growing enquiry from mainstream population on South Asian culture, art forms and practices. The exponential growth of Yoga for instance, as a solution to workplace stress, the integration of south asian musical instruments and cuisine, the rise of Bollywood movies, all demonstrate a craving for South Asian culture and a definite niche for culturally relevant programming in the community. We intend to foster better understanding and relationship with the wider population that frequent our centre during the Heritage Month. We also plan to educate the populace in order to preserve the south asian heritage and contribution made.

We require the funding amounting to \$ 4,000.00 for the current fiscal year of 2008 for the following purposes :

#### Advertising and Promotion

Payments to the Performers of Folk & Theatrical Groups

Prepared By : Shailesh Joshi ( General Secretary ) & Adit Kumar (Committee Chair of the Program)



# **South Asian Heritage Celebration      May 31,2008**

## ***Lower Hall program:***

**Boots or Displays: Historical, art, musical instruments, rangoli, karate; ayurvedic, yoga, artifacts, books, sari-wrapping, Video of 100 high achievers, Contributions and History of Asians coming to Canada. Participation from Seniors, Youth & Children PRIMARILY from the community of Markham & GTA.**

**The Program is aimed at educating and enlightening the importance of South Asian Heritage & Culture.**

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| <b>4:30</b> | <b>Recorded music, mehendhi and sari-wrapping (ongoing)</b>      |
| <b>5:00</b> | <b>Live music from various instruments</b>                       |
| <b>5:45</b> | <b>Opening remarks, Minister of Immigration<br/>Michael Chan</b> |
| <b>5:55</b> | <b>Opening remarks, Mayor of Markham<br/>Frank Scarpitti</b>     |

## ***LIVE DEMONSTRATIONS***

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>6:00</b> | <b>Karate</b>   |
| <b>6:15</b> | <b>Ayurvedic Demonstrations</b>                         |
| <b>6:20</b> | <b>Classical Dance Workshop</b>                         |
| <b>6:30</b> | <b>Live Musical presentation</b>                        |
| <b>6:40</b> | <b>Yoga      &amp;      last call for sari-wrapping</b> |
| <b>6:50</b> | <b>Tassa drum roll</b>                                  |





## ***UPPER HALL PROGRAM***

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>7:00</b> | <b>Multi Faith Prayers</b>                    |
| <b>7:10</b> | <b>Invocation Dance</b>                       |
| <b>7:20</b> | <b>Poetry Reading</b>                         |
| <b>7:30</b> | <b>Keynote Address (Nalini Mohabir)</b>       |
| <b>7:50</b> | <b>Skit Depicting Immigration Experience</b>  |
| <b>8:05</b> | <b>Taan Singing</b>                           |
| <b>8:15</b> | <b>Fashions of Different Regions of India</b> |
| <b>8:30</b> | <b>Tabla/Singing Combo</b>                    |
| <b>8:40</b> | <b>Bhangra Dance</b>                          |
| <b>8:50</b> | <b>Daandiya Dance</b>                         |
| <b>8:55</b> | <b>Vote of Thanks</b>                         |
| <b>9:00</b> | <b>End of Program</b>                         |



|  |                 | Actual          |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2008 Budget for South Asian Heritage Month Program | 2,008           | 2,007           |
| Expenses   |                 |                 |
| Plane Ticket for Guest Speaker coming from England | 950.00          |                 |
| Printing of Magazine                               | 2,500.00        | 2,350.00        |
| Performing Artistes                                | 500.00          | 500.00          |
| Costumes and Decorations for Stage and Hall        | 550.00          | 500.00          |
| Advertiserr TV                                     | 1,500.00        | 1,500.00        |
| Radio  | 1,250.00        | 1,250.00        |
| Newspapers   | 850.00          | 1,250.00        |
| Snacks and Food Items for guests and artistes      | 250.00          | 250.00          |
| Printing of Color Flyers                           | 100.00          | 100.00          |
| Still Photography of event                         | 600.00          |                 |
| Video taping of event                              | 750.00          |                 |
| Clean up   | 150.00          | 150.00          |
| Total Expenses                                     | <b>9,950.00</b> | <b>7,850.00</b> |
| Income   |                 |                 |
| Sale of Advertisements for magazine                | 1,250.00        | 950.00          |
| Donations  | 1,500.00        | 750.00          |
| Sale of Food items                                 | 1,250.00        | 750.00          |
| Total Income                                       | <b>4,000.00</b> | <b>2,450.00</b> |
| Expenses over revenue                              | - 5,950.00      | -5,400.00       |

