

NATIONAL INDO-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR SENIOR CITIZENS Inc. (NIAASC)

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NETWORKING AMONG ONGOING INDO-AMERICAN SENIOR PROGRAMS

The National Indo-American Association for Senior Citizens (NIAASC) had its 17th Conference on Saturday, May 30, 2009 in Elmont, Long Island. It was undertaken in collaboration with the Indian American Kerala Cultural and Civic Center. Workshop sponsors included 15 individuals and four nonprofit Organization. These organizations were: India Home Inc., Indo-American Senior Citizen Center of New York, ShantiNiketan – a project of Bharat Vilas in Florida, and India Association of Long Island, and. About 75 participants attended, enthusiastically endorsing the key theme of Networking amongst Seniors' Organizations encompassing both public and private sectors.

Mr. Rajeshwar Prasad, Executive Director of NIAASC, in his opening remarks urged participants to work with various Indian organizations in their communities to initiate programs for seniors. **Mr. Raju Thomas**, General Secretary of the Kerala Center welcomed the participants and recalled the close working relationship between the Center and NIAASC extending over ten years.

NIAASC President, **Mr. M K Ramasubramanian**, in his welcome address reiterated NIAASC's role as a "Catalyst" in promoting collaborative efforts amongst the Senior's Organizations serving seniors in their respective constituencies.



Guest and Members of NIAASC

The Keynote Speaker for the workshop, **Dr. Vasundhara Kalasapudi**, Founder and President of India Home Inc. outlined Ten Commandments of Networking, and enumerated each for the benefit of workshop participants. She elaborated in details where to start and how to proceed from one step to next. She also underscored the importance not to limit networking with Indian entities only but to work closely with American entities also. Her comments were supplemented by **Chan Jamoona**, Founder and Executive Director of United Hindu Cultural Council Senior Center (UHCCSC), **Dr. Ashwin Pandya**, Founder and President of Senior Citizen Center of New York at the Vaishnav Temple, and **Mrs. Nirmala Ramasubramanian**, Coordinator and **Jagajit Singh**, Executive Director, of the Hindu Temple Senior Program.



Dr. Vasundhara speaking: Panelist Nirmala Ramasubramanian, Ashwin Pandya, and Chan Jamoona, listening

The entire formal interactive session was moderated by **Ms. Meena Modak**, Vice President of NIAASC. Of the 10 participating senior programs at the workshop it was noticed that these programs have been in operation for varied periods from six months to over 10 years. Also programs varied in their affiliations: programs being run as a part of Federally funded senior programs; programs run under Indian community organizations; and programs run as independent senior entities. Each one had a different perspective on networking.



Guest and Members of NIAASC

After two-hour discussion **Mr. P. Ramaswamy Mohan**, NIAASC Secretary, summarized the proceedings and underlying suggestions. The proceedings of the morning session again confirmed some long standing beliefs and the very purpose of NIAASC that rose out of several years of gathering input and experience from the various Senior Programs and the larger community. The recommendations pertain to the invaluable impact of networking and are as follows:

1. Develop a comprehensive program for Senior Organizations, and encourage cooperative and interactive ventures with one another:

2. Encourage networking among ongoing programs as well as establish a working relationship with different community organizations within programs' service area;
3. Based on the experience of senior programs, NIAASC should develop a standard protocol for senior programs, to be shared amongst senior programs throughout USA;
4. NIAASC should maintain a database and share the same with senior programs as and when it would help the local senior programs;
5. An ongoing relationship should be developed with Governmental agencies at local, state and federal levels. NIAASC should develop guidelines as to help develop this cooperative relationship and identify areas that can be helpful to Indian American seniors;
6. NIAASC should work closely with other Senior Organizations in understanding how they distinguish and address issues of recent senior immigrants and early senior immigrants, so that NIAASC could disseminate this information for the benefit of other groups facing similar challenges.

Usha Foods provided vegetarian buffet lunch. All appreciated the efforts made by **Chandubhai Patel** in arranging lunch and breakfast. **Mr. Satpal Malhotra**, NIAASC Treasurer, proposed a Vote of Thanks.



Mr. Mukesh Patel affiliated with King of Prussia, PA's newly formed senior program making comments & suggestions

On this occasion NIAASC distributed a publication of its ten years accomplishments and future plans.