IN THE NEWS

SAYA! Awarded Grant to Expand Program at Longtime Partner High School

SAYA! is on the forefront of New York City's Community Schools initiative. Community Schools aim to improve student achievement through strong partnerships among principals, parents, teachers, and community based organizations. A grant to SAYA! of $900,000 annually will enable us to significantly expand our programming at Richmond Hill High School. We are thrilled at the opportunity and currently busy planning for the upcoming academic year.

OFF TO COLLEGE

Learn Where SAYA! Youth Are Headed

This fall, SAYA!’s recent program graduates from the Class of 2015 are heading to the following colleges: Adelphi University, Cornell University, CUNY Adelphi University, Cornell University, CUNY Brooklyn College, CUNY City College, CUNY College of Staten Island, CUNY Hunter College, CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY Queens College, CUNY York College, Fordham University, Smith College, SUNY College at New Paltz, SUNY Stony Brook University, and Yale University.
As a new batch of SAYA! students gets ready to go to college, SAYA! supported them by awarding scholarships, a first in the organization’s 19 year history. These awards were a result of the live pledge drive at last year’s Gala, an effort we hope to repeat this year. Six SAYA! students across high school programs were awarded 4-year scholarships as well as one alumna who received a one-time scholarship:

Mamataz B. plans to attend CUNY’s City College. She has a passion for giving back to the South Asian community and is president of the badminton club at her high school.

Sujoy B. will attend CUNY’s City College as a pre-med Biotechnology major. An active participant in the young men’s leadership program at one of SAYA!’s partner high schools, he shows wonderful initiative and looks into every possible learning opportunity available to him.

Sagarika D., who took part in leadership programming and college advisement at SAYA!’s Elmhurst Center, is leaving home to attend the College of Saint Rose in Albany, NY this fall.
Ann H. is passionate about social justice and human rights and, as part of a high school club she co-founded, raised money for women’s education in Uganda. She will start attending CUNY’s Queens College this fall.

Mosammath S., who took part in leadership programming and college advisement at one of our partner high schools, will attend CUNY’s Hunter College this fall.

Bushra W.’s extensive academic achievements are complemented by her commitment to volunteering, which ranges from cheering on Breast Cancer Walk participants to rescuing leftover food and bringing it to shelters. She will attend LaGuardia Community College in the fall.

Additionally, Nahima U., a SAYA! alumna currently attending New York University, received our alumni scholarship. This allows her to take up an unpaid internship at the United Nations this summer.

**ANNUAL GALA**

**Saturday, September 26, 2015**

Join us for SAYA!’s Annual Gala 2015 on Saturday, September 26, 2015. We promise you a fun night where we honor MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga and his wife Ritu Banga, co-founder of Zoomdojo, as well as actor Kunal Nayyar, otherwise known as Dr. Raj Koothrappali in the CBS sitcom, *The Big Bang Theory.*
On April 18, 2015, 40 young men traveled to The Adventure Park, an aerial forest ropes park in Long Island. Youth developed teamwork skills by learning to support one another and build self-confidence by utilizing their own strategy, balance, and strength in order to complete various climbing and zip lining obstacles.
“Uncommon Paths, Extraordinary Lives” was the theme of SAYA!’s second annual Desi Young Women’s Leadership Conference, which took place on April 25, 2015 at The New School in Manhattan. This exciting event brought 85 high school students from Queens and Brooklyn together with inspiring women who have combined their passions with practicality to forge their own unique paths in life.

Students spent the day rotating through four breakout sessions which all focused on empowering them to find and forge their own path. The “Power Panel” gave the youth a chance to learn about how a diverse group of inspiring women crafted their own academic and professional paths. The women shared stories and advice about taking unconventional risks, embracing changes in one’s path, and overcoming the fear of failure when striving for success. The “Share Your Story” workshop, led by writer and performer Aizzah Fatima, challenged students to mine their own experiences and craft compelling narratives about their lives. SAYA! is also lucky enough to have strong young women within our programs. We were proud to have alumni and current students run a “Take a Stand” workshop about activism and the positive change students can make now. Our “Make Your Mark” session was all about the immense creativity of our youth. Through painting they represented how they envision their futures and the marks they want to make in the world.
When we displayed their works together at the end of the conference, we saw an inspiring, collective vision of the hopes and dreams of all the motivated young women at SAYA!.

Along with the rousing keynote speech by Ripa Rashid and the encouraging closing remarks by Nisha Agarwal, all of these sessions drove home a unified message to the youth that self-discovery, exploration and expression are vital to forging a meaningful path. It takes courage to boldly imagine your future, open-mindedness to experience as much as you can, and persistence to take risks and learn from them. All the speakers shared these qualities and were successful in motivating the youth to look within themselves and develop their own vision of an extraordinary life.

**Industry Experts Share Career Experiences with SAYA! Youth**

On May 16, over 30 professionals from various fields attended a power-packed Career Exploration Day at SAYA!’s Elmhurst Center and talked about their professional paths with our young people. Volunteers from similar industries were grouped into panels where they shared their experiences with the youth; during the latter half of the session, youth broke out into small groups and posed questions to individual panelists. Volunteers represented a wide range of industries including health and medical sciences, STEM, law and government, education and nonprofit, business and entrepreneurship, and arts, media and communications. SAYA! youth came away with a much better understanding of the industries and the volunteers had a great time getting to know the students’ interests.
Elementary and Middle School Youth Mark End of School Year with a Talent Fest

On Saturday, June 13, SAYA! youth from all our elementary and middle school sites came together at our Elmhurst Center to mark the end of another successful academic year. The morning’s festivities were attended by many SAYA! parents and included theater, dance, song and art as our youth showcased their amazing talent.

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South Asian Youth Action (SAYA!) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 1996 and committed to serving the needs of low-income South Asian youth in New York City through tailored programming that offers academic support, leadership development and enrichment opportunities. SAYA! is the only secular organization nationwide that directly and comprehensively addresses the critical needs of South Asian youth.