MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear SAYA Community,

As I reflect on the 2022-2023 school year, I am filled with gratitude for each and every one of you who have been a part of SAYA’s continued growth and success. It is through our collective efforts—whether as staff, board members, volunteers, or supporters—that we have paved the way to where we stand today, and where we aim to go tomorrow.

For over 28 years, SAYA’s unwavering mission has been to cultivate a sense of identity, belonging, and community among our youth. We are more than just advocates for our young people; we are champions of possibility, igniting within them the courage to pursue their dreams. From bolstering self-confidence to encouraging them to step out of their comfort zones and emerge as bold and resilient individuals, each success story serves as a testament to the profound impact of SAYA’s mission.

As we stand at the threshold of a new chapter, I am thrilled to share that SAYA is poised for significant growth. With a renewed focus on expanding our school and corporate partnerships, launching innovative initiatives, and extending our reach in Queens, we are primed to make an even greater impact. I am proud that we are well-positioned to empower an ever-growing number of youth, equipping them with essential skills, nurturing their potential, and fostering success both academically and personally.

As we look ahead to the future with optimism and excitement, I am confident that together, we will continue to create positive change and make a lasting impact in the lives of our youth and our community. Thank you for being part of this remarkable journey!

With gratitude and warm regards,

Sonia B. Sisodia

“We are more than just advocates for our young people; we are champions of possibility, igniting within them the courage to pursue their dreams.”
We welcomed three new members to the Board of Directors.

**ZARME SHAHNAWAZ**
Family Physician and Medical Educator

**SUCHARITA DASA**
Managing Director, Citi, Clean Energy Transition

**THARA NATALIE PRASHAD**
Wellness Warrior; Health, Reiki and Yoga Teacher

Making History

Our Board Member, Arun Subramanian, made history as the first South Asian to be confirmed to serve as a District Judge on the prestigious United States District Court for the Southern District of New York.

Thank you to our corporate donors for their support throughout the year.
Fall & Spring Career Days
Our fall and spring career days have been instrumental in guiding our youth through the exploration of various career pathways while simultaneously honing invaluable soft skills. Volunteers spanning diverse professional backgrounds generously shared their personal origin stories, offering invaluable insights into their respective journeys. Through engaging activities and interactive sessions, our young people gained the tools and knowledge necessary to make informed educational choices and set ambitious goals for their future.

Young Women’s Leadership Conference
In May 2023, SAYA hosted its first Young Women’s Leadership Conference since 2020, welcoming over 100 participants. This signature event serves as a platform for our young women to explore and experience personal growth in a fun, warm, and supportive environment.

Family Fun Nights
Throughout the school year, our elementary sites hosted regular Family Fun Nights, led by SAYA staff. These events brought SAYA youth and their families together for activities such as Paint Night, Zumba, Pottery, Taekwondo, Scrapbooking, Games & Trivia, Gardening, Science Fun, and Lit Readers. These gatherings promoted family bonding and community unity, providing opportunities for laughter, creativity, and shared experiences.
SAYA Gala

We were thrilled to resume our gala after three years away! We had the pleasure of honoring Paul Grewal, Chief Legal Officer at Coinbase, and Rekha Malhotra “DJ Rekha.”

The evening was hosted by SAYA Board Member Sheetal Sheth and actor Nik Dodani, and featured performances by Anik Khan and Robin Dey, as well as comedy by the Kutti Gang.

Thank you to our corporate donors for their incredible generosity

Thank you to our in-kind sponsors, who made the evening unforgettable
HIGHLIGHTS

WE'RE PROUD TO SHARE SOME OF OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

01 Expanded Funding for Elementary School Program
SAYA was awarded a four-year New York State grant for our elementary school program in Elmhurst, Queens, allowing us to serve more than 200 youth additional each year.

02 Expansion of On-site High School Programming
Our proven program model has laid a strong foundation for the expansion of our on-site high school programming. By delivering vital services, fostering positive relationships within the community, and garnering support and trust from stakeholders, SAYA continues to make a meaningful difference across Queens.

03 Deepening Mentorship
We continued our 6-month intentional career mentorship programs with volunteers from Goldman Sachs and PricewaterhouseCoopers. In addition, our Peer Mentorship Program where our college youth mentor our high school youth - supported by TD Bank - officially launched.

SAYA on the Daily Show
We were thrilled to be highlighted by guest host and friend of SAYA, Kal Penn!
PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

Asian American Arts Alliance (A4)
We partnered with local artist, EunHea Kim through the Asian American Arts Alliance (A4), to beautify and improve our community center space. EunHea, along with our youth and staff, created four paintings that honor the many vibrant and varied Queens communities we work in. These gorgeous murals are on display at our center!

Jeremy Lin Foundation
SAYA was thrilled to join eight of our peer organizations as a member of the inaugural Stronger Together Collaborative, a partnership between the Jeremy Lin Foundation and The Asian American Foundation!

In July, a group of our youth and staff joined a convening of partners, where they shared best practices, forged connections, and discussed the role each of our organizations play in pushing for cross-racial solidarity and social change.
OUR YOUTH

Organization-wide Demographics

- Hispanic/Latinx: 31.8%
- South Asian/Indo-Caribbean: 18.4%
- Asian (not including South Asian): 15.8%
- Multi-racial: 11.7%
- Black/African-American: 11.2%
- Other: 11%
- Other: 10%

Elmhurst Center Demographics

- Hispanic/Latinx: 13.5%
- South Asian/Indo-Caribbean: 64.2%
- Asian (not including South Asian): 13.5%
- Other: 8.8%

28 years helping students belong, grow, thrive
1600+ youth served from 2022 to 2023

SAYA | JUNE 2022 - JULY 2023
OUR YOUTH*

*Data obtained from youths who provided responses to the questions. Youth who declined to answer were not included in the following numbers.

45% of youth were born outside the United States.

93% of youth have at least one parent who was born outside the United States.

84% come from families with a combined annual income of $75,000 or less.

*Data obtained from youths who provided responses to the questions. Youth who declined to answer were not included in the following numbers.
WHERE WE SERVE

**Elementary School**
- P.S. 124 Osmond A. Church
  South Ozone Park, Queens
- P.S. 230 Doris L. Cohen
  Kensington, Brooklyn
- Central Queens Academy
  Elmhurst, Queens

**Middle School**
- Central Queens Academy
  Elmhurst, Queens
- Irwin Altman Middle School
  Glen Oaks, Queens
- J.H.S. 202 Robert H. Goddard
  Ozone Park, Queens
- Our World Neighborhood Charter School
  Astoria, Queens

**High School**
- Elmhurst Center
  Elmhurst, Queens
- High School For Construction Trades, Engineering and Architecture
  Ozone Park, Queens
- Richmond Hill High School
  Richmond Hill, Queens
- Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School
  Jamaica, Queens

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Founding Partner
- Guha PLLC

**Sasank Chary**, Treasurer*
- Senior Advisor
- Sageview Capital

**Bharat Das**
- Managing Director
- Das & Co.

**Sucharita Dasa**
- Managing Director, Citi, Clean Energy Transition

**Sonia Deb**, Secretary*
- Community Member

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- NYU Grossman School of Medicine

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- Goldman Sachs

**Prashant A. Raj**
- Senior Managing Director
- Guggenheim Partners, LLC

**Thara Natalie Prashad**
- Wellness Warrior; Health, Reiki and Yoga Teacher

**Bharat Sawhney**
- Partner
- Sia Parnters

**Radhika Sehgal**
- Community Member

**Zarme Shahnawaz**
- Family Physician and Medical Educator

**Sheetal Sheth**
- Actress, Author, Producer

**Arun Subramanian**
- Community Member

**Sonia B. Sisodia***
- Executive Director
- South Asian Youth Action
ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW AND MISSION

For more than 28 years, South Asian Youth Action (SAYA) has been a catalyst for change in the lives of underserved youth across New York City. As a pioneering South Asian organization in the United States, SAYA plays a pivotal role in fostering the positive development of young individuals. Today, our impactful, no-cost programming spans nine public schools and our Elmhurst-based community center, establishing us as a cornerstone in our community with a proven and enduring legacy.

Through our innovative, holistic approach, we work toward educational equity by providing opportunities and resources to less privileged New York City youth, ensuring they are empowered academically, emotionally, and socially to become engaged community members.

Throughout our history, SAYA has broken down the “model minority” myth and paved the way for greater attention and investments in social services for the South Asian population. Furthermore, as the communities we serve continue to diversify, our commitment to inclusivity and belonging are exemplified through our dedication to transformative cross-racial solidarity.