

ONTARIO ZOROASTRIAN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

VISION

JULY 2008

Upcoming events

Shenshai Muktdad – August 14 – 18 at ZRCC (please see page 2 for all information)

AGM: September 7 at ZRCC (please watch for a separate mailing)

Lamb Roast Picnic & Khordad Sal Celebration: August 24 at ZRCC (see attached flyer)

Newsletter Committee
Roshan Byramjee, Michelle Patel,
Rayomand Patel, Charis Wania.
Board Liaison: Hanoz Kapadia

Entertainment Committee
Kashmira Laher (Chair), Armaity
Anandasagar, Niloufer Bhesania,
Zarina Gutta, Ferzin Kapadia,
Benifer Patel, Coomi Sorabji

President's Message

The past 2 years as President of the OZCF have been immensely gratifying ones. 2 years ago, 8 of the 13 directors elected to the Board were new to the Board. Over the past 2 years, this group has grown together into a strong and effective leadership unit.

I am also very encouraged by the many new faces that I see at our events, whether it be Dhanshak Sunday or an afternoon of soccer. I look forward to seeing all of you over the course of the summer.

Our next AGM will take place on Sunday, September 7 at the ZRCC. You will receive a separate mailing about the AGM; the information is also posted on our website. At this meeting, we will elect a new Board of Directors. All 13 members are elected to the Board every 2 years and the Board then elects the 4 officers (President, Vice-president, Secretary and Treasurer) from these 13 Directors.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Jal and Meher Panthaky for their leadership in presenting the Parsi Natak "Gustadji no Ghotalo". Jal and Meher are founding members of the OZCF and continue to demonstrate their support for our vision and our mission through their actions.

In closing, I would like to thank each of you for your support for the OZCF. I look forward to the day when we have our community center and place of worship in place to serve the needs of our community.

Building Committee Update

The Province of Ontario has now completed its evaluation of our proposal and recommended the lifting of the Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) on our property. They reviewed our application as well as public comments from a notice they placed in local newspapers. No negative comments were received and many positive letters of support were sent to the province. The province will issue its amended MZO to the Town of Oakville soon so that the town can issue the minor Site Plan Approval (SPA) for development. Following various discussions and meetings with the town to speed up the overall process, the town was willing to accept and start processing our building permit application even though the MZO and SPA had not been issued. Our application was submitted in early June. The town will release the permit following their review and issuance of the SPA. We remain in continuous communications with the town, architect and contractor to quickly respond to the town's requests for information. We expect the MZO, SPA and permit to be issued soon so that we can get construction underway.

MILESTONES

Baby boy **Zubin Bharucha** born on 29th May, 2008 to Viloo and Sahavir Bharucha of Mississauga. Grand parents Mithoo & Homi Mullan of Mumbai, India and Sheru & Sarosh Bharucha of Ahmedabad, India.

Baby **Natasha Gazdar** was born on June 7, 2008. Weighing in at just over 5 lbs, she is the new light of proud Mom and Dad, Diana and Roy Gazdar's lives. Congrats to Grandparents Sam, Dhun and Khurshed Gazdar of Mississauga and Boman and Bachi Damkevala of Chicago, Great Grandpa Noshir Jamsetjee, Aunty Zarine, Aunty Persis, Uncle Burjis, Aunty Aban, Uncle Cyrus, Aunty Mikiyo and cousin Nina.

Xerxes Kevin Mancherjee, a son to Janine and Kevin Mancherjee, grandson to Jeroo and Hosie Mancherjee, nephew to Zubin Mancherjee and grandson to Zarine and Rusi Tamboli of Toronto, Ontario on March 14, 2008.

Rayhan Carl Rogers, born on June 5, 2008 to Khurshid & Jeff Rogers and Brother to Zehan in Colorado. Proud Grand Parents are Putli & Noshir Mirza and Janet & John Rogers.

Navjote

Ayesha Medhora, Daughter of Zarir & Claudine Medhora, at OZCF in Oakville on April 6, 2008.

Alisha and Darius Banker, of Mississauga, at Payal Banquet Hall on June 29, 2008.

Elections for the Board of Directors

Do you have a strong sense of commitment to the goals of the OZCF? Do you have personal time that you would like to use to benefit your community? Are you able to relate well to and work well with people? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are a good candidate for the Board of Directors of the OZCF.

We are looking for a variety of skill sets on the Board – Mobeds, youth perspective, Iranian perspective, accountants and lawyers, fundraising experience, planning events, construction/building experience.

Every 2 years, a maximum of 13 members are elected to the Board of Directors (“the Board”) by the membership. The next election will take place at the AGM in the summer of 2008. These Board members then elect the 4 officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) from the 13 Directors.

If you are interested in being elected to the Board, please contact any Board member and let them know. Official nomination forms will be sent out prior to the AGM as specified in the By-Laws.

Parsi Natak “Gustadji no Ghotoalo” a Rousing Success!

“Ma-neh toh pate ma hasi hasi neh doo-khech!” (*my tummy hurts from laughing so much!*)

Many in the sell-out crowd of 600 experienced this pleasant ailment on the night of May 31 at Michael Power St. Joseph Auditorium in Etobicoke to see the Toronto Parsi Drama Group’s proud presentation of “Gustadji no Ghotoalo” (Gustadji’s Mischief/Confusion), their latest Natak (a comical, Gujarati play) in a series of classics. Emcees Sarishta Katrak and Khush Panthaky teased the audience and whet their appetites with their own jokes to kick off the evening.

The story centered on Jimmy Khurshedji (Zarir Cooper) and his sidekick Dinshaw (Burjis Mehta) trying to lure their girlfriends Dinoo (Katy Mulla) and Silloo (Shirin Chaturvedi) to their place. Being typically well-mannered Parsi girls, they would only pay a visit to their boyfriends’ place in the presence of an elderly woman.

With only their college friend Gustadji (Kerkan Katrak) and no elderly woman around, the boys came up with the cockamamie suggestion that Gustadji dress up as the imposter elderly woman - his own Goola masi (aunty)! Hesitant at first, Gustadji agreed to play along. What he didn’t bargain for was the arrival of Jimmy’s Father, Khansaheb Khurshedji Khasukhanji, a mouthful in any language (played by Sam Gazdar), and Dinoo and Silloo’s Uncle, Dastur Darabdaru (played by Jal Panthaky). With their mojo still motoring, these two could become enamored by the “lovely Goola Masi”.

The series of mix-ups that followed from this cocktail of confusion were hilarious. If that weren’t enough, the arrival of Silloo and Dinoo’s cousin, the gun-slingin’ Kau Kakri (a “cu-cumbersome” name, played by Noshir Mulla) and the petulant Jilobai (Darabdaru’s hot-tempered sister and Dinoo and Silloo’s Mother, played by Jasmine Wadia) provided comedy that had the audience in stitches. Of course the final surprise arrival of real Goola Masi (played by Meher Panthaky) created more only more confusion.

Fine performances were given by the supporting cast which included Nozer Kotwal, Baji Langdana, Porus Pastakia and Aban Vazir, Jal Panthaky, Sam Gazdar and the showstopper, the cross-dressing king of comedy, Kerman Katrak had the audience in stitches.

In addition to the cast, Dhun Gazdar assisted backstage as the prompter and Sam Bharda with the sound. All of these highly talented and dedicated members often during a six month period prior to the performance.

Much of the show’s success is due to the producer/director dream-team of “Janu and Janu”, a.k.a. Meher and Jal Panthaky. They did the groundwork, putting in countless hours constructing props and designing sets writing scripts and organizing a laundry list of jobs that inevitably arise when producing a show of this caliber. The entire group’s efforts helped raise a whopping **\$28,000** for the OZCF. The OZCF salutes your dedication and thanks you for all your efforts in putting together a memorable and superbly entertaining evening.

Religious Events

Shenshai Mukta

Shenshai Mukta ceremonies will be held at ZRCC, 1187 Burnhamthorpe Rd., East, Oakville, from Aug 14th to Aug 18th, 2008. If you wish to include the names of your dearly departed in the daily prayers, kindly fill out the attached form and forward it to Ervad Nozer S. Kotwal or Ervad Kobad Zarolis a.s.a.p.

Schedule of prayers are as follows:

Aug 14th, 15th. & 18th. Morning Stoom 6:30am; Afringan/Farokhshi 7:00am;
Afternoon Stoom 11:30am; Evening Stoom/Hum Bundaghi 7:00pm.

Aug 16th & 17th – Morning Stoom 7:30am; Afringan/Farokhshi 8:00am;
Afternoon Stoom 11:30am; Evening Stoom/Hum Bundaghi 7:00pm.

Donations of Fruits, Flowers, Dry Fruits, Cooked Food, Sukhad, Loban, Tachho etc. will be very much appreciated. If you would like to volunteer your services please contact Kermin Byramjee at (905) 845-3480.

North American Mobed Council (NAMC) AGM 2008

The OZCF hosted the 21st AGM of the North American Mobed Council. The meeting was held at ZRCC, 1187 Burnhamthorpe Road East in Oakville, on May 24th & 25th. Twelve mobeds and one Modyar attended the meeting.

Brief Highlights of the Meeting:

-The Contemplation Session on the deliberation of five Gahs. Ervads Jehna Bagli, Adi Unwalla (for Gev Karkaia), Behram Panthaki, Soli Dastur, Gustad Pantheki, and Cawas Desai made the presentation on each Gah followed by discussion which was both educational and beneficial to all present.

- Navjote of the Adopted Children. A prolonged discussion took place, followed with several members expressing their personal experiences in this matter. A proposed resolution will be circulated to all members for further discussion and vote upon at the next AGM.

- Women as Mobedyars. In view of the enquiries from the community, regarding consideration of women for the training of Mobedyar, a discussion was initiated by Ervad Jehan Bagli to reconsider the criteria of qualification to be Mobedyar. After prolonged discussion it was unanimously decided to delete 'Zoroastrian males only' and keep the program open to any interested Zoroastrian.

-Financial assistance to young Mobeds to further their knowledge of religion and ritual performances. A proposal was tabled to empower the Executive to spend up to \$5000.00 a year, to assist young mobeds, to further their knowledge of religion and ritual performances.

At the conclusion of the 2008 NAMC (North American Modeb Council) AGM meetings, the following Executive Board was elected:

President:	Ervad Kobad Zarolia
Vice-President:	Ervad Noshir Mirza
Secretary:	Ervad Nozer Kotwal
Treasurer:	Ervad Gev Karkaria
Executive Officer:	Ervad Gustad Panthaki

On behalf of the entire NAMC, we would like to thank outgoing officers: Ervad Jehan Bagli, Ervad Adi Unwalla and Ervad Cawas Desai, for their wonderful leadership, dedication and scholarship to all of us for six long years.

At the request of the new NAMC President and his Executive Board, Ervad Soli P. Dastur is appointed in charge of all NAMC Communications as well as keeping NAMC website up to date. In this photo album, we present the NAMC AGM, new officers, outgoing officers, and the gracious hosting of a dinner for NAMC attendees by Niloufer & Mehernosh Bhesania. We thank the Bhesanias for their wonderful hospitality, as well as Nilofer Aga, Sam Gazdar, Nergish Kotwal, Perin Screwala and other volunteers who provided meals over the weekend. The photos of the dinner are also presented. With the help and direction of Ervad Jehan Bagli and Ervad Kerman Kattrak, NAMC is proud to announce their new website: www.namcweb.com

We are planning to make this website a resource for all NAMC communications. One of our goals is to enlist the names and phone numbers and emails (if available) of ALL NA Mobeds for ready reference to all of us. In this respect, we will need all FEZANA Associations to help us with the enlisting of these names.

The **Seventh ISIS Biennial Conference** will be held in Toronto, Ontario, from July 31 to August 3rd, 2008 at the Park Hyatt Hotel. See www.parktoronto.hyatt.com. They are planning an exceptionally rich conference with many cultural events. It will feature a large selection of scholarly panels, a historic symphonic orchestra performance with Shahnamah-khani and pardah-khani, a dance performance, a film festival, an art exhibition, and a book exhibit.

For more information contact Mohamad Tavakoli, Program Chair, Seventh Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies International Society for Iranian Studies. <http://www.humanities.uci.edu/iranian-studies>

NextGenNow 2008 Conference to be held in Washington D.C.

The leadership team at Next Generation Now is pleased to announce that NextGenNow 2008 - Your Future in Your Hands - will be held **Friday, Aug. 1 to Sunday, Aug. 3**, on the beautiful campus of George Mason University in suburban Washington, D.C.

NextGenNow 2008 is the second in a continuing series of conferences aimed at stimulating and motivating the next generation of Zarathushti leadership in North America. The conference is intended for next generation leaders from all FEZANA member associations, small groups, and individual dwellings of Zarathushtis scattered throughout North America.

Our mandate - to work with you to find at least two next generation leaders from your community to attend. From college students to young professionals in their 30s and 40s, we seek Zarathushtis who have demonstrated an interest in leading on Zarathushti education, awareness, and community building in North America.

On the horizon: we will be announcing conference speakers, a new web site, registration information and deadline dates. By leading with purpose and conviction, we will continue to mobilize and energize the next generation. Best wishes. We look forward to making a difference! Please see the enclosed Registration Form and see www.ozcf.co for the flyer.

Khojeste Mistree Talks at UTM

Incredible!, "Amazing!", "Wow!" These were just some of many enthusiastic responses heard from the nearly 250 people who attended Mr. Khojeste Mistree's talk titled "Zoroastrianism, a Living Faith" and slide show on "A Pilgrimage to Zoroastrian Iran", at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM), on Saturday, May 24, 2008.

The extremely informative and interesting talk held the attention of the audience, while the fascinating slide show of Zoroastrian Iran, portrayed the glorious past of the Persian Empire and many unique Zoroastrian sites. The Question/Answer session could have gone on for hours, as the questions just kept coming and Mr. Mistree gave excellent detailed answers, within the time constraints. Young adults were very impressed with his extensive knowledge and scholarship as well as found the delivery of the information to be very engaging and understandable.

In attendance were mainly Parsis and Iranians of the Zoroastrian faith, from all over the GTA and the province of Ontario, including some guests from as far as British Columbia, as well as Professor Raffaelli from the UTM faculty.

A very special heartfelt Vote of Thanks goes out to the many young-at-heart and young adult volunteers, for so willingly giving of your time and expertise, and all your co-operative efforts in making the evening such a tremendous success!

We would also like to thank all those who attended. For additional comments and pictures to be posted shortly.

<http://mistreetorontovisit.zoomshare.com>

Sunday Dhansak

Back in the old country, Dhansak on a Sunday afternoon was commonplace in many Parsi households. This tradition was revisited on Sunday, April 27 at the ZRCC by over 225 Dhansak lovers.

The lovely April sunshine ensured that everyone was able to spend the afternoon outdoors. Kids played soccer, adults played carom and everyone else simply caught up with friends. Soon enough, the gentle breeze carried along the **tantalizing aromas**, signaling that dhansak was indeed ready.

With bellies-a-bulging and whispers of "areh Khodai bohu khadhu" (Oh God, I've eaten too much!), you'd think a nap was beckoning. With ice cream to help digest the dhansak and participants of carom and soccer carrying on from where they left off, who could possibly catch a few winks?! It is always great to see new members! Keep visiting our website for further details and upcoming events.

Kudos to the entire Entertainment Committee and their group of volunteers who had planned long and hard in preparation of the event!

VISION NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING

Would you like optimal exposure of your business to Zoroastrian members of the GTA? Advertise in the VISION Newsletter!

\$ 75 for full page

\$45 for half page

\$25 for quarter page

We will be putting ads only in the black and white issues, which are published 4 times per year. We ask that you let us know how many issues you wish to advertise in and you will be billed accordingly. Contact Roshan Byramjee for more information at (905) 849-4684.

The Spirit of the BAVA-Gs!

Continuing in our wonderful Zoroastrian tradition of unity, we are pleased to announce that your community is now represented in the Toronto Central Sport and Social Club which, among other events, organizes a weekly indoor floor hockey league. A group of energetic and highly competitive youth have recently completed their first season of co-ed ball hockey and have done so with core Zoroastrian values. This team, named the Bava-Gs, is the truest example of unity, team-building, upbeat spirit and positive leadership in our community.

The Bava-Gs is organized by Captain Cyrus Khory and Co-captain Cambeez Mulla. While the season did not end in a league championship, it was incredibly successful. Every game was a fantastic example of team unity and mutual support amongst its members. After each game, the bonds within the team and the feelings of camaraderie grew strong. At some point in the season, all 22 players realized that they were part of something special. In the face of confrontation, the Bava-Gs stood strong and proud, and was able to overcome any challenges that obstructed our path. Losses were overcome by encouragement and a back-slapping, "go get 'em next time" attitude. Wins were punctuated by even louder words of encouragement and immense team spirit.

As we reflect back on our games, which were filled with the "highs" and "lows" that are expected in any team sport, the unselfish and supportive way this team conducted itself can be an example to the rest of the community. United We Stand Strong! Congratulations to the team members (listed in alphabetical order below) on a great first season.

Meher Bharucha, Farrah Cooper, Neville Cooper, Bnaifer Desai, Fiona Engineer, Yohann Gazdar, Mo Hajiani, Parizad Hathidar, Kelly Jogina, Adi Kavarana, Anita Khory, Cyrus Khory, Pearl Merwan, Cambeez Mulla, Jasmine Mulla, Mehraan Pavri, Zahra Sadikali, Behzad Shroff, Manoj Sinha, Jasmine Surkari, Xerxes Surkari and Sanobar Zarolia.

APPEAL FOR MEDICAL HELP

"This is to let you know that our daughter, **Nazneen Dubash**, 9 years old, is suffering from "PH" i.e. Pulmonary Hypertension. It is a syndrome in which the lung arteries are constricted due to which the heart overstrains to pump blood into the lungs. This causes a continuous strain on the heart leading to a possible failure over the years. The normal pressure in any individual is 25 but in Nazneen's case it's as high as 56, which a few years later will further increase and can be very fatal.

The doctors in Mumbai have said that most PH patients rarely cross three to four decades of life, as there is no cure for PH. The only other option is a lung transplant. Only 45% of lung transplant patients survive beyond 5 years. This option is given to patients who do not respond to medication and whose condition is worsening rapidly.

Though Nazneen does not fail in this high risk category now, her condition will gradually move towards it. She needs to be kept on medicines for the rest of her life. Some of the latest and newest medications are not available in India. Also these medicines need proper testing for compatibility and response, which is not done in India. The USA & UK are the two places that have proper facilities to start, initiate and manage these programs under PH specialists and their teams. If not done immediately, we will need to visit a PH centre by early next year.

The medications she's been currently prescribed by her cardiologist here are Sildenafil and Bosentan. The latter is not available in India, but is mandatory for her treatment.

Nazneen needs to be taken to the USA Children's Medical Institute every six months for regular medical intervention to check how she's responding to the medicines, how much side effect damages have been caused to her liver and kidneys. Also these centers decide whether the patient needs a transplant and how soon. The current waiting list for a lung transplant is about 4-5 years. These transplants are only done in the USA/UK.

My husband works as a project engineer in Al Ansari Trading Enterprises LLC. since February 2004 in Muscat (sultanate of Oman) where all 3 of us are currently settled. Prior to that he was working in Shapoorji Pallonji & Godrej & Boyce Cos. in Mumbai.

We, Farokh and Khushnuma Dubash, request you to help us financially as much as you can. Our contact is as follows:

Mrs. Khushnuma F Dubash, Mr Farokh G. Dubash

C/O Mr. Dara B. Patel

C/O Al Ansari Trd. Ent. LLC

A-6 Mistry Building; PO Box 1832, Ruwi, Dr Shirodkar Rd; P.C. - 112

Parel; Sultanate of Oman

Mumbai-400012

Res: 0096824499041

Mbl: 00919821318797 (India)

Mbl: 00 968 95218689, 00 968 92588910 (Muscat)

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours truly, Khushnuma Dubash

FEZANA NEWS

On Monday, June 9, 2008, Ervad Pervez Patel and Homi Gandhi represented Zoroastrian community at the interfaith prayer service at St. Peter's Church in New York City, prior to the 2008 United Nations High Level Meeting on AIDS. This meeting is to evaluate the time-bound targets agreed on in 2001 and to move towards universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010. All citizens of the world demand accountability of the member states to their agreed promises.

Ms. Thoraiya Ahmed Obaid, Undersecretary General of the UN, delivered "A Vision of Hope" and Ms. Deborah Landey, Deputy Executive Director of UNAIDS, read out a message from the Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon. I would like to thank Ervad Soli Dastur for recommending the appropriate prayer from Ahunavaiti Gatha with translation as it was very much appreciated by the assembled congregation.

FEZANA AGM 2008 -- Election Results -- President, Treasurer and Assistant Secretary

The positions of FEZANA President, Treasurer and Assistant Secretary had come up for re-election as all three incumbents had completed their first 2 years in their respective offices. We are delighted to inform you that your newly elected Executive members in these positions are as under and we extend our heartiest congratulations on their appointment.

President: Bomi Patel
Treasurer: Katayun Kapadia
Assistant Secretary: Nahid Dashtaki
Behram Pastakia, Homi D. Gandhi
Co-Chairs, FEZANA UN NGO Committee

OTHER FEZANA NEWS

The following is a letter from the FEZANA UN NGO Committee...

" Dear members of the Zoroastrian community,

It gives us great pleasure in informing you that the United Nations has renewed FEZANA's standing as a Non-Governmental Organization [NGO] in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC]. The next quadrennial review will be in the year 2012 This recognition is owed to the contribution and dedication of our UN NGO Committee Team members, now numbering over 60 individuals. Delegates have traveled to the meetings, found lodging, and made arrangements for their visas all on their own time and expense. We have learned to write press releases, organize workshops and interact with the media. We are grateful for the contribution of each and every individual who has brought us this far, and trust this has provided participants an opportunity to grow as world citizens.

What the United Nations is looking for from us to continue this collaboration is to share its vision and mission with civil society. In this regard we seek your help. It is not enough for us to attend meetings and represent the Zoroastrian community at world fora; though that is certainly an integral and important part of our mandate. To take our activities to the next level we seek participation at the local level.

This year the United Nations marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The year long celebration provides us an opportunity as local associations, as small groups, or even as individuals to ask the question, ***"What is it in our own faith tradition that impels us to support human rights?"*** We look forward to your feedback with ideas, and suggestions so that we can work together in fulfilling the mission of our Federation in partnership with the United Nations." Ushta te!

FEZANA INAUGURATION IN CHICAGO

FEZANA will also be hosting an **Inauguration of the Administrative office on Sunday, August 31, 2008**. We would be honored to have as many of our members, friends and supporters as possible to join us for this auspicious occasion. All are welcome and encouraged to come! See attached invitation and contact the administrative office for more details.

Also, FEZANA is pleased to announce that internet service and a telephone/fax line have been installed in the FEZANA Administrative Office. Please note our updated contact information below:

Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA)
8615 Meadowbrook Drive
Burr Ridge, IL 60527
Tel/Fax: (630) 468-2705
E-mail: admin@fezana.org
Web site: www.fezana.org

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS

Cyrus Hira is a Graduate of Fanshawe College, London, ON, where he completed 3 years in the MIA Program (Music Industry Arts), being on the **President's Honour Roll**, for the first year. He won an award for one of the songs on his forthcoming CD that he has composed, written the lyrics for and sung as well. The same song won another award for the Production and Engineering and was also nominated for the Best Audio in a Video. Cyrus' scene was from a more serious and intense movie called 'EQUILIBRIUM'.

The award is "DIGITAL MEDIA DISTRIBUTION" award, given by a Company called Digital Media Distribution Services (DMDS). This company submits music of artistes to Radio Stations across Canada, by way of a 'Special File' that they themselves create on the artiste, and ONLY they can send the artistes' own work this way. These days you can't just go up to a radio station and ask them to play your song - it has to go through companies like DMDS, who are the largest in their field. Cyrus got this award because a couple of his songs, made at College, were frequently played on the Fanshawe College radio station and other local stations.

Then by choice, he completed another year of APP (Audio Post Production) and was awarded the under-mentioned, which spans both MIA and APP. Cyrus is now busy with interviews for jobs with Studios and Companies in his field, in downtown, Toronto. He has a couple of offers. Let's see where he chooses to go!

Congratulations, to **Yasmine Daroga** who was presented with the prestigious LEADER OF THE QUARTER AND LEADER OF THE YEAR 2007 AWARD. The award was presented to her at a Gala Banquet awards night by the President of the Marriott Hotel. Yasmine has achieved this award in a very short span of 2 years that she has worked for Marriott as the Manager for Housekeeping. She has also received similar awards in Karachi Pakistan, where she worked for the Sheraton Hotel for many years. Yasmine excels in customer care and these awards are indicative of her hard work.

CONGRATULATIONS to **Katy Mulla** for receiving an award for her DEDICATION AND HARD WORK for the Multicultural Society of Pakistani Canadians, who celebrated their 25th anniversary of serving the community. She was awarded this honour at the Grand Banquet held at Le Parc Banquet Hall in Markham on the 8th of March, 2008. This event was attended by many dignitaries and the Minister of Multiculturalism was the Chief Guest of Honour. Katy, as most of us know, has dedicated her services to many associations since her arrival in Canada some 35 years ago and continues to give of her time at every opportunity. Congratulations on your hard work Katy and keep it up.

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World Religious Leaders Urge G8 Governments to Take Action on Violent Conflict and Climate Change

—Religious leaders of different faiths from 25 countries convene parallel G8 Summit for Peace in Hokkaido, Japan—

(SAPPORO, JAPAN 4 July 2008)—Senior leaders of different faiths from *Religions for Peace*, the world's largest and most representative multi-religious coalition, called on the Group of 8 (G8) governments to take bold action to address violent conflict and climate change.

The leaders were among the 100 who gathered for the "World Religious Leaders Summit for Peace" in advance of the G8 meeting in Hokkaido, Japan, held on 2–3 July 2008 at the Sapporo Convention Center. The senior religious leaders represented the world's major faith traditions, including Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Judaism, Islam, Shintoism and Zoroastrianism.

"We are united in our call to the G8 to take bold action to address the threats that confront humanity, including the destruction of the environment and climate change, extreme global poverty and deteriorating food security, nuclear arms, terrorism and violent conflict. Addressing these threats requires urgent action by the G8," the religious leaders said in a statement. [See full text below.]

"We must draw attention to the link between the health of the environment and war," said the Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky, Moderator of Religions for Peace. "In addition to killing people, disrupting the lives of entire societies and thwarting development, war destroys the ecosystem. We religious leaders urge the G8 governments to a reduction of total national defense and military expenditures and utilize the saved funds to establish an Earth Fund dedicated to environmental protection."

On Friday, 4 July 2008, a *Religions for Peace* delegation delivered the call to action to Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda in Tokyo, Japan. The delegation included H.E. Dr. Mustafa Cerić, Reis-I-ulema, Islamic Community in Bosnia-Herzegovina; Chief Rabbi Gutman, Chief Rabbi of Strasburg, France; Rev. Nichiko Niwano, Chairman, *Religions for Peace*–Japan; His Grace John O. Onaiyekan, Archbishop of Abuja in Nigeria; and Sheikh Tayser Rajab al-Tamimi, Supreme Judge of Sharia Courts in Palestine.

H.E. Prime Minister Fukuda said he would deliver the religious leaders' statement to his fellow G8 heads of state. "Our global challenges require cooperation among all sectors and peoples. It is now time for religious and political leaders to dialogue and work hand in hand to tackle our common problems," he said.

"Terrorism—the intentional killing of innocent people as a way of achieving political objective—is never morally justified whether it is perpetrated by individuals, groups or states," said Dr. William F. Vendley, Secretary General of *Religions for Peace*. He called on the G8 to cooperate with religious leaders to address the problems of terrorism and violent conflict.

Ms. Stellamaris Mulaeh, a Summit delegate and the Coordinator of the *Religions for Peace* Global Youth Network, said she was encouraged by the religious leaders' commitment to work for future generations. "Youth must be involved in the advocacy as well," she said. "The voice of the voiceless must be heard. Also, we must use our churches and mosques and temples as platforms for advocacy and action."

The summit was organized by *Religions for Peace*–Japan and the Japanese Association of Religious Organizations and supported by Ministry of the Environment and World Federalist Movement–Japan Religious Committee. Additional support was provided by Religions for Peace–International. The Hokkaido Summit follows similar work begun in multi-religious meetings held just prior to the G8 summits in Moscow, Russia (2006), and Cologne, Germany (2007).

The *Religions for Peace* World Council is advancing peacebuilding work around the world in seventeen states including Iraq and the Middle East region, Sri Lanka, and the Horn of Africa.

Religions for Peace is the world's largest and most representative multi-religious coalition advancing common action for peace since 1970. Headquartered in New York and accredited to the United Nations, Religions for Peace works through affiliated inter-religious councils in 70 countries in six continents.

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Articles and news are welcome from everyone and will be put in the newsletter at the discretion of the committee. Please send your articles to Michelle Patel at ron.michelle@rogers.com or Charis Wania at 2cxw@rogers.com.