

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE **MAY 1, 2006**

**PROCLAMATION REQUEST –
SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE WEEK**

Recommendation

The City Clerk recommends:

- 1) That May 25 – 31, 2006 be proclaimed as “South Asian Heritage Week” in the City of Vaughan; and
- 2) That the proclamation be posted on the City’s website, published on the City Page, space permitting, and that staff issue a news release.

Economic Impact

Not applicable.

Purpose

To respond to the request from the Founder, Human Endeavour, dated April 23, 2006 (Attachment #1).

Background - Analysis and Options

The attached request to proclaim May 25 – 31, 2006 as South Asian Heritage Week in the City of Vaughan was forwarded by the Founder of Human Endeavour, an organization committed to Social Change. Three associates of Human Endeavour include appointed members of the City of Vaughan’s Community Relations Committee and Accessibility Advisory Committee. This proclamation will help promote programs that will highlight South Asian heritage, culture and their contributions.

The organization requesting the proclamation does not meet the City’s Proclamation Policy, in that the organization is not a registered charity with the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, however, the City’s proclamation policy does provide for such proclamations where the City wishes to directly sponsor the event. The City has proclaimed Asian Heritage Month in the past. It is noted that this request as indicated in the attachment is for a sub-region of Asia comprising India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities set forth in Vaughan Vision 2007, particularly ‘A-1, “Pursue Excellence in the Delivery of Core Services” and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

Staff is recommending that May 25 – 31, 2006 be proclaimed as “South Asian Heritage Week” and that the proclamation be posted on the City’s website and published on the City Page, space permitting.

Attachment

Attachment #1 - Correspondence from the Founder, Human Endeavour, dated April 23, 2006

Report prepared by:

John D. Leach, City Clerk

Respectfully submitted,

John D. Leach,
City Clerk

Janice Atwood-Petkovski,
Commissioner of Legal and Administrative Services



HUMAN ENDEAVOUR

Human Endeavour

An Organization Committed to Social Change

Mayor Michael Di Biase and Council
City of Vaughan
Ontario, Canada

April 23, 2006

Subject: Proclamation of South Asian Heritage Week 25th to 31st May

Your Worship and Members of Council,

On behalf of Human Endeavour, I wish to request you to proclaim last week of May, 25th to 31st, as South Asian Heritage Week.

South Asia is a sub-region of Asia comprising the modern states of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives and covering an area of about 4,126,800 sq km. About 1.33 billion people live there—about a third of all Asians and a fifth of all the people in the world. (Ref: Environmental Indicators South Asia by United Nations Environment Programme, 2004)

The City of Vaughan has already proclaimed the month of May as the Asian Heritage month. Since the Asian community in itself is vast and diverse, I wish for the City to acknowledge the distinct and vibrant heritage of South Asian Community, by declaring last week of May as South Asian Heritage Week.

South Asian community is one of the fastest growing communities in the city of Vaughan. Keeping this fact in consideration, Human Endeavour has been expending its energy to bridge the gap between the South Asian immigrants and the Canadian society. By doing so Human Endeavour hopes to make South Asian community an integral part of Canada's cultural mosaic. In declaring South Asian Heritage week, not only will you be helping us help the South Asian immigrants, you will be furthering the multicultural spirit of Vaughan and Canada. The declaration will help us promote programs that will highlight South Asian heritage, culture and their contributions. These programs will help South Asian community to become more involved and inclusive.

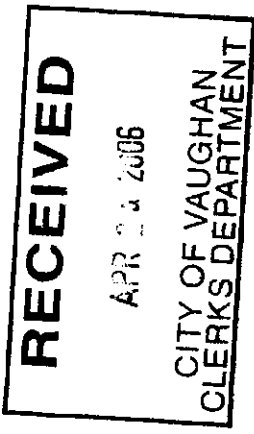
I will look forward to your positive reply. Thanks.

Yours truly,

Noor Din
Founder, Human Endeavour

Ph: 416-726-3252 Email: noor.din@humanendeavour.org

Enclosures: Organization Background / Activities for 2005 / 1st Annual South Asian Heritage Day in Vaughan



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email: info@humanendeavour.org www.humanendeavour.org

Review of Human Endeavour Activities for Year 2005

(Year ends Jan 31st, 2006)

- **Community Service Organization:** Human Endeavour gained the Community Service Organization (CSO) status from the City of Vaughan, Ontario, Canada. CSO is the recognition from the City of Vaughan for service providers whose work benefits the community. This status is granted to organizations, that are non-profit, volunteer based and have an open membership for members regardless of race, religious or political differences. The services provided should address neighborhood needs. Human Endeavour started the first non-faith based group for South Asian Seniors in Woodbridge.
- **South Asian Seniors and Community Forum:** In March 2005, HE launched a pilot project to serve the senior citizens of South Asian Communities. Because of the success it gained with the Seniors and Community members, this project is now a regular weekly event in the 11th month and has nearly 50 members. In spring this will become twice a week event. See HE web site for more info.
- **Community Relations Committee of the City of Vaughan:** Noor Din, one of the Founders of HE, was appointed on the Community Relations Committee of the City of Vaughan representing SAVI. The committee works to promote community relations within the city by formulating and recommending policies and strategies.
http://www.city.vaughan.on.ca/vaughan/committees/community_relations.cfm
- **Serving City of Vaughan Seniors through SAVI:** Noor Din was elected the Vice President of SAVI (Seniors Association of Vaughan Initiative) an umbrella organization for all seniors group in the City of Vaughan. The aim of SAVI is to provide information and recreation to the Seniors of Vaughan and to provide them a platform form where their issues and concerns can be voiced. Regional Councillor Mario Ferri is the Founder and honorary chair of SAVI.
- **Promoting Diversity and Inclusivity:** Working with Inclusivity Action Plan Initiative of Human Services Planning Coalition (HSPC) and the Regional Government of York. Action Plan is to mobilize the York Region Human Service providers to work together in becoming an ethno-culturally inclusive community. The Action Plan has three theme areas with six working groups.
 - Improving Communication between Service Providers and Users
 - Creating Ethno-Cultural Awareness in York Region
 - Promoting Ethno-Cultural Representation in Human Service AgenciesHuman Endeavour is a member of:
 - Member of Group #5 [Leadership and Volunteer Development]
 - Member of Group #6 [Organizational Change]<http://www.region.york.on.ca/Departments/Planning+and+Development/Human+Service/s/HSPC/IAP/default+Iap.htm>
- **Establishing Service Providers Network:** Since 2004 Co-chairing Senior Service Providers Network (recently renamed) with CHATs. Group is currently led by United Way of York Region.
- **Vaughan Community Information Fair:** By partnering with seven leading organizations **Vaughan Community Information Fair** was held at the Maple High School in May 2005. More than 30 Organizations exhibited to create awareness about different services available to the community.
- **Seniors and Community Forum Activities:**
 - Evaluating needs of the South Asian Community
 - Introducing other agencies/services to the community

- Providing conversational English and writing assistance
- Forum is a source of information, learning, social gathering and recreation
- Workshops/Information Sessions
 - Fire Prevention
 - Health & Fitness
 - Nutrition
 - Low Impact Exercises
 - Legal Aid
 - Benefits
- Information Sessions
 - Recreation and Culture
 - United Way of York Region
 - Community Home Assistance to Seniors (CHATS)
 - South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)
 - Councilor Peter Meffe
 - Punjabi Community Health Center
 - Vaughan Community Information Fair at Maple High School
- Outdoors
 - Summer Picnic at Belfountain – Caledon
 - Nature walks
- **Health Awareness:** Worked with the York Region Health Services to provide health awareness and programs.
 - 4 Health Workshops were conducted
 - Facilitating FIT (Falls Prevention) program to South Asian Community Seniors. This is in home service to Seniors.
- **Networks and Relationships:** Human Endeavour has established sound working relationships with governments and other community based organizations and service providers to serve all communities within Vaughan and York Region.
- **Creating Awareness** through writing papers and group discussions on important issues
- **Assistance to the Community** in general to address their issues and finding relevant information and suitable links
- **Together in Community Building:** During December 2005, an annual event was held with the participation of the Mayor of Vaughan and other City officials and distinguished guests. A number of Certificates of Appreciation were distributed to organizations and individuals who did outstanding job with Human Endeavour to server the communities.

Coverage

- Coverage in Vaughan Citizen in May 2005
- Coverage in Community Relations Committee's Newsletter in Spring 2005

For more information visit www.humanendeavour.org or send email to info@humanendeavour.org

SOUTH ASIAN SENIORS FORUM 1ST ANNIVERSARY

Woodbridge, ON—March 11, 2006: South Asian Seniors Forum (SASF) is an initiative of Human Endeavour (HE) and works for providing recreation and information to the senior members of the South Asian Community in Vaughan.

The SASF focuses to promote a program in which citizens from various cultural backgrounds get together. The program has helped the seniors to increase their social circle, make new friends and thus lead a more independent, healthy and happy life. Through this forum they have a place where they can get together with people of their age and interests and improve their physical, mental and social health. It also is a perfect example of diversity and living together in harmony as it consists of members of Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Tamil backgrounds. They learn about each other's culture, values, and traditions and thus get a better understanding of each other.

The organizers of HE have arranged to provide newspapers of Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Gujrati and English to keep the seniors informed. This service is considered very valuable by the members as they can read newspapers in their own language.

Apart from recreation and enjoyment the community members get information about services available to seniors and community through other service providers or through the various levels of government. Workshops, surveys, lectures and group discussions are held and expert advice is given in case of any problem or any specific need.

SASF held its first anniversary on March 11th, 2006 at Vellore Village Community Center in Vaughan. The celebration was made a family event so the families of SASF members would share the event and get knowledge of the accomplishments of the year. More than 100 community members attended

A committee of 5 Seniors from the group took charge of planning and implementing the program along with Human Endeavour (HE) management. They decorated the hall with banners, party decorations and balloons. There were display boards that outlined the work and activities of HE and SASF.

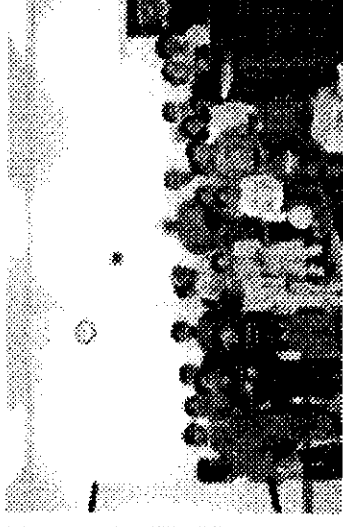
The program was started with the national anthem of Canada in which all the kids participated as well. Then the national anthems of the three countries to which the members of SASF belong were played. The program consisted of religious poems of Indians and Muslims, jokes and presentations by senior members and kids. HE had invited singer Mr. Zeshan who was visiting from Holland to come and perform for that day. He accepted the invitation and entertained the audience with Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi songs. Mr. Aslam a senior group member also recited some poems. HE had also prepared a slide show and video showing the various activities of the group during the last year. Refreshments were served to all the guests. The program provided four hours of fun and entertainment and was appreciated by everyone.

After the program some members of SASF had arranged displays to show their craft and handicraft, and others had brought some items to display for sale.

Pictures Gallery:



Seniors and Families



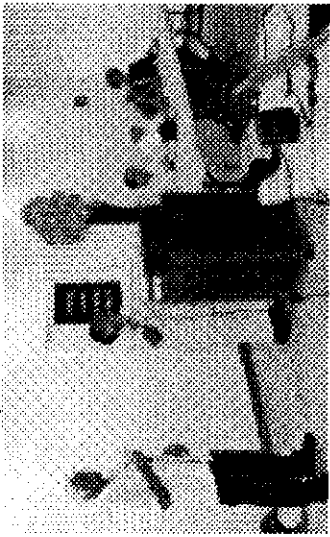
Kids Singing National Anthems



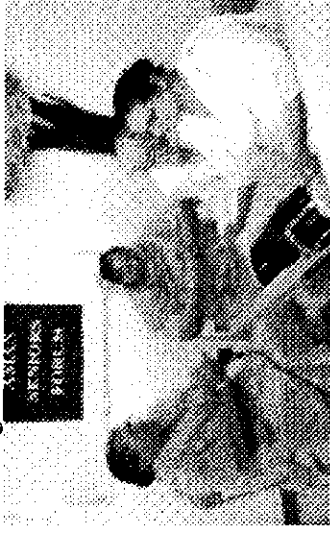
Guest Singer Zeshan



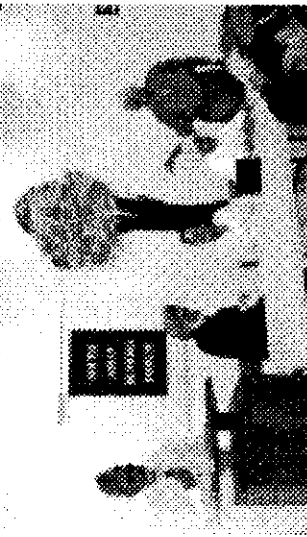
Listening with concentration



Siva & Christopher singing a SriLankan song



Senior members singing Hamd



Mr. Aslam a group member singing Ghazal



Senior members singing Hamd

More information about SASF can be found at www.humanendeavour.org. About Human Endeavour: (www.humanendeavour.org). Human Endeavour aims to work for poverty reduction, community and human development, environment, conflict and disaster management in Canada and other countries, with special focus on developing countries, by initiating programs aimed at generating self-reliance and economic uplift among the less fortunate and at the same time facilitating a dialogue between various stakeholders, in Canada and abroad, on issues affecting the social fabric.

Information about parent organization YCHR-CRTI can be found on www.ychr-crti.org.

Together in Community Building 2005

Woodbridge, ON--December 1, 2005: Human Endeavour organized its 2005 annual meeting to celebrate its work, and recognize contributions of individuals and organizations made to the community. Theme of the meeting was "Together in Community Building".

To build stronger, diverse and inclusive communities, Public, City Departments, Community Based Organizations, and various levels of Government have to work together. A close and strong cooperation between these entities ensures vibrant communities that will contribute to the development of an integrated society.

With this focus in mind, Human Endeavour organized a community forum that was attended by members of different cultures, organizations and city departments of Vaughan. Honorable Mayor of Vaughan Michael Di Biase was the Guest of Honor at this community forum.

Noor Din of Human Endeavour gave a brief overview of the activities of the group. He expressed his appreciation of all the city departments and organizations that worked together with HE in providing information, services and support to the community. He also mentioned about Vaughan being a very inclusive city, and having a Council whose all members are very easily accessible and supportive of any organization that wants to work for community development.

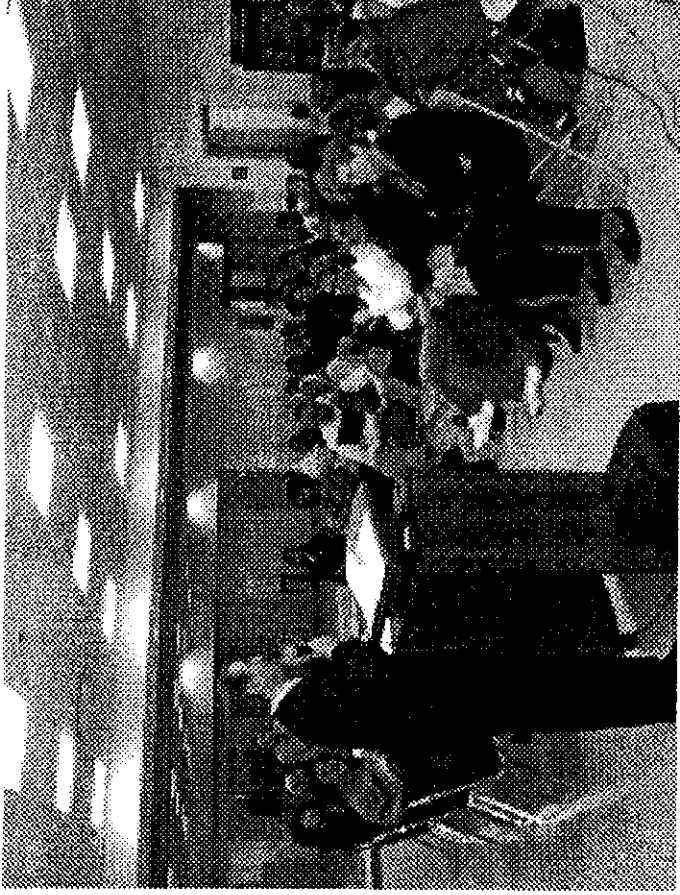
After that, four members from the South Asian Seniors Forum delivered short speeches on the following topics:

Living Together by Jamila Malik
Benefits of the SASF by Bimla Walia
Learning Through SASF by Arunusam Sivapathasundaram (Siva)
Some Issues and Challenges Faced by SASF by Amrit Kaur

The Honorable Mayor praised the achievements and accomplishments of the group and expressed that Vaughan is a multicultural and inclusive city and every community should work together closely for improving the quality of life. He said that the City is very accommodating in fulfilling the needs and requirements of communities with diverse cultural backgrounds. He promised to look into the issues identified by SASF and find some workable solutions.

Noor Din then asked the Honorable Mayor to give the recognition certificates to Domenic Colalillo (Recreation and Culture), Art Mustantuno (Recreation and Culture), Zahra Kassam (York Region Health Services), Isabella Ferrara (Seniors Association for Vaughan Initiative), and Vaughan Citizen (community newspaper). Noor Din presented the Mayor with a group picture with the South Asian community members taken on the occasion of the opening of Vellore Village Community Center.

Pictures Gallery



Honorable Mayor Michael DiBiase



About Human Endeavour: (www.humanendeavour.org). Human Endeavour aims to work for poverty reduction, community and human development, environment, conflict and disaster management in Canada and other countries, with special focus on developing countries, by initiating programs aimed at generating self-reliance and economic uplift among the less fortunate and at the same time facilitating a dialogue between various stakeholders, in Canada and abroad, on issues affecting the social fabric.

Information about parent organization YCHR-CRT can be found on www.ychr-crt.org.



HUMAN ENDEAVOUR

Human Endeavour

An Organization Committed to Social Change

Celebrating South-Asian Heritage



Respected Guest,

Human Endeavour (HE) is a registered non-profit, non-partisan and non-religious organization. The organization's aim is to work for poverty reduction, community and human development, advocacy, helping vulnerable sections of the communities, promoting equality, conflict and disaster management in Canada and other countries. Members of HE are actively involved in number of Council appointed committees, City and Regional initiatives concerning ethno-cultural and senior communities, diversity, inclusivity and South-Asian resident's quest in becoming an integral part of the mainstream society.

Since 1993, May has been marked as Asian Heritage Month in Canada. It is a celebration of the contributions and cultural diversity of all Asians in Canada. On May 27th 2006, Human Endeavour will host a celebratory event to highlight contributions of South-Asians in Canada and to share rich South-Asian History and Culture with everyone in the community.

Member Parliament, Honorable Mahli Gurbax, Honorable Mayor of Vaughan, Deputy Mayor and several Council members will attend this event.

Place: Vellore Village Community Center (Cafeteria), 1 Villa Royale Ave. Woodbridge, ON L4H 2Z7

Date: May 27, 2006 (Saturday)

Time: 11:00am-1:00pm

We are inviting the South-Asian community and leaders, council members, community leaders and other distinguished guests to come and join us to celebrate this event. Together, we will celebrate the multicultural and inclusive spirit of Canada by sharing our heritage and culture.

We will be honored to have you as our distinguished guest on this day. Kindly confirm your participation by May 5, 2006, either by email (noon.din@humanendeavour.org) or by phone (416-726-3252).

Yours Truly,

South-Asian Heritage Event Committee

Noor Din

Amrit Kaur

Meenu Sikand

Arunusam Sivapathasundaram

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YOUTH INITIATIVE

Human Endeavour has started Youth Initiative to promote youth participation in spreading social awareness. This program encourages university/college students to research and explore the issues impacting the social fabric. The data gathered is presented in form of articles. A University of Toronto's student wrote one such article, with the title "Problems Faced by Immigrant Students". The article touches on the surface of the difficulties that immigrant students face to adjust to the Canadian society. This article can be found on HE website

Two research projects are in progress:

Canadian Immigration System From the Perspective of Immigrants of Developing Countries.

Family Dynamics from Women's Perspective.

FUTURE ENDEAVOURS

- HE plans to develop a program that will allow the immigrant population to make use of the skills that they have acquired in their own countries. HE intends to facilitate their exposure to the local economic system so that the immigrants can understand the system, obtain economic stability and become a useful and functional part of the society.
- HE intends to look at the immigrant family dynamics, especially from the perspective of women. The issues that are faced by Canadian born women i.e.

balancing family and professional life compounds itself for immigrant women, because in the cases of immigrant families religion, cultural values and traditional gender roles are also a factor. The necessity of conforming to the major trends of Canadian society disrupts the family dynamics and causes a power shift with in the family. HE hopes to smooth this adjustment into a new society easier for these women by providing them a better and culturally sensitive support system.

- Promote community relations within the city by formulating and recommending policies and strategies through the Community Relations Committee of Vaughan.

- Promote exchange of information and research between developed and developing nations.

- Conduct dialogues on important international and national level issues.

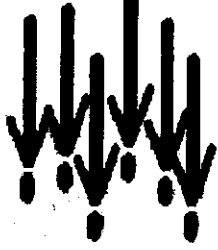
- Proactively work for peace and present a realistic and undistorted view of people's beliefs. Help fight against misunderstandings and misconceptions.



Human Endeavour
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Human Endeavour

www.humaneendeavour.org

ABOUT HUMAN ENDEAVOUR

Human Endeavour (HE) is a registered non-profit, non-partisan, non-religious Community Service Organization. It is an extension of YCHR-CRT (www.ychr-ct.org) a Pakistan based organization that has been active in community development and social justice since 1989.

Some of the main objectives of Human Endeavour are as follows:

- To combat poverty and contribute towards lasting improvements in living standards and quality of life, thereby, promoting great social and economic development and justice nationally, regionally and globally.
- To contribute towards promoting peace, democracy and human rights among the residents of developing countries and also among the migrant community in Canada and help them to integrate in the Canadian society.
- To develop programs and enhance peoples skills in making maximum use of their resources and by increasing their contribution, both among the migrant community in Canada and those living in South Asia.
- To improve the exchange of information and skills between Canadian organizations and institutions and South Asia-based organizations and institutions

- To bridge the cultural gap between the communities of developed and developing countries.

- To promote diversity and inclusivity between people of different races, religions and communities in order to promote cultural tolerance and harmony.
- HE intends to look at the immigrant family dynamics, from the perspective of the basic family unit.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

SOUTH ASIAN SENIORS AND COMMUNITY FORUM

South Asian community is one of the fastest growing communities of Vaughan Region. In March 2005, HE launched a pilot project to serve the Senior Citizens of South Asian Communities. Because of the success it gained with the Community members, this project is now a regular weekly event. It is a platform for representing and providing information, recreational programs aimed to create awareness and mobilize the South Asian community.

The program serves the purpose of a social gathering for the seniors and other community members. Seniors are encouraged to speak about their festivals or other important personal events. Other organizations serving the community are regularly introduced. Simple spoken English is also exercised so they can learn basic conversational skills.

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN IMMIGRANTS AND THE CANADIAN SOCIETY

Human Endeavour invites speakers from the City departments and various community based organizations for the purpose of making South Asian Community aware of available services. HE is trying to bridge the gap that exists between the immigrants and the services & facilities available to them. In this way HE enables them to become active members of the society.

HE acts as platform for these people to interact and to understand local setup of the Canadian society. HE hopes to be the step that will make the transition and adjustment to a new society easier for these immigrants. Through its networks and SAVI (Seniors Association of Vaughan Initiative), HE is promoting interaction between different groups belonging to different cultures.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

Working with Inclusivity Action Plan Initiative of Human Services Planning Coalition (HSPC) and the Regional Government of York Region (Vaughan City is Part of York Region).

The Action Plan has three theme areas:

- Improving Communication between Service Providers and Users.
- Creating Ethno-Cultural Awareness in York Region.
- Promoting Ethno-Cultural representation in Human Service Agencies



HUMAN ENDEAVOUR

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Woodbridge, ON--April 12, 2006: One of the objectives of Human Endeavour (HE) is to work with different levels of the government to provide them advice on various critical matters affecting the communities. HE is pleased to announce its representation in two committees in the City of Vaughan.

Ms. Amrit Kaur and **Ms. Meenu Sikand** both have been appointed by the City Council as members of the City of Vaughan's Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Ms. Meenu Sikand is Gender and Equity advisor of Human Endeavour. Currently she is working as the Accessibility Planning Specialist for the Region of Peel. Her previous work experience includes management positions within provincial government, corporate as well as non-profit sector. She is a passionate Human Rights advocate who is actively involved in number of organizations advancing the rights of women, persons with disabilities and immigrants.

Ms. Amrit Kaur a retired early childhood educator is also the Vice President of South Asian Seniors Forum. This Forum is a division of Human Endeavour and currently is operational within the City of Vaughan.

The purpose of the Accessibility Advisory Committee is to assist in the preparation and implementation of an Accessibility Plan, provide guidance and address and identify the needs of the community by the removal and prevention of barriers in the City of Vaughan's by-laws, policies, programs, practices and services.

Mr. Noor Din, the founder of Human Endeavour is already an appointed member by the City Council in the Community Relations Committee of the City of Vaughan, representing SAVI (Seniors Association of Vaughan Initiative).

The aim of this committee is to formulate and recommend to Council policies and strategies to prevent tensions, enhance community relations, fulfill human rights, and promote understanding and harmony.

About Human Endeavour: (www.humanendeavour.org). Human Endeavour aims to work for poverty reduction, community and human development, conflict and disaster management in Canada and other countries, with special focus on developing countries, by initiating programs aimed at generating self-reliance and economic uplift among the less fortunate and at the same time facilitating a dialogue between various stakeholders, in Canada and abroad, on issues affecting the social fabric.

Information about parent organization YCHR-CRT can be found on www.ychr-crt.org.

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