

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

**SAN**

South Asian Network



# Table of Contents

A Message from the Executive & Deputy Director.....	1
Voices Against Violence (AWAZ).....	2
Citizenship & Civic Engagement (CCE).....	5
Community Health Action Initiative (CHAI).....	9
Emotional and Mental Health (EMH).....	11
LA Office.....	14
Outreach.....	16
2024 Initiatives.....	18
Our Team.....	19
Our Partners.....	20
Our Funders.....	22
Closing Note from Board.....	23

## ***MISSION & VISION***

***South Asian Network (SAN) is a community based organization advancing the health, emotional & mental well-being, and civil rights of South Asians in Southern California.***

# A Message from the Executive & Deputy Director

When it comes to serving people and advocating policy, numbers can be both powerful and perilous. Powerful because it will demonstrate how much we accomplished with so little. And perilous because numbers cannot tell the stories. However, we would like to share with you both in the forthcoming pages.

Although we can share several tragic stories, here is one who transformed herself from being a survivor to an empowered individual and a caring mother.

***“I appreciate your two years long unconditional support throughout my difficult journey out of DV. You saved my life. Thank you.”***

We often ask ourselves how we can measure a life changing transformation. We believe we cannot. Helping someone become independent, confident and most importantly finding meaning in life gives us pure joy and fulfillment. And we hope you agree because we know you care!

South Asian Network remains on the front lines serving South Asian immigrants and second generation South Asian-American communities as an essential service provider. We continue to respond to the increasing need and emerging challenges facing our communities – including food insecurity, housing instability, anxiety and depression, increased risk of domestic violence, and barriers to accessing health services. Your support has been integral to ensuring we can respond efficiently and effectively, and we cannot thank you enough.

As we celebrate this past year, we are looking to the future and remain committed to addressing the systemic injustices and barriers for our communities. In the coming year, SAN will continue to center our work around gender equity, holistic healing, immigrant rights, community health and transformative justice. We hope you will join us as we empower our communities and other vulnerable populations and help them win their rightful place in the public square.



**Shakeel Syed &  
Hina Ahmad**

# AWAZ

## VOICES AGAINST VIOLENCE

Our Voices Against Violence (AWAZ) program empowers survivors of violence — including domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, child abuse/child sexual abuse, digital abuse, stalking, human trafficking, and elder abuse. SAN provides confidential case management, education, advocacy, and access to legal services for community members in need of support. We know that reaching out for assistance can be very difficult, that is why we provide a professional and safe space to navigate these situations.

### COLLABORATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

AAAJ	LACLJ	NLS	Crowell & Moring	Hill & Piibe	Levit & Quin	Herriot & Buhai	Radiant Futures	SAHARA
------	-------	-----	------------------	--------------	--------------	-----------------	-----------------	--------



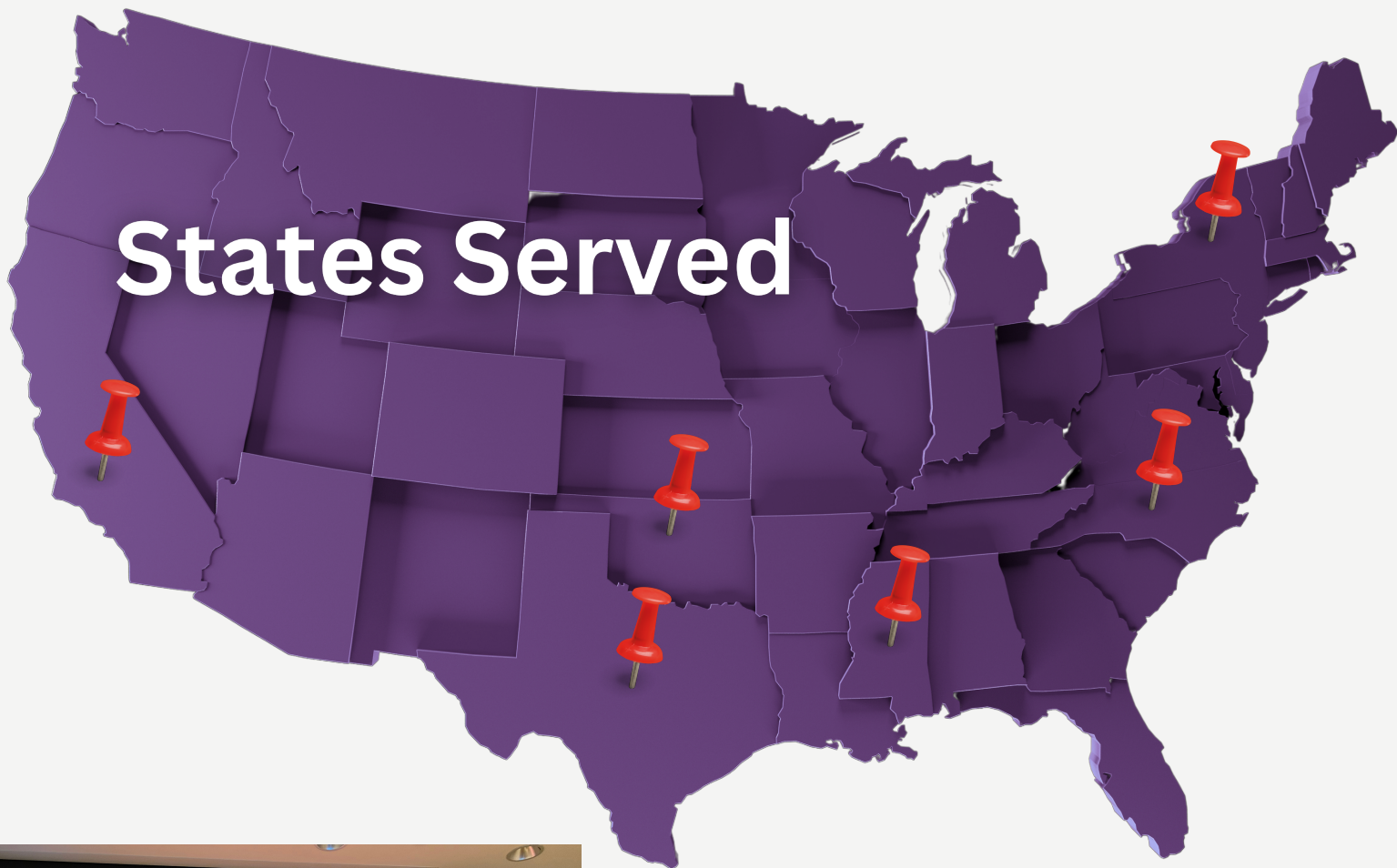
**35**  
**INTERNAL/EXTERNAL**  
**REFERRALS**

**200**  
**CLIENTS SERVED**

**8**  
**INDIVIDUALS**  
**PROVIDED**  
**COUNSELING**

**2023 INITIATIVES: Religious Leader Toolkit,  
South Asian March Against Domestic Violence**

**“You saved my life and my kids life here in America...your support has given me some strength to fight back the abuser and stand on my feet again...even the Judge (last year) said in the courtroom that I have gotten right guidance from NGO SAN. “ - ST**



**AWAZ Program Manager, Riffat Rahman, shared a presentation on supporting monolingual survivors earlier this year at the Domestic Violence and Homeless Services Coalition Community Connections Summit.**

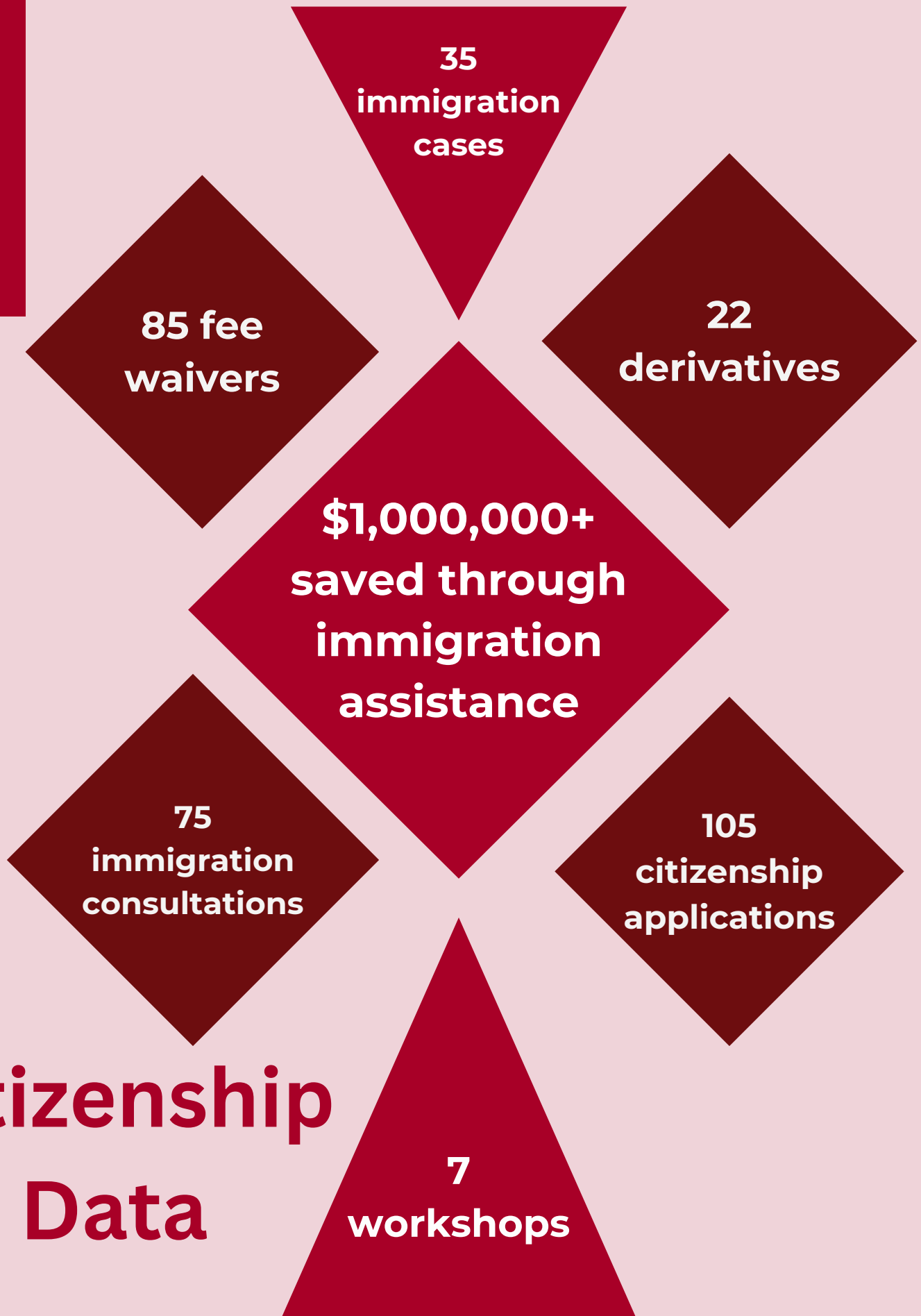
# CCE

## CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Citizenship & Civic Engagement Program engages the South Asian community in the key areas of citizenship, non-partisan voter registration, immigration issues, workers' rights, know your rights, and hate crimes/hate motivated incidents. We provide US Naturalization application assistance, as well as civic engagement advocacy and training. SAN finds it imperative that South Asians, specifically in Southern California actively engage in immigrant and civil rights issues.



**Citizenship Applicants' Countries of Origin**



# Citizenship Data



# LEGAL SERVICES

In September of 2023, the South Asian Network announced the expansion of SAN's immigration services, and hired our very **first in-house immigration attorney**. Jennifer Gavini joins our team with over 10 years of experience in the immigration field. Jennifer offers a wide range of support with not only applications for relief and adjustment, but also representing individuals in immigration court and through appeals. In 2024, we will take on more complex cases, host legal interns, and, in partnership with our AWAZ Unit, provide legal support for survivors of violence.



# CCE INITIATIVES



In collaboration with our partners at Neighborhood Legal Services, LA, we hosted a worker's rights workshop for the Artesia community.

Gearing up for the 2024 election year, SAN hosted a book talk with author Sangay Mishra on the importance of South Asian civic engagement.



This summer, SAN hosted a series of events in partnership with faith communities and in Little Bangladesh to address growing Anti-Asian hate and to educate the community on safety planning, bystander intervention, and more.

# CHAI

## COMMUNITY HEALTH ACTION INITIATIVE



Our Community Health Action Initiative (CHAI) program promotes healthy living and access to healthcare. SAN supports community members facing the challenges of language barriers when seeking medical attention/inquiries or accessing public services, as well as seniors in need of In Home Support Services (IHSS). The CHAI unit focuses on the overall health of the community (healthcare, economics and social interaction), which is why we host community events such as yoga at the park, South Asian movie watch parties and more!

### TOTAL APPLICATIONS

- **\$746,100 WORTH OF GROCERY VOUCHERS DISTRIBUTED**
- **88 MEDI-CAL**
- **62 COVERED CA**
- **60 SSI**
- **30 WIC**
- **25 CAL-FRESH**
- **25 IHSS**

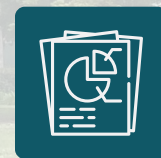


# Client Testimonies



**“During my emergency, I had no idea what to do, as I didn’t have health insurance...I went to SAN and they were able to help me pay my hospital bills and also access long term care.”**

**“I didn’t have the money to pay for my dialysis treatment but SAN helped me apply for Medi-Cal and I was able to continue to receive care.”**



**“Our kids are citizens, but we are not. We barely had enough money to keep our home and were struggling to have food on our table. SAN helped us access cash assistance and food vouchers.”**

**“As someone on a student visa, with a chronic disease, keeping up with my treatment was very difficult. With SAN’s support, I was able to access affordable care so that I could maintain treatment.”**



# EMH

## Emotional & Mental Health



Our Emotional & Mental Health (EMH) Program provides therapy and workshops for healthy living. We offer a confidential and safe space led by trained mental health professionals that assist in creating and sustaining mental well-being. We are here to support clients through recovery from trauma, grief, loss, mental health conditions, isolation, family conflict, relationship issues, overall stress, and so much more. SAN's EMH Program also prioritizes providing educational workshops within the community to destigmatize conversations around mental health, emphasizing culturally specific healing practices, and more.

# Client Testimonies



**“Ever since I sought out services from SAN, I have had more mental clarity and have been able to pick up pieces of my life and stand on my own two feet.”**

**- A.T.**

**“We need more events and spaces where women can comfortably open up about mental health struggles that we face.”**

**- BollyX Attendee**

# EMH Initiatives

**30**  
**therapy**  
**clients served**

**1000**  
**hours of**  
**therapy**  
**provided**

**12**  
**educational**  
**workshops**

## SOUTH ASIAN YOUTH INITIATIVE

In February of 2023, Mental Health Therapist, Mahtab Javed Siddiqui, spoke at the South Asian Youth Initiative conference at Yale University! On the Mental Health and LGBTQ Panel, Mahtab addressed the stigmas and risk factors associated with the mental health of our diaspora and the dysfunction and challenges that come with intergenerational trauma.

## RECLAIMING IDENTITY FOR COLLECTIVE LIBERATION CONFERENCE

Earlier this year, our Mental Health team also went international and attended a conference in Cancun, Mexico, where the focus was addressing clinical treatment and diagnosis for the BIPOC community. The topic of residual effects of colonization lingering into our practice with community members and impairing access to treatment validated our culturally specific practices.

# INAUGURATING OUR LA OFFICE



In January of 2023, the South Asian Network opened a “satellite” office for 6 months to test the waters in Little Bangladesh. This came after many conversations about the growing needs of the community in the region. In June, after receiving positive responses, SAN decided it was time to open up our own stand alone office in the heart of Little Bangladesh.

## Clients Served in Little Bangladesh in 2023

25

CITIZENSHIP CLIENTS

20

AWAZ CLIENTS

85

CHAI CLIENTS

6

WORKSHOPS HELD

4

EVENTS HELD





# BANGLADESHI COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The seed funding for the opening of our LA office came from a grant through the Department of Child and Family Services, titled the “Poverty Alleviation Initiative.” This funding seeks to invest in projects directly led by and for the community. In surveying local residents, we heard from them loud and clear that they wanted a community development center of their own. This center offers skills development workshops, computer classes, resume and interview preparation, ESL classes, and more. We also offer free childcare to ensure that all members of families are able to benefit from the resources available.



# Outreach & Engagement

46 OUTREACH  
EVENTS ATTENDED  
47 CITIES COVERED  
200,000 PEOPLE  
REACHED



# COMMUNICATIONS

Social media and online engagement allows us to further our reach and connect with our community regularly. This year, our online engagement has helped us reach the South Asian community in organizing and civic engagement.



# 2024 Initiatives



## LEGAL CLINICS

As SAN expands its own legal work, SAN plans to collaborate with amazing community partners to bring necessary legal support to community members. These clinics will bring support for individuals seeking counsel on tenant protections, workers rights, immigration law, family law, and more.



## 2024 ELECTIONS & POLICY ADVOCACY

From its inception, South Asian Network (SAN) has had a rich history of civic engagement and advocacy, empowering the South Asian community in Southern California. Some campaigns include:

- Los Angeles Taxi Workers Alliance fighting against harassment and abuse by the Taxi Owners
- holding a vigil for Mohammad Umar Chaudhry, an autistic man who was shot and killed by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), in 2008
- launching a workers' rights campaign in 2011 to get the workers of Indian restaurants and a beauty salon in Artesia their rightfully earned minimum wage and overtime pay
- co-sponsoring CA Senate Bill 403 to end caste-based discrimination in workplaces
- and working with coalitions to help the immigrants in Los Angeles.



## HEALTH FAIRS

In collaboration with community clinics, medical professionals, student groups, and partners, SAN plans to host community health fairs to bring necessary resources to the community in both Little India and Little Bangladesh

To move this initiative forward, SAN is working to create a policy agenda for 2024-2025 for the first time in its history. This legislative agenda will have demands of the community for elected officials. As we expand our citizenship and civic engagement (CCE) unit, SAN hopes to amplify the South Asian community's needs in the local and state legislative framework. The research and development (R&D) phase for the agenda led by Sirat Kaur, SAN's Community Organizer, involves in-depth unified steps with community partners, staff, and of course the South Asian community in Southern CA. Come 2024, we plan to collaborate with community organizations and community members to push for the immediate and necessary needs rooted in the R&D phase and advocate with the elected officials to prioritize the South Asian immigrant community's needs.

# Introducing Our Team



**Balvinder Kaur**



**Cynthia Chockalingam**



**Harsirat Kaur**



**Hina Ahmad**



**Ilesha Gupta**



**Jannatul Maoa**



**Jennifer Gavini**



**Mahtab Javed Siddiqui**



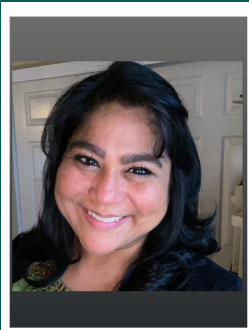
**Mehdi Shah**



**Mohammad Sufian**



**Nina Sharmin**



**Purvi Shahpatel**



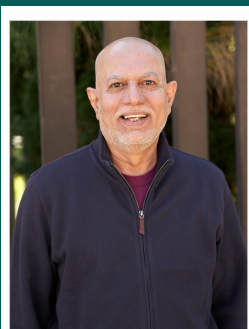
**Riffat Rahman**



**Sabrina Ali**



**Sachini Rajapaksha**



**Shakeel Syed**



**Shakuntala Chugani**



**Zainab Syeda Qureshi**

# Thank You to Our Partners



**AAPI EQUITY ALLIANCE**



**IMMIGRANTS ARE LOS ANGELES**



California Pan-Ethnic HEALTH NETWORK



CENTER FOR THE PACIFIC ASIAN FAMILY  
NURTURING CHANGE TOGETHER



ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER FORWARD MOVEMENT



**STOP AAPI HATE**



# Thank You to Our Community Partners



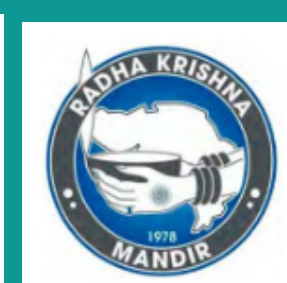
- Ashirwad Senior Center, Walnut
- Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Buena Park
- Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Stanton
- & so many more!



**Norwalk-ADHC**  
adult day healthcare center



Shri Lakshmi Narayan Mandir



# Thank You to Our Funders





# CLOSING NOTE FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

South Asian Network (SAN) continues to move forward with purpose and humility. Just this year, SAN has expanded its team to 16 staff members and added 2 new board members who bring their own unique expertise, experiences, and passions to the organization. While continuing to grow, we did not forget SAN's legacy in working to build power for our communities and confront the pervasive anti-Asian racism and hate.

We remain deeply committed to our core work, i.e., to dismantle gender-based violence, heal mental-health crisis, support our seniors and the underserved with public benefits and empower our community by helping them become citizens and train them to become civically active.

We're only able to continue this important work with the support of our donors and funders. We hope you will be as proud as we are of the detailed accomplishments highlighted in this report. Thank you for your partnership.

Sincerely,  
Board of Directors



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Ashim Kumar, Dr. Meena Makhijani,  
Laboni Hoq, Rita Kapadia, Rohit Shendrikar,  
Sandeep Dhuper, Sanjay Chhugani, Suman  
Mudunuri, Vaishalee Raja  
(listed left->right, top->bottom)



# SOUTH ASIAN NETWORK

**Artesia Office:**

18173 Pioneer Blvd. Suite I Artesia, CA 90701 | 562-403-0488

**LA Office:**

154 S. Vermont Ave. Los Angeles CA 90004 | 213-352-4033

[saninfo@southasiannetwork.org](mailto:saninfo@southasiannetwork.org)

[www.southasiannetwork.org](http://www.southasiannetwork.org) | [@southasiannetwork](https://www.instagram.com/southasiannetwork)

**DONATE HERE:**

