

June 7, 2011

Bangladesh-American Center in Houston Made Headline News!

On June 4, 2011, the first Donor Conference for Bangladesh-American Center was held at the Stafford Civic Center with over 500 donor-members from across Houston and various other cities. It was a one of a kind event and the first such in the Bangladeshi-American Community. The objective of this conference was to create a platform to bring Bangladeshi-Americans together to renew the shared commitments and refresh the sense of duty to their shared heritage. It was intended to bring out the Bangladeshi Americans who represent diverse sectors and have been a silent force to reckon within the broader community. This conference was also designed for the community to have a place for a philanthropic spirit to make meaningful contributions that only boost the collective pride.

The conference has fulfilled the objective of moving the Bangladesh American Center (BAC) project to its next logical step to have the tangible fund – the seed money from the broader community to answer the skeptics' questions of "Why do we need a Bangladesh American Center?"

The answer was given by the broader community and the members of Bangladesh Association by contributing from \$10 up to \$30,000 at the conference center during the period of 6 hours. Within the time interval of 7:00pm to 1:00am the First BAC Donor Conference raised over approximately \$200,000.00 in the form of cash and checks, along with another \$100,000.00 in pledges. Once the total cash and checks are audited and counted by the oversight committee with the BAC and BAH Treasurers, the actual amount raised at the conference will be disclosed within the next few weeks.

The conference started with the US and Bangladesh national anthems being played in violin by a young Bangladeshi 8th grader Tawsif Azad while everyone stood silently and showed respect to the flags. Mr. James E. Edmunds, the Chairman of Houston Port Authority was the opening speaker, wherein he signified the entrance of an immigrant Bangladeshi-American community in the city of Houston. Then the Harris County Clerk Mr. Chris Daniel welcomed the community and the center in his county. Following that the Mayor pro-tem Mr. Ed Gonzales welcomed the Chairman, the Director, and the Bangladesh Ambassador to accept the proclamation by the Mayor of City of Houston in announcing the Bangladesh Donor Conference Day at the city level.

The conference was well managed and designed to take to the next high level where the Congress of United States of America has sent a clear message to the community that the government is one hundred percent behind the new emerging community in Houston. US Congresswoman Ms. Sheila Jackson Lee welcomed the community in the conference and proclaimed that this community well deserved to be recognized as a political force and commended the effort of the community in building the BAC.

As the program went on, US ambassador H.E. Mr. Akramul Qader who was representing the government of Bangladesh to accept the honor from the local and US government welcomed the donor-members to the historic moment toward the first step in building a home away from home. Mr. Gordon Quan, ex city council member of Houston, also gave a welcome speech. The conference was intertwined and tied with entertainment with Bangladeshi dances from the local community members, along with fund raising activities. The dances were inserted in a sequence as if history is unfolding in front of live audiences and with live TV broadcast by the BDeshTV.com in real time. The performers were Ms. Nadia

Husain (an UT nursing school Student), Ms. Farzana Alam (a high school student), Ms. Sierra Haq (just graduated from Clear Brook High school), Ms. Nuriva Kamran (a high school student), Ms. Anisha Roy (a high school student), Simmy Ahmed (Student of U of H) and Disha Roy (an UT law school student).

The highlights of the program were also marked by the speeches from broader community leaders and company executives for an occasion designed to raise funds to build a permanent structure of the Center at 13415 Renn Road, Houston, TX 77546. Amongst the leaders were Dr. Selina Ahmed (Professor of TSU), Mr. Dewan Ahmed (a founding member of BAH), Dr. S. S. Newaz (ex-chairman of BAH), Dr. Abdus Satter (retired reservoir engineer), Mr. Mohid Khan (executive of pharmaceutical company) Mr. Towfique Habib (CEO of Proplant Inc.), Dr. Nizam Meah (a well known Doctor), Mr. Azadul Haq (the first Director of BAC), Mr. Afzal Ahmed (ex-chairman of BAH), a message from Fakhru Ahsan Moni (an ex-BAC Director) at his absence given by Mr. Kamal Haq and Mr. Quamrul Mina (CEO Bdeshtv.com).

To promote the conference within the Bangladeshi-American young professionals, the conference provided a section for them to speak toward the common ground. Their participation is important as they begin to pave the way for this community and as new leaders emerge from their generation. The speeches were given by freshly graduated Medical Doctor Ms. Ana Islam (Kasfia) and Tabeen Islam (a young professional) in honor of their late father (Mr. Quamrul Islam, Ex-BAC Director), a new young professional working at the Houston International partnership group Ms. Farah Wahab and a young executive of a fortune 500 company Ms. Sarah Turner.

As the Fundraising Committee Chair for this event, the Chairman of the Bangladesh-Association Mr. Arun Roy's speech provided a clear vision of the BAC project in substantiating the justification of the required funds to make it a viable option to start the construction in October of this year. The Chairman's speech was followed by the BAH Secretary General Mr. Shapnik Khan and BACDC Fundraising Co-Chair and BAH Vice Chairman Mr. Shah Haleem. These two officials provided the needed inspiration throughout the program by motivating the donor-members to contribute toward the common goal and the theme quickly became "Let's Build BAC – NOW". They have been at the forefront of the project and have been able to excite people and raise as much funds as possible so that the construction will no longer be a dream.

The convener of this conference and the BAC director Mr. Hasan Rahman provided a clear path of 'How to build the BAC' with a no-nonsense clarification. He defined the path in a very simple 3-step process. Get the city permit, get funds to start the construction, and have the grand opening of the permanent structure by December 2012. The donor-conference was designed by the BAC Director Hasan Rahman. His goal was to create the momentum to start the engine of the community participation while gaining the required support and funds to get the city permit.

The biggest accomplishment of this conference was the announcement of the award of architectural design and engineering plan to the Karl Watson Group, a local architectural firm in Houston. The conference also had complimentary dinner with music by local artists Ms. Nusrat Jahan Khan (Ishika) and Ms. Maliha Arefeen Anchal and ended by a famous Kazi Nuzrul Islam poem recited by Mr. Mukul with a finishing touch of Mr. Rathindra Nath Roy's benefit concert. There was lot of other entertainment available throughout the day along with clown entertaining the kids as well as raffle drawings for numerous prizes such as 2-free round-trip airline tickets to Bangladesh, a 46 inch LCD flat screen TV, Astros Tickets and Houston Space Center tickets. The program was designed to take a big step in building a home away from home, and the community came through in a very big way.

The Executive Board of Bangladesh-American Center and Board of Directors of Bangladesh Association jointly would like to thank all the donors and volunteers for making our first BAC Donor Conference a success.

Vote of Thanks:

Donor-Members: BAC EB and BAH BoD sincerely thank all the donors who contributed to the construction project. All Donor Names will be published once certified by the Treasurer.

Volunteers (BAC DC): Abu Chowdhury (Khokon), Adnan Mannan, Afzal Ahmed, Amer, Andre Huq, Arif Rahman (Bappi), Aslam Zahan (Prince), Atiqul Islam (Rana), Ayman Imam, Azadul Haq, Carrissa Huq, Duon Miller, Reaz Mohammad, Gourie Ahmad, Jaime Alvarado, Jinnatul F Khan (Shirin), Kamal Haq, Kazi Kamran Mahboob, Kallol Halder, M. Masoom, Maggie Haleem, Mahmuda Chowdhury (Punno), Mohammad Hasan, Naisha Naser, Navid Naser, Naz Husain, Oli Mohammad, Pitu Rajon Rahman, Ratna Roy, Rona Islam, Ruben Gutierrez, S.M. Haleem, S.M. Azad, Saddam Ahmad, Sagir Imam, Syeda Youmna Zahan, Selina Ahmed, Shah Haleem, Shahid Islam, Shama Ahmad, Shapnik Khan, Shubo Rahman, Simmy Ahmed, Syed Arefin, Syed Dinar, Syed Jan, Syed Mujbul (Prince), Tawfiq Ahmed, Tawqir Azad, Tawsif Azad

Group Song: Riffat Uddin Kushum, Khaled Khan, M. R. Chowdhury, Naela Huq, Rumana Ahmed, Rumana Rawnak, Prova Azam, Hafiz Rahman, Maliha Chowdhury (Anchol), Shyamal Bhattcharia

Magazine Editorial Board: Azadul Haq, Syed Dinar, Afzal Ahmed, Selina Rahman, Kallol Halder, Naz Husain

Graphics Design/Video: Azadul Haq

Stage Decoration: Rana from New York

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Warm Regards;

BAC Fund Raising Committee

Bangladesh-American Center, A project of [Bangladesh Association, Houston](http://www.Bangladesh-Association.com)

A Nonprofit Organization, Established in 1978, Charter #3-00084-4754-9

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