

EGO

20 Years One Vision

By Sangeeta Kumar



Prince George Ballroom

Sakhi celebrated its 20th anniversary and hosted its 7th Gala Benefit on Friday, Oct. 2 at the regal Prince George Ballroom. The evening, with the theme 20 Years One Vision: Ending Violence Against Women, depicted the profound individual and community transformations Sakhi has made possible over its history.

The evening's revelry did not underscore the real reason why we were all there: to contribute our bit to help Sakhi break the silence that envelops the issue of domestic violence in our communities.

Actress and model Bhavna Toor was the mistress of ceremonies. She recounted her first encounter with Sakhi during the March Against Violence in 2001 and how its unmistakable courage to speak out about a subject that's taboo struck a chord.

A fusion performance by the Sa Dance Company, founded by Artistic Director Payal Kadakia, to increase awareness of Indian Dance in the mainstream set the stage of what was to follow- an interspersing of survivors' real live stories and Sakhi's pivotal role in transforming lives.

Following a crisply edited montage of her films, the evening's honored speaker, Mira Nair motivated guests, with her extraordinary spirit, to honor Sakhi's great work with an anecdotal narration of the start of her association with Sakhi when founding member Tula Goenka approached her with a goal to establishing an organization to "end the silence". A dinner with her was the most sought after 'item' during the live auction conducted subsequently by a Sotheby's representative.



Filmmaker and long-time Sakhi supporter, Mira Nair

Executive Director Purvi Shah spoke of “changing the conversation from living in fear to enabling women's dreams” and that in essence has been Sakhi’s journey over the years since its founding in 1989.

Reshma Shetty actress on the comedy series ‘Royal Pains’ wrapped up the night with a pledge drive and paved the way for knock out desi tunes by DJ Rekha.

Through corporate sponsorship and individual major gifts, ticket and auction sales, as well as donations, Sakhi raised more than \$200,000. These funds make possible Sakhi’s vital programs to support survivors of abuse, engage communities through innovative outreach and media work, and enhance language access in the courts through policy advocacy.

As Purvi Shah observed that evening, the real celebration will finally occur where there exists ‘a world without abuse’. Until then Sakhi is the beacon that alerts our community to the reality that silence is provocation.

Images By: Preston Merchant (courtesy of Sakhi)

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