

For Immediate Release

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Post Event Press Release: Domestic Harmony Foundation 3rd Annual Fundraiser

On Saturday April 9th 2011, the Swan Club in Roslyn, NY was alit with beautifully attired ladies and gentlemen, all supporting the dire cause of domestic violence victims. The Domestic Harmony Foundation (DHF) successfully hosted its 3rd Annual Fundraiser Dinner with the backdrop of the charming gardens of the country club.

The cocktail hour was held in a glass room overlooking manicured gardens littered with budding spring leaves and hyacinths. There were approximately 190 guests in attendance that night. Various stations of food were nestled in the corners of the cocktail reception area as supporters, organizers and guests mingled with each other. During the cocktail hour, DHF volunteers sold CDs and books by singer, author, and humanitarian, Salman Ahmad. An expectant buzz surrounded the guests in the reception area as anticipation built for the evening's events to unfold.

The main event room was beautifully decorated with real carnations and hyacinths in clay pots as centerpieces, adorned by gifts from DHF for the guests. The evening's program began with an introduction by DHF's esteemed Executive Director Shaida Khan. Ms. Khan spoke of DHF's inception and events that brought to light the need for organizations such as DHF to exist. She highlighted the activities of the organization and stressed upon the importance of community involvement in eradicating domestic violence. Ms. Khan's speech reminded the listeners how essential it is for religious and community leaders to be fully educated on issues of domestic violence so they may be a guiding light to the victims who turn to them.

It was announced, regrettably, that two of the evening's speakers, Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice and Dr. Sujata Warriar, Director of the NYC Program of the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Abuse, were unable to attend. The District Attorney's place was taken by Madeline Singas, Chief of the Special Victims Bureau at the Nassau County DA's office, who illustrated the types of crimes the Bureau is faced with on a regular basis. The audience was given a glimpse into life at the Special Victims Bureau and the responsibilities Ms. Singas and her colleagues face each day in their battle against violence.

Following Ms. Singas, the celebrated Salman Ahmad took the stage and the audience's hearts. Mr. Ahmad is the founder of the Pakistani rock band *Juno* and the non-profit organization, the Salman and Samina Global Wellness Initiative (SSGWI), which works on interfaith dialogue, wellness awareness and music education, to name a few. He performed some of his famous songs with Mr. Pandit Samir Chatterjee accompanying on

the tabla. Mr. Ahmad's musical and vocal talents kept the audience captivated and by popular demand he returned a little later in the evening to perform a few more songs.

The musical part of the evening was followed by a brave woman who related to the audience her story and experiences dealing with domestic abuse. The survivor's story brought home this issue for the awestruck audience. She spoke of the dilemmas she was faced with daily, the worries for herself and her children's safety, and her ultimate path into the arms of the Domestic Harmony Foundation. The audience could clearly see the immense amount of strength of heart and mind the survivor has had to bring herself to seek help and continue with DHF's weekly support group meetings. Because of this one person's courage, the listeners were able to put a face to the term "domestic violence survivor," and found themselves transported into her shoes, seeing the pain she has had to endure.

DHF member Yasmin Wasti shared an inspirational poem reflecting the emotions of a domestic violence victim. Long-time DHF member and counselor Dr. Kushalata Jayakar Ahmed skillfully sang a few songs during dinner to depict the feelings of uncertainty and strength survivors of domestic violence can encounter. Later, two young ladies representing the organization Khadijah's Caravan, a spiritually based activist group, presented poems and pieces written by members of a young generation working to raise awareness on women's issues. There also followed a slideshow introduced by DHF member and lawyer Mr. Omar Chaudhry, Esq. Aside from providing legal advice to victims of domestic violence at DHF, Mr. Chaudhry oversaw a summer law internship for two students from the New York Law School. The slideshow presented DHF's activities over the past year, which included various presentations at numerous locations, events held at DHF locations to raise domestic violence awareness and increase dialogue.

The evening's success was greatly due to the great amount of hard work and love that was put in by the organization's members and volunteers. The work that went behind the scenes to create a night of such elegance and poignancy could have only come about through immense amounts of dedication and time. In addition, individual donors and organizations such as *The South Asian Times*, *Weekly Pakistan Voice*, and TVOne Global, our Media Partners, as well as Habib American Bank, the Islamic Center of Long Island, and the Mukhopadhyay Foundation, provide the community and institutional support necessary for the work we do. Undoubtedly, with this continued support, the following year will see another successful fundraiser.