

# Momentum

South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)  
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## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear SAALT members, supporters,  
and allies:

In 2011, SAALT asked a simple question: **What kind of America do we want to live in and build?** Through our work this year, we heard from many of you who responded to this question. We heard that you want to be part of an America that respects civil rights; that values civic and political engagement; that creates equal access to opportunity for individuals regardless of where they come from, what their immigration status is, and what language they speak; and that ensures that our elected leaders, policymakers, and government agencies understand the concerns and challenges of the diverse communities that make up this nation.

**Here, at SAALT, we couldn't agree more.** In this edition of *Momentum*, you will find examples of how SAALT has been building such an America. With many of you, we represented our community's concerns with policymakers on Capitol Hill and the White House. And, we engaged youth, advocates, and entrepreneurs to give back to their neighborhoods and cities through the *Be the Change* service project.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to build the America that we and our children deserve to be part of, in 2012 and beyond.



Deepa Iyer  
Executive Director

## An America that Recognizes Diverse Voices and Leadership



*"Most of us, even as advocates, do not get the opportunity to have access to Washington, DC the way we do through SAALT. Thanks to SAALT for making that happen and for paving the way for real change, from the community to national policy!"*

– Nadia Hussein, California

Nadia was among the 250 individuals from around the United States who attended the National South Asian Summit held by SAALT in April 2011. The Summit included a Congressional briefing, roundtables with numerous federal government agencies, and trainings. SAALT builds the next generation of social change leadership through programs such as the biannual Summit, the *Advocates for Community Empowerment* training program for women advocates, and more.

## An America that Values Civic Service

Rupal and the Austin, Texas team were part of a nationwide effort to engage volunteers in civic service in their neighborhoods in October 2011. Over 2,500 volunteers participated in 72 different locations around the country to clean up parks, work with children, or serve food at homeless shelters. Through *Be the Change*, community members have the opportunity to give back to their communities in the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi's timeless message, *'You must be the change you wish to see in the world'*.



*"Through Be the Change we are empowering others to find joy in service while strengthening the community."*

–Rupal Shah, Project and Volunteer Coordinator, Be the Change-Austin, TX

## An America that Respects Civil Rights



*"Xenophobia is not just something that our community has to deal with... We must understand [that] justice is not about 'just us', it has to be liberty and justice for all of us."* –Mohammed Hameeduddin, Mayor of Teaneck, New Jersey, on the unanimous passage of the anti-bias resolution presented by SAALT in Teaneck, NJ.

SAALT advocates with policymakers in Washington, DC and in other parts of the country for policies and laws that respect the rights of all individuals in the United States. In 2011, our policy work focused on the ten-year anniversary of September 11th, a watershed moment for our country and community. With the support of our organizational partners and Field Fellows, SAALT held and participated in community hearings, engaged in media advocacy, and obtained pledges from congressional and local policymakers to refrain from engaging in xenophobic rhetoric.

**Download Now!**

## SAALT RELEASES A NEW REPORT, *COMMUNITY RESILIENCE*

Released on the ten-year anniversary of the hate crime that killed Balbir Singh Sodhi, *Community Resilience* looks back at the past decade and presents recommendations on moving forward. It **includes testimonials** from South Asians who experienced loss as a result of the September 11th tragedy as well as **examples of best practices** around **community collaborations**. To read the report, visit [www.saalt.org](http://www.saalt.org).



## PARTNER WITH SAALT



One of SAALT's core strategies is building partnerships both within and outside of the South Asian community. The National Coalition of South Asian Organizations (NCSO), a network of 42 organizations in 12 regions around the country, forms the basis of SAALT's partnerships. We work closely with NCSO members on regional projects, national advocacy, and skills-building programs. Our allies also include the Rights Working Group, the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights, and the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA).

## MEET THE SAALT TEAM!

### STAFF

**Sadiya Abjani**, Maryland Outreach Coordinator, AmeriCorps Member

**Deepa Iyer**, Executive Director

**Mou Khan**, Programs and Campaigns Associate

**Mary Kong**, Administrative and Development Assistant

**Priya Murthy**, Policy Director

**K'ai Smith**, Director of Operations and Programs

**Rehman Sufi**, Development Manager

**Hena Ashraf**, NYC Racial Profiling Project Coordinator/Consultant

**Navneet K. Patwalia Bhalla**, New Jersey Policy and Outreach Coordinator /Consultant

*...and our amazing interns, Field Fellows, SAALT Circle coordinators, Be the Change planning teams, and volunteers through the year!*

### BOARD

**Ankur Agarwal**

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## SAALT ON THE RECORD

*Rep. King's Hearings: Lessons Forgotten*, The Hill.com

*Racial healing Needed on 10th anniversary of 9/11*, opinion editorial placed in newspapers around the country

*From Crisis to Hope, India Abroad*

*South Asians Battle Lingering Stereotypes From 9/11*, The Bergen Record

SAALT also spoke around the country at conferences and panel discussions, including those convened by the American Constitution Society, Stanford Law School, and the National Network for Arab American Communities. **Invite us to your event in 2012!**



## JOIN US TO BUILD AN AMERICA FOR ALL OF US!

*South Asian Organizations*: Join the National Coalition of South Asian Organizations.

*Students*: Sign up your organization to participate in *Be the Change 2012* and contact us to do a workshop for your members.

*Professionals*: Become a member, starting at just \$35, and organize a local SAALT Circle to discuss issues and trends in our community.

*Advocates, Allies and Activists*: Join our public webinars and workshops.

**Contact us at [info@saalt.org](mailto:info@saalt.org) for more information!**

## SAALT THANKS YOU AND ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

Atlantic Philanthropies

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