



Strengthening South Asian
Communities in America

PRESS RELEASE:

Stand Together, Serve Together:

**Over 3,000 volunteers celebrate service and Gandhi's challenge at
Be The Change events nationwide**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 6, 2012

Washington, DC - The spirit of volunteerism and community service should be taken beyond a single day of service - that was the message at the annual *Be The Change* national day of service hosted by the DC area-based non-profit organization, South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT), on Saturday, October 6, 2012, in coordination with over 46 campus and city planning teams around the country.

Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's message, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world," over 3,000 volunteers including students, professionals, and retirees contributed their time and energy to service activities around the country, including Atlanta, Austin, Boston, Chicago, New Brunswick, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. In addition, college campuses from Hawaii to Oklahoma to New York coordinated *Be The Change* activities.

"For the past 11 years, *Be the Change* has encouraged community members, young professionals and students to take an active role to build community through service. With each year, we are increasingly inspired by the growth in numbers and initiative taken by individuals around the country to live the words of Gandhi as they get involved on this day and truly be the change," said Deepa Iyer, Executive Director of SAALT.

"This was Austin's third year participating in *Be the Change* as a core city. It was extremely exciting and gratifying for the Austin BTC coordinating team to watch the day unfold as volunteers from all walks of life stood together in service," said Sonia Kotecha, the head of BTC Austin's planning team. "To think that just a small group of us could inspire, motivate and mobilize an entire community to 'be the change' was humbling. It reminds me each year how ordinary people can do extraordinary things through serving each other."

This year's service activities focused on food and hunger, seniors, children and youth, civic engagement, and the environment. Partners and sponsors also affirmed the values of *Be the Change*. Partners ranged from South Asian sororities and fraternities to national Asian and Pacific Islander organizations and South Asian professional networks. *Be the Change 2012* was supported by National Sponsors Sodexo, Development & Training Services, Inc., North American South Asian Bar Association, and Iota Nu Delta.

"Sodexo is once again thrilled to be a part of the nationwide *Be The Change* events which align with our corporate values and reflect our Business Resource Groups' commitment to community engagement," said Cassandra Chin Muh Loh, Sodexo Senior Training Manager and National Co-Chair of Community Engagement/Cultural Awareness of Sodexo's Pan Asian Group.



Strengthening South Asian
Communities in America



This event was tweeted under [#BTC2012](#). For more information and additional photographs, please contact info@saalt.org or 301-270-1855.

Be The Change 2012 was generously supported by

