

# MOMENTUM

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*South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) is a national, nonpartisan, non-profit organization that elevates the voices and perspectives of South Asian individuals and organizations to build a more just and inclusive society in the United States.*

***A note from SAALT's Board of Directors and staff:*** We made some big changes in 2013! Deepa Iyer, our first Executive Director, announced that she would be leaving the organization after nearly a decade of leadership and service. After a six-month search, the SAALT Board and staff welcomed Suman Raghunathan, a seasoned non-profit and policy professional who connects deeply with SAALT's values and goals. We hope you will have a chance to welcome Suman!

Dear SAALT Community:



I am looking forward to working with you and meeting with you this year. As the daughter of Indian immigrants who has devoted my career to social change work in the non-profit sector, I begin my tenure at SAALT with humility and excitement. With a strong team of staff members, with the support of our Board and advisors, and with the guidance of my predecessor, Deepa Iyer, SAALT is off to a running start in 2014.

This year, we plan on strengthening South Asian communities through leadership programs, townhalls and forums on immigration and civic engagement, and policy analysis about the issues that affect your daily lives. We will continue to be a progressive voice for South Asian community organizations and individuals in Washington, DC. And, we hope to learn from you through our community forums and SAALT Circles.

In this year's *Momentum*, you will read about our key programs and activities for the year. I hope that you will get involved with SAALT and become part of our family of activists, partners and supporters.

In Solidarity,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Suman'.

## Training New Leaders



*"YLI 2013 has inspired me to keep moving because I know that there are others who are still out there changing their communities, and there is no reason for me to stop either." – Nikhat*

In July of 2013, SAALT convened 15 university students from across the country at the second *Young Leaders Institute* in Washington, DC. The Institute offered young leaders the opportunity to build leadership skills, connect with activists and mentors, and explore social change strategies around issues that affect South Asian and immigrant communities in the US. Students developed action plans to address bias-based bullying on their campuses and in their communities.

## Your Voice in the Capitol



*Former ED, Deepa Iyer, facilitates meeting with Asian Pacific American leaders and President Obama (May 2013).*

SAALT engages regularly with the White House, Congress and federal agencies to highlight issues affecting South Asian American communities. Right now, our emphasis is on the need for immigration reform legislation that can fix our country's broken immigration system. In 2013, SAALT convened 6 townhalls with community members and organizations in places like Jersey City, Chicago, and Fremont to raise awareness about immigration reform.

## Strengthening South Asian Organizations



South Asian organizations gather for a training in Washington DC.

SAALT coordinates the National Coalition of South Asian Organizations (NCSO), a network of 49 groups that provide direct services, organize, or advocate on behalf of South Asian communities. In 2014, through the *We Build Community* program, SAALT will provide trainings, networking opportunities, and subgrants to five organizations including Chhaya CDC, Desis Rising Up and Moving, South Asian American Policy and Research Institute, Sapna NYC, and the Sikh Coalition.

## National South Asian Summit



*"From community storytelling to digital organizing, immigration policy to caring for seniors, the National South Asian Summit was a place where I could learn, be challenged, and meet wonderful new collaborators and friends from across the country."*  
- Anirvan Chatterjee, Bay Area

Over 375 activists, advocates, allies and community members representing 18 states across the US, as well as Canada and the UK, and over 30 South Asian community-based organizations gathered in Washington, DC for the 2013 *National South Asian Summit*, hosted by South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) and the South Asian Law Student Association (SALSA) at American University Washington College of Law. The Summit engaged participants in workshops and sessions related to key issues affecting South Asians, and included an Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill for community members to meet with policymakers.

## GET INVOLVED WITH SAALT IN 2014!

- Start a SAALT Circle
- Bring us to your campus for a workshop or presentation
- Intern with us in DC
- Apply for the Young Leaders Institute 2014
- Donate and become a member of our Sustainers Circle

## MEET THE SAALT TEAM!

Suman Raghunathan — Executive Director  
K'ai Smith — Director of Programs Operations  
Manar Waheed — Policy Director  
Manpreet Kaur Teji — Program Associate  
AuriaJoy Asaria — Communications and Administrative Assistant  
Victoria Meaney — Program/Policy Fellow  
Deepa Iyer — Strategic Advisor  
Jasmeet Sidhu — Law and Policy Consultant

## THANK YOU FOR MAKING OUR WORK POSSIBLE

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