



Strengthening South Asian
Communities in America



Dear SAALT Community:

With gratitude for your partnership and support for nearly ten years, I am writing to let you know that I will be stepping down from my position at SAALT at the end of 2013.

When I became Executive Director in 2004, we started SAALT in a one-room, windowless office in midtown Manhattan, at a time when South Asian communities were confronting the post 9/11 realities that had taken shape in America. We began to build on the connections and knowledge that already existed among groups and community advocates around the country, and developed a common vision to create a progressive national presence that could meaningfully amplify the issues, priorities and needs of our diverse communities.

Being part of this shared community journey with so many of you has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

Over the years, I came to realize that it would be important, both for SAALT and for myself, to make way for new leadership, and to do so at a time of organizational strength and stability. And that is where SAALT is now, with seasoned staff and board leadership, a track record of meaningful policy and program impact, long-term relationships with allies and stakeholders, and financial sustainability.

I am confident that the important community-building work that you rely on us to do will only deepen under the guidance of a new Executive Director and with the wisdom of our Board of Directors, the commitment of our team, the support of our philanthropic partners, and the strength of our relationships with allies and community-based organizations.



*Our team at SAALT reception,
January 2013*

Our Journey Together

Today, SAALT is a national organization with six full-time staff in our DC area office, a million dollar budget, and strong partnerships. We have become a key player on policy issues ranging from immigration to civil rights, and have sat at tables with Administration and Congressional leaders to advocate around our community's needs. We have changed the landscape of information about South Asian communities through our [reports](#) and analyses. Students, organizers, non-profit leaders, activists and professionals come back

time and again to take part in our programs, including our [South Asian Summits](#), [Young Leadership Institutes](#), and [Be the Change](#) events.

Perhaps what makes me proudest is our involvement in shaping the [National Coalition of South Asian Organizations \(NCSO\)](#). With the capacity and connections of the NCSO, we stand ready now to respond to crises and opportunities alike that face our communities. And, our partnerships with allies such as the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans, the Rights Working Group, the National Network of Arab American Communities, and the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, ensures that the experiences and perspectives of South Asian communities are being heard and included in broader movements for racial, immigrant and gender justice in our country.



SAALT attends a meeting with AAPI leaders and President Obama (May 2013)

What's Next?

Between now and the end of this year, the SAALT Board of Directors, staff and I will implement our transition plan, which we began to develop six months ago. The most important part of the process, of course, is to find our new Executive Director, and that's where we need your help!

[View the SAALT Executive Director Job announcement here](#)
Share this link with your networks: <http://bit.ly/saaltEDJobAnnouncement>

We would also love to hear from you during our transition period. Please feel free to reach out to me with questions you might have, and to offer your support and input to our team of staff and Board members. You can reach me at deepa@saalt.org, and send a message to our staff and board by emailing info@saalt.org.

Some of you might be wondering what I will do when I leave at the end of the year! I plan on taking the time to rest and reflect, to write and teach. I will also stay engaged with SAALT as a consultant to provide guidance and input to our new director, staff and board. This work, our community, our movement for racial and immigrant justice is my home, and I intend to find ways to be of service as I find the next arc of my journey.

This is certainly not a goodbye message, and you will continue to hear from me in the coming months as we implement our leadership and capacity building programs, and deepen our advocacy around immigration reform. And, I hope to see you at the end of this year at special SAALT events around the country to reflect on the past decade, and to introduce you to our new Executive Director!

In Solidarity and with Gratitude,



Deepa Iyer
Executive Director

FROM ANOUSKA CHEDDIE, on BEHALF of the

SAALT Board of Directors

Dear SAALT Community:

On behalf of the SAALT Board of Directors, I write to thank Deepa for nearly a decade of visionary leadership, and to tell you about our plans for a healthy and effective transition process.

Under Deepa's direction and with the efforts of our accomplished and dedicated staff, board members and advisors, SAALT has become a leading national voice in the movement for racial and social justice in the United States. We are so inspired by and grateful for the time and investment that Deepa has given for nearly ten years. Those of us who have worked with her know that Deepa is a strong, tenacious leader who fights to ensure that our communities have a voice at tables of power. Deepa's leadership and the efforts of our entire team, past and present, have placed SAALT in a position of stability and influence.

Over the past six months, the SAALT Board and Deepa have been developing a transition plan with the guidance of organizational development experts. Over the past month, we began to engage our staff and key stakeholders as well. Our Transition Committee, comprised of board members and senior staff, will soon be recruiting, interviewing and selecting our new Executive Director. Please help us find our next Executive Director.

[View the SAALT Executive Director Job announcement here](http://bit.ly/saaltEDJobAnnouncement)
Share this link with your networks: <http://bit.ly/saaltEDJobAnnouncement>

We are confident that we will have a transition worthy of Deepa's leadership and commitment to SAALT and our communities. Over the coming months, we will keep you updated on the transition process, and let you know about opportunities to celebrate and sustain the legacy that Deepa leaves.

I welcome your feedback, input, ideas and questions as we move through our leadership transition. Please feel free to reach me at info@saalt.org.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to thank you for your ongoing support and your trust in SAALT's vision for strengthening South Asian communities.

Warmly,



Anouska Cheddie
Chair, SAALT Board of Directors

Stay Connected:

