On August 5th, 2012, the nation woke up to a terrible tragedy, when a gurudwara in Oak Creek, Wisconsin was attacked during Sunday prayer, leaving six people dead. SAALT played multiple roles in the ensuing days and months: to be a support organization to Sikh organizations and individuals impacted by the attacks; to coordinate the field of South Asian, Muslim, and Arab American organizations and allies around the country to identify next steps related to policy and media messaging; and to be a critical voice in informing and shaping public opinion. On September 19th, SAALT organized a press conference following a U.S. Senate hearing on hate crimes. The hearing, chaired by Senator Durbin (IL), and the press conference drew a diverse group of organizations who pledged to eliminate hate in all of its forms. In addition, SAALT placed opinion editorials in the *New Jersey Star Ledger*, the *Detroit Free Press* and *USA Today*. Our key message: we must all create neighborhoods, schools, and places of worship where everyone feels safe and welcomed.

**Changing the Debate**

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**Building a Leadership Pipeline**

SAALT plays a critical role in developing new leaders across the country and across generations. Just this past year, our *Youth Leadership Institute* (YLI) brought together fifteen dynamic college students who are interested in long-term civic engagement and political work. Through four days of trainings and networking opportunities on Capitol Hill, SAALT introduced 18 to 22 year olds to how policy is created at the federal level, and the role of organizations such as SAALT. Now, our young alumni are working on their own campuses and communities to implement the ideas that they generated at SAALT’s Youth Leadership Institute.

In addition to building leadership with young people, SAALT also coordinates trainings among non-profit advocates who are part of the National Coalition of South Asian Organizations (NCSO). Through leadership buildings such as *We Build Community* (WBC), non-profit staff receive skills such as strategic planning, program evaluation, fiscal management, and media training.

“Along with a new set of strong connections, I left YLI well-versed in the process of policy change...Through further trainings and discussions with the SAALT team, I was able to construct a concrete action plan to carry out on my college campus.” Priya Kamath, Sophomore, University of Florida

**Impact of SAALT in 2012**

- 20,000 outreach materials about the elections distributed to South Asian community members
- 4,900 service hours contributed by over 3,000 Be the Change volunteers
- 70 appearances in media by SAALT about key issues
- 22 non-profit advocates from *National Coalition of South Asian Organizations* received leadership development training to sustain and expand their work
- 15 college students convened in Washington, DC for SAALT’s Youth Leadership Institute

Tamia Pervez, Policy Organizer at South Asian Network in Southern California, comments, “Our participation in the WBC project is certainly going to help us change our work with our community members, in that we will be including information we learned here about racial equity, systems analysis and systems change in our leadership development curriculum.”

**South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)**

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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.
ENABLING A MORE INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY

With Census 2010 numbers indicating the South Asian presence has reached 3.4 million, South Asians are increasingly becoming a visible and recognizable community in the U.S. SAALT was on the streets and on the phones this fall, ensuring that South Asians were informed at the polls. Our non-partisan South Asian Vote! campaign targeted South Asians in New York City, New Jersey, Texas, Chicago, the DC region and California with information about the how’s and why’s of voting. Through our campaign, we distributed translated materials to South Asians at Navratri and Eid functions; presented information to community centers and places of worship; and utilized community media to spread the word about why we need to vote. SAALT plans to remain engaged with the issues that matter to our community after the elections with Congress and the Administration.

BE THE CHANGE NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE

On Saturday, October 6th, over 3,000 volunteers answered Mahatma Gandhi’s inspirational challenge to “be the change you wish to see in the world” through Be the Change National Day of Service, which took place in 45 cities and campuses nationwide. Now in its 11th year, Be the Change offers students, senior citizens and professionals to come together to provide service in their neighborhoods and communities. This year’s sites included the American Diabetes Walk in Philadelphia, the San Francisco Food Bank, Al Lopez Park in Tampa, the Keiro facilities in Seattle, and voter registration drives nationwide.

SAVE THE DATE: 2013 National South Asian Summit

Join us in the spring of 2013 for the 4th National South Asian Summit, a gathering of community and business leaders, professionals, students and activists. The Summit will kick off with the Changemakers’ Reception, followed by two days of panel discussions and the inaugural meeting of SAALT’s Business Roundtable.

GET INVOLVED

- Join Our Mailing List
- Donate to help make this work possible
- Invite us to speak at your event
- Volunteer for a SAALT event

Visit www.saalt.org today or email us at info@saalt.org to get involved.