MANASHNI SPECIAL EDITION

YOUTH FUNDRAISER 2021

BY

The ZAH YOUTH GROUP

and

The ZAH MIDDLE GROUP

2020-21

DANDIYA NIGHT
17th to 17,000 – THE STORY

How it All Started and Why

Our youth saw the damages to ZHCC during the recent winter storms and decided to raise funds for center repairs. We approached the EC with the idea of the youth group fundraiser to help pay for the damages to the dance floor.

The Planning

As soon as the date for the fundraiser was approved, our youth and middle groups got to work. We had several zoom meetings to discuss the logistics such as the theme, entertainment, marketing, fundraising, decorations, and the most important part - the food, and we formed subcommittees to help in each area. We reached out to each and every youth group, middle group, and elementary group member, their parents and teachers requesting them to participate in this event in whatever capacity they wanted to help.

Collectively, we made sure to communicate with each other on how we wanted our tasks to be done. Due to great leadership, communication, and camaraderie amongst participants, this event became a huge success!

Youth Planning sessions/meetings
The Theme and Entertainment

We jointly agreed upon the theme - Garba Dandiya Night. All youth, middle, and elementary kids and parents were given an opportunity to submit their names for script writing, choreography, acting, dancing, backstage help, props, etc. Everyone got to work, we started drafting the script for the play and selecting music and dances that would fit this need.

The Various Teams

The next step was to form teams that would take care of some specific tasks such as planning, marketing, budgeting, fundraising, entertainment, hall decor, food, registration, silent auction, communication, etc. Our youth submitted their names as volunteers based on their interest and the team that they wanted to serve on.

The marketing and fundraising teams reached out to our ZAH family for donations, sponsorships and encouraged them to attend the event. The entertainment team finalized the script and planned the music and dances, discussed the need for lighting, backstage help, props, audio-visuals, etc. while other committees in charge of food, budget, decor etc. started getting quotes for dinner and other expenses for the event.

The most important team that made this event a grand success were our donors, sponsors, and attendees.
The Rehearsals/Practices

Our practices began on May 28 once we were all out for summer holidays. We admit some of our initial practices took off at a rough start, but we knew we would pull it all off at the end of the day. We want to convey our special thanks to Anushka Oak for choreographing our dances and helping us polish them at each and every rehearsal. We also wish to thank our Youth mentor Nerius Mehta for learning all the steps and helping us at practices. The play practices continued in full swing with the actors coming to practices almost daily during the last few weeks!
The Preparation

Several weeks prior to the fundraiser, parents/volunteers helped set up the partitions and dressing rooms, lights, audio-visuals, curtains, music, sound, etc. A day prior to the function, several parents helped setup and decorate the main hall and the lobby. A lot of volunteers also signed up to bring auction items and helped arrange the silent auction tables.

A special shout out to Rashna Oak for donating all decorations and helping decorate the main hall and atrium with the help of other parent volunteers.

Rangoli with flowers in the atrium courtesy of Rashna Oak
Dandiya Night Decorations
Silent Auction Paintings

Barbara Nelson’s painting and M. F. Husain prints - Silent auction items courtesy of Cyrus Bharucha
THE Day...

On the day of the fundraiser, all participants and volunteers arrived 2 hours prior to the start of the play, so we could set up the buffet lines, paper products, silverware, and give the hall our final touches. Prior to the start of the play, we had appetizers (Chilli Fish, Chicken Fingers, Samosas, and Chips) and some complimentary wine for all of our guests.

The main entertainment was a play about a US based Parsi family visiting India during the Navratri festival. They went to Udvada Iranshah to offer prayers, and were intrigued by the garba raas dancers in Gujarat who were dressed up in colorful chaniya cholis and other traditional clothing. When the family returned to Mumbai they went clubbing with their cousin followed by a series of Bollywood dances and hilarious moments that made our audience laugh out loud.
Our elementary kids performing a country western dance choreographed by Vehishta Kaikobad

Our dancers wearing Rhythm India costumes courtesy of Arzan Gonda
Our US based family traveling in a Taxi in India

Club dancers at a Mumbai Club
The play was followed by the most important part of the evening—Dinner and Dessert from Biryani Pot (Butter Chicken, Biryani, Mutter Paneer, Daal Makhni, Bhindi Fry, naan, raita, papad, Gulab Jamun, Jalebi, and Ice Cream). Two games of Bingo and fabulous door prizes made the evening even more special. Our guests were now ready for the interactive garba and dandiya. The stage and dance floor were filled with energetic dancers who were ready for a fun evening!
Table decorations and centerpieces courtesy of Rashna Oak
Next we announced our silent auction winners followed by some music played by our youth DJ. The music and dancing continued past midnight and we were all happy that the event was a great success!
Youth Dancing to the music played by our very own DJ Cyrus Mistry until 1:00 AM in the morning
Funds Raised

Thanks to everyone's efforts we were able to raise Net Proceeds of $17,552.76 for ZAH.

Acknowledgements

The ZAH Youth Group would like to thank all of our guests and donors for their support, encouragement, participation, and generous donations. Also, this function would have not been possible without the help of our ZAH youth, middle, and elementary kids, parents, and volunteers who selflessly helped us for the past couple months. We had 30+ participants and 25+ volunteers who helped make this event a great success!


Kudos to all our stage and backstage participants…


Others: Anushka Oak (Lead Choreographer), Cyrus Mistry (DJ and Backstage Volunteer), Jeh Morey (Narrator), Natalya Mehta (Backstage Volunteer), Nerius Mehta (Mentor and Backstage Volunteer), and Rayhan Nariman (AV and Backstage Volunteer).

Thanks to our Silent Auction Donors, we raised $4,657.00 for all silent auction items.
Special Thanks to Cyrus Bharucha for donating M.F. Husain and other paintings/prints.
Silent Auction Items and Donors: Rukshana Sarkari (Over the Moon Puzzle), Cyrus Desai and Ariana Anklesaria (Hand painted 3D Farohars), Wendy’s Sugar Land (1 year of free meals), Italias (Alcohol Gift Basket), Mehtas (Cillie’s Gift Basket), Chikhliwalas (4 Garba/Dandiya and Rangoli Paintings), Delna Surveyor (Dancing Happily Painting), Avan Bhathena (Raas/Garba original painting), Banafsheh Mondegarian (Head Accessories), Anonymous (Black Gara), Ariana Anklesaria (Nature Painting), Shireen Anklesaria (Stitch and Angel, The Thailand Fall Art), Cyrus Bharucha (8 M. F. Husain and other paintings/prints).

Three Cheers to our Team!!!

And Jasmine Mistry, the woman behind it all…
And here’s what some of our participants and volunteers had to say about the event:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For this year’s fundraiser, I really liked how the choreography and comedy completely matched and enhanced the whole play. All of it coming together made the whole show more energetic and entertaining!</th>
<th>I had fun teaching the kids the dances for the show.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>- Zal Italia</em></td>
<td><em>- Nerius Mehta</em></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The main highlight from the fundraiser to me was working with people and creating long-lasting friendships.</th>
<th>The ZAH Youth Group and all the members, opened their hearts and welcomed us in. It was so nice that the Mory kids (being new in the ZAH center and town) were given the opportunity to participate and become a part of the event and group, especially when the event was just round the corner.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>- Zara Italia</em></td>
<td><em>- Dilnaz Mory</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>I was very happy to help and be a part of the youth fundraiser. I really liked how the kids adapted and improved at every practice. Everyone brought their talents to the forefront. I will truly cherish these memories.</th>
<th>The main highlight of the fundraiser for me was being able to spend time with my friends and make new ones too. I loved how supportive everyone was of each other, and I believe the memories made will last forever.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>- Arzin Italia</em></td>
<td><em>- Natasha Kanga</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>This experience allowed me to meet my friends after a long time, and it was a fun way to raise money for the ZAH youth group.</th>
<th>What I liked the most about this ZAH event was that the youth group reached out to each elementary, middle, and youth group member and parent to give them an equal opportunity to participate in this event regardless of their talent and skill levels! Kudos to our youth!!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>- Neville Kanga</em></td>
<td><em>- Jasmine Mistry</em></td>
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</table>

<p>| The other thing I liked a lot was that the script was written by a youth member, the choreography of all dances was done by current and past youth members, and our past youth stepped up and helped the current youth by participating as actors, backstage helpers, DJ, etc. All fundraising, marketing, and other logistics for the event were handled by our youth. Awesome teamwork!!! |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your elementary, middle, and youth group would like to thank each and every member of our ZAH family for their encouragement and continued support!!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *I enjoyed helping the youth group and hanging out with my friends.*  
* - Natalya Mehta |
| *I enjoyed the laughter that ensued whenever actors would go off on tangents, dancers would do the wrong things, or when the wrong song played. Everyone cheered on everyone and I think those who were backstage were the biggest fan of those who were on-stage.*  
* - Mahtab Dastur |
| *I enjoyed seeing the camaraderie across the different age groups, the making of new connections and friendships...everyone doing their bit and coming together to serve our wonderful ZAH community. That was the highlight for me.*  
* - Khursheed Dastur |
| *The people who made up the fundraiser, kids and adults, really enjoyed the togetherness that the dances brought. I think that watching and learning from the others brought us closer to people we have never been friends with and also gave us all a good laugh.*  
* - Shanaya Vakil |
| *I really enjoyed spending time with everyone and making so many new memories with close friends. I also really liked how everyone grew out of their comfort zones and improved and adapted at every practice. Everyone always put their best foot forward and their hard work and efforts made the show such a big success. I will truly cherish these memories.*  
* - Natasha Dungor |
| *I really enjoyed the opportunity to get to know a section of the Zoroastrian community in Houston, which I found extremely warm and welcoming. I fondly recall our amateur karaoke sessions during the down time of our practice sessions and look forward to many more.*  
* - Jeh Mory |