

AUGUST 4, 2006

# Indian nursing home celebrates first anniversary

RIITAM GHOSH

Fords, NJ

TO MARK the Indian Program's first anniversary, an award ceremony was held at Alameda Center for Rehabilitation and Care in order to celebrate the achievement. At Royal Albert's Palace in Fords (New Jersey), patients, doctors, and dignitaries gathered to dedicate a night to the services that Alameda Center has been offering to the community.

The Indian Program was founded by Dr Mukund Thakar and his wife Rama, who had a dream to bring an ethnic feel to a nursing home. They took their idea to the Garden State Healthcare, which owns the Alameda Center. Garden State Healthcare CEO Sidney Greenberger, says he was "excited about the idea, but skeptical." Greenberger's reservations were put to rest as the program became a huge success.

During the celebration, a DVD presentation showed more than 50 patients in the center. The presentation was accompanied by interviews with nurses and doctors of the center, all of whom expressed their happiness at the success of the center. Greenberger also spoke of the expansion of the center.

"Even though I was skeptical at first, it is evident that a year later, we see what heart and soul can do, and this is just the beginning. We are bringing our second Indian floor, geared toward short term stays. On top of that, we have got requests from places such as Houston and Atlanta for a center in



Awardees at the celebration

their town, and we are ready to spread this program nationwide."

The administrator of Alameda Center, Michael Nieman said, "Mukund is like a brother to me now, and every time I visit the third floor of the Alameda center, I see all my grandparents on the floor and they look at me with smiles on their faces."

Mukund Thakar also spoke at the event, in his native Gujarati giving a heartfelt story to all the patients attending. They were all presented with certificates and trophies for their achievements, and certificates and medals to

with the idea of the Indian Program.

The Indian program is extremely unique. Most of their staff members are Indians, so communication is never a problem. The patients' needs are therefore carefully addressed and they get proper care. They observe Indian holidays and religious festivals. Fresh Indian food is prepared for them every day.

"It's just refreshing to find a center that ad-

**The patients' needs are carefully addressed and they get proper care. They observe Indian holidays and religious festivals. Fresh Indian food is prepared for them every day.**

numerous people who have helped the center become what it is today. Guest of honors Dr Sudir Parikh and H.R. Shah also got awards for their valuable contributions

Dr Thakar was a doctor for 16 years before he moved to the US in 1989 with his wife Rama. Here they continued to be closely involved with elderly patients. They realized that with elderly Indians, comfort was something that was hard to achieve in contemporary nursing homes. They did not have the right atmosphere, the right food, or the right entertainment. Thus, he came up

dress the needs of elderly Indians," says Adesh Balwani, a doctor from Parsippany (New Jersey), who attended the event with his mother. "Most of them are just not comfortable in the American nursing homes, and they need something much more ethnic and geared toward their needs. This center provides great care along with Indian comforts that make it seem like home."

*(Ritam Ghosh is an intern under Oxford South Asia Initiative Internship Program)*