

Vibha Volunteer Dies In Tragic Accident

BY RAVI R. PONANGI

Atlanta: The Indian community in Atlanta was shocked and saddened by the tragic death of Madhuri Vemulapalli, wife of Vijay Vemulapalli, a well known community leader in Atlanta. Madhuri died early Wednesday on Oct. 28 in a car accident on her way to work. She was 40.

Madhuri has been a part of Vibha, a charity organization for underprivileged children for 13 years, right from the time of the inception of the Atlanta action center. She attended various volunteer meetings over the years and has been of tremendous support to her husband Vijay who is Vibha US Secretary and Vibha India President, and to the entire non-profit organization. She had strong dedication and commitment to the cause and was Vijay's great source of strength and welcomed Vibha volunteers to their house for innumerable activities. She always participated in the Vibha Dream Mile and walked away with a trophy.

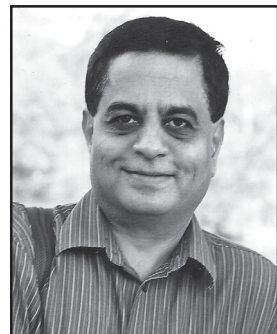
Madhuri was a compassionate soul. Everyone around loved her pleasant personality and simplicity.

She was a highly devoted mother and was an ardent world traveler. She travelled across Europe, South America, and Asia with her loving family. She did everything in her life with passion, dedication and discipline with a never give up attitude. She has been a role model and pillar of support for all us, said friends tearfully. All her family and the entire Atlanta community will dearly miss her for ever.

Madhuri is survived by her husband, Vijay; daughter, Divya (8). She was a resident of Atlanta for the past 15 years. Madhuri, like her husband Vijay was an IT executive. Madhuri's parents rushed to Atlanta from India on hearing the tragic death of their daughter. Her only brother lives in Atlanta.

Obituary

Balaji V. Rao, 56, of Atlanta passed away on Saturday, Dec 5th at 8:56 am, due to complications from a heart attack. He is survived by wife, Jayanthi, and daughters, Nithya and Preeti.



The funeral was held at the Wages & Sons funeral home in Stone Mountain.

Rao was a tireless volunteer at the Hindu Temple of Atlanta, Riverdale.

Raksha Fundraiser: Laughing For A Cause

BY BRITTANY MARKS

Atlanta: It was an evening filled with laughter, dinner, and dancing to celebrate the 11th annual Ek Shaam Raksha Ke Naam fundraising event with entertainment by prominent comedian Vijai Nathan, as well as Tushar Singh and DJ Jaz. Vijai Nathan kept the audience laughing with her irreverent humor and stories about being Indian while growing up in America. You couldn't help but laugh and relate to the crazy antics of her family and wonder what was coming next!

The night was not only a time to enjoy great food and entertainment; it was also a time to recognize all of the incredible works that Raksha continues to do. There are always individuals that stand out as leaders who have been instrumental to change in the community.

To honor them, Raksha nominates community members who are vital to bringing about awareness and change to social issues within the community. This year, Dr. Gulshan Harjee and Shyam

Sriram were awarded the Ramesh and Vijaya Bakshi Community Change Award.

Since Raksha was founded in 1995, they have continued to broaden the amount of resources of-

director, Aparna Bhattacharyya, said "Through the community's support, we have been able to directly impact the lives of numerous members caught in domestic violence or sexual assault situations. We have witnessed the program's success and have watched individuals create new and healthy lives for themselves and their families. It is incredible to see the 'Power of Change' when we all come together for a common cause of a stronger and healthier community."

Raksha continues to find ways to better serve the community. During the event, Aruna Rao-McCann said she looks forward to a day when we will not need Raksha and the services to support all of the burdens carried by domestic violence or sexual abuse.

For when that day comes, it will be a day of true celebration. Until that day, Raksha and all of the volunteers continue to be leaders for change within the community.



The Raksha team: L to R: Fatima Wasim, Varsha Vijaya Kumar, Aparna Bhattacharyya, Tonja Holder, Manisha Lance, Amita Rao and Swechhya Pant.

ferred to support victims of domestic violence, family violence, discrimination and sexual assault. Since 1995, they have fielded more than 12,000 calls through their direct services. Executive

Kailash Kher & Kailasa Rock Atlanta

BY VEENA RAO

Atlanta: The little guy with the big talent-sufi/pop star and Bollywood playback singer Kailash Kher- towered over an enchanted audience at the Variety Playhouse in Little 5 Points November 8th.

The Atlanta concert was part of his band Kailasa's tour of North America. For over two hours, Kher kept the crowds mesmerized with his unique, earthy voice, singing popular songs from his albums, and from Bollywood hits. He moved seamlessly from classical-based to sufi-inspired to pop, encouraging people to move to the front to dance to his numbers.

Save for a moment when a small group that was obviously inebriated climbed on to the stage, prompting Kher to request that the decency of the show be maintained, high energy and sheer music flowed through the evening.

Dressed in a red brocade shirt Kher belted our hits like 'Tauba Tauba' and 'Teri Deewani' from his album 'Kailasa', 'Rang Deeni' from the movie 'Dev' and 'Ya Rabba' from the movie 'Salaam-e-Ishq', Nusrat Fateh Ali's 'Tere Bin Nahi Lagda', 'Saiyyan' and 'Babam Bam' from the album 'Jhoomo Re' amongst others. Kher dedicated his favorite song 'Sajna Tere Bina' to the Atlanta crowd.

He introduced Atlanta to his band's new international release, 'Yatra- Nomadic Souls' He ended the show with the ever-popular 'Allah Ke Bande' from the album 'Kailasa'.

The band 'Kailasa' was founded by Kher along with guitarist brothers Paresh and Naresh Kamath. A combination of Kailash's strong tradi-

tional folk sensibilities and lyrics that invoke Sufi-mystical dimensions, with Naresh and Paresh's more modern rock, electronic and funk influences, Kailasa has had tremendous commercial success and has toured worldwide to sold out audiences.

The Atlanta concert was certainly a testament to their enormous talent.

