

Happy Birthday, America!

The Declaration of Independence was signed by 56 political leaders in 1776, documenting America's independence from Britain. Many centuries later, we are still celebrating this momentous occasion, but as we celebrate America this month, let's also not forget community members that are marginalized and victimized based on race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. For the past 28 years, SAHARA's mission has been to empower these marginalized communities and help them thrive. The history of SAHARA may not be as colorful as America's, but it is undoubtedly more compassionate and kinder!



(From SAHARA's archives - A picture of the founding members in a local newspaper. They are sitting on the floor because while they had a new office, they hadn't yet bought any furniture!)



In 1991 a group of seven individuals, two physicians, and five social workers got together to brainstorm ideas about how to help the South Asian Community. They had noticed many community members who needed help but had limited language proficiency and weren't familiar with the resources available to them. These trailblazers held their first meeting in the kitchen of Chandrabala and Rusi Alamshaw, and there they decided to create a non-profit organization where no matter who entered the doors, they were helped in whatever capacity they could. Eventually, in 2003, with the help of a donor and a fundraising event, SAHARA was able to buy a house that would become a Transitional Living Home. During that time, all of SAHARA's founders had full-time jobs and would volunteer their time to help the South Asian Community.

They were pioneers in their vision, dedicated to their cause and worked tirelessly, and because of them, today, SAHARA can be actively engaged, and march forward to help community members in need.



Our founding members reunited at the 2018 Circle of Pioneers Luncheon - from left to right: Rusi Alamshaw, Dr. Pratibha Patel, Dr. Sulochana Trivedi, Smita Patel, Chandrabala Alamshaw, and Sheila Mehta. Not pictured Charu Modi.