

Pommier retains title at VIBHA Run/Walk

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Mountain View, Calif.

FRENCH participant Jean Pommier defended his overall 10K title at this year's VIBHA Run/Walk with an improved time of (0:34:44). Nearly 300 people participated in the Run/Walk which was held here at Shoreline Park on July 10. The participants also included several professional non-Indian runners.

Dustin Cossio (0:17:57) won the Male 5K category while Nicole Von Germeten (0:20:56) was the

winner in the Female 5K category. Last year's Male 10K winner Cupertino resident Jean Pommier defended his title with an improved time of (0:34:44), while Erin Wilson (0:44:49) emerged as winner in the Female 10K category.

A team of about 6 runners from India Literacy Project (ILP) non-profit also participated in the event. Other runners came from a diverse spectrum. While Sarla Tiku, mother of volunteer Sugam, participated in the 10K category, San Jose based 12-year-old Anand Pandian finished a creditable 27:29

in female 5K race and Rajesh Rajamani of Sunnyvale cleared his personal best times in the 5K, completing the race in (0:31:13).

Meanwhile, first time participant Neha Shah were happy only to finish the race. The youngest female competitor was Olivia Brashears (5) of San Jose who finished in a creditable time 0:38:53 and the youngest male finisher was Amit Sanjeev (5) of Pleasanton who finished in 1:16:31.

The activities area during the walk and race had the usual fare of tents with several non profits like Asian American Donor Program (AADP), Silicon Valley Professional Association (SIPA), as well as sponsors like Ganesha Bhavan of Milpitas etc who provided free brunch to runners and visitors. Meanwhile some strategically placed VIBHA volunteers reminded brunch eaters of the ongoing pledge drive nearby.

The last announced pledge totals were about \$13,000 with pledges also being collected during the event. The race raised a total of \$14,000 which will help fund projects for disadvantaged children in India.

A few kids participated in the Kids Carnival and Games area which seemed to be frequented a lot by adults as well. Regular carnival games like throwing the dart and face painting saw a number of enthusiasts.

Asian, American artists come together for APPEX program

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

EIGHTEEN musicians, composers and dancers from Asia and America will come together to work in tandem and create collaborative creative pieces at the sixth Asia Pacific Performance Exchange (APPEX) Residency program at UCLA from July 3-August 11.

The artists—hailing from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and the US—are masters of South Indian percussion (ghatam and kanjira), Indian dance traditions, Northern Thai dance, Balinese and Javanese Gamelan music, Malay percussion, German Tanztheater, music and dance from the Philippines, Japanese Taiko, American jazz, classical guitar and piano, Sudanese dance, modern/postmodern dance and theater.

Public performances of their collaborative works titled "At Home in this World?" will be held on July 19 and 21; and August 9 and 11 at the newly renovated UCLA Glorja Kaufman Dance Theater in Westwood.

The artists include Anusha Lakshmi Kedhar, Somnath Roy and Sanjib

Bhattacharya from India. Kedhar is a Bharata Natyam exponent from Irvine, California and works as a choreographer for Angika dance company based in London. West Bengal-based Roy is a percussionist specializing in ghatam and Haryana-based Sanjib Bhattacharya is a dancer trained in the Manipuri, Bharata Natyam, Odissi, Kathakali and Kathak dance forms.

Other artists include internationally acclaimed vocalist Grace Nono from the Philippines; Cynthia Ling Lee of Los Angeles who practices postmodern dance and Kathak; award-winning jazz guitarist Robert Levit; northern Thai dancer Waewdaoo Sirisook, vocalist and percussionist Mohammad

Kamrulbahri Hussain and dancer-choreographer Joseph Gonzales from Malaysia; Gamelan musician Dedek Wahyudi from Java; and acclaimed Sundanese dancer Sriyani Fitri. The American musicians in the program include Greg Acker, David Cutler, Shoji Kameda, Andy McGraw and David Cutler who perform classical and jazz music on guitar, piano, taiko drums and percussion.



American Jewish Committee gifts roof for tsunami victims in Chennai

KALYANI VASAN
Los Angeles, Calif.

IN A gesture of friendship, the American Jewish Committee (AJC) is setting up a vocational center in the southern Indian city of Chennai. The two-level structure is expected to open next winter, and serve a community of thousands devastated by the 2004 tsunami. The vocational center, located in the Nadukuppam neighborhood, will house a community hall and three classrooms, one of which will be equipped for computer training, while others will be used for courses in nursing, boat building and teaching English. Also planned is a women's bank that will be operated by Chennai fisherwomen to serve their needs.

On a recent visit to the site which will house the Center, director of AJC's Office of Government and International Affairs, Jason Isaacson, said: "The building will be a handsome addition to the neighborhood and a lasting emblem of our friendship with India."

"Situated near the main thoroughfare of the town and adjacent to the Bay of Bengal, the 8,000 square foot building will blend in with other important structures such as a local college, foreign con-



Nadukuppam village chief A. Anbukumar (third from Left), Jason Isaacson and Priya Tandon at the site of the center in Chennai

ulates and the police commissioner's office."

Isaacson further said, "Recently, AJC's permanent representative in Mumbai, Priya Tandon, came to Los Angeles and addressed members of the Los Angeles Consular Corp from over 30 countries on AJC's response to the Tsunami and other humanitarian disasters and our strong relationship with the Indian government. She described the AJC efforts as Tikkum Olam, which is a Jewish concept of repairing the world and caring for others. Tandon, along with our other staff, regularly meets with Indian diplomats both in the United States and in India."

Speaking on the occasion, the Director of Public Relations for the American Jewish Committee Los Angeles Chapter Eli Lipmen said, "The AJC sprung into action after the Tsunami, raising over \$900,000. And a part of this money was raised by the Los Angeles chapter."

According to Lipmen, since the AJC works more on a Consular level, its relations and interaction with the Indian community is largely done through the Indian Consulate office in San Francisco.

Tandon, who later attended the groundbreaking ceremony in Chennai said, "The AJC Vocational Center will make a long-lasting impact, strengthening the local community while deepening the special bonds of American Jews and India."

During the event, Isaacson, along with AJC Board of Governors member Steven Wisch, also met with senior Indian government officials, including Minister of State for External Affairs Anand Sharma, policy analysts, business leaders, journalists, and US and Israeli diplomats. Discussions focused on US-India relations, current congressional developments involving the US-India civil nuclear agreement—which AJC supports—and India's relations with Israel.