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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SOUTH ASIAN HEART CENTER'S SECOND ANNUAL GALA TO BE HELD AT SAN JOSE CONVENTION CENTER

Mountain View, CA, February 4, 2010: "Scarlet Night," the major annual fundraising event for the South Asian Heart Center at El Camino Hospital, will take place Saturday, March 20th at the San Jose Convention Center. Money raised will support the Center's educational outreach, participant screening and individualized prevention planning and follow-up.

South Asians--who trace their ancestry from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka--have four times higher levels of risk factors for heart disease than the general population. It strikes them at younger ages, without prior symptoms or warning and without presenting the same risk factors as the general population. It's estimated that by 2015, 60 percent of the world's heart disease burden will be borne by India alone. The South Asian Heart Center is the first major nonprofit devoted to combating this epidemic. El Camino Hospital Foundation is the fiscal sponsor of the Center.

This is the second year for the gala, which last year drew 500 people. That's a number supporters hope to double this year, according to Sujatha Suresh and Sheetal Singhal, co-chairs of the gala's executive committee.

"Fighting our community's epidemic of heart disease is very dear to my heart as a participant, beneficiary and donor," said Suresh, a first generation immigrant and successful entrepreneur. "My father died of heart disease at age 60 after a bypass operation in his 50s. His mother died of a heart attack when she was about 40. So this is a very personal disease for me. It's there, lurking in our genes, but we can fight it--we don't have to be sitting ducks. The South Asian Heart Center provides the weapons—education, outreach, and prevention—to make sure we don't become the next victims."

Sheetal Singhal, a slim, fit dance instructor who owns a book publishing company, learned the importance of the Center's work the hard way. "We may look healthy," she says. "But then you learn that despite everything you've done, you're still at high risk because of heredity—something over which you have no control. That's what happened to me and it was a real shock. But with the help of the Center, I've reduced my risk, so that I can be there for my family and my community. Now, I feel a responsibility to raise awareness about this silent killer not only among other South Asians, but in the physician community."

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“It’s easy to see someone else as the victim, more deserving of your help,” she continues. “But we are the victims here—and if we care about our families and community we should support the work of the center. I strongly urge every South Asian business and employer to support this event and to make sure their employees get screened.”

Scarlet Night starts at 6 PM with a reception, followed by dinner and music, dance and comedy. The black tie/scarlet dress celebration will feature a sumptuous banquet of deliciously healthy cuisine prepared according to the Center's nutrition guidelines for better heart health.

The Scarlet Event Sponsor for the night is San Jose-based Shastha Foods (www.Bondsforever.com) makers of fresh stone ground Indian batter. Tickets are \$125 per person, and tables of ten are available from \$1000. For more information or to register, you can visit <https://www.southasianheartcenter.org/scarlet>.

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