

Puranik Foundation Flourishes at Inaugural Lotus Innovation Awards Gala



Three generations of the Puranik family women: Rekha Puranik (right) with daughter Rani Puranik. Rekha's daughters Bhakti Salunkhe Puranik (left) and Sharayu Salunkhe Puranik are left of the Peacock sculpture. Photos: Daniel Ortiz and Priscilla Dickson Houston Mayor's assistant Olivera Jankovska presented the Puranik Foundation with a "Puranik Foundation Day" on April 28th proclamation honoring the founders Rekha and Sudhir Puranik (left) with granddaughter Sharayu (right).

HOUSTON: The Puranik Foundation flourished at the Inaugural Lotus Innovation Awards Gala on Thursday, April 28, 2022, with three generations of women who share a mission of providing educational opportunities that open minds, stimulate holistic perspectives and inspire transformation.

The Puranik Foundation and more than 400 guests celebrated the first The Energy Project, a semester-long internship program that offered high school students the opportunity to impact the future of sustainability by co-creating alternative innovations to benefit Houston by problem-solving local energy challenges. The Puranik Foundation launched The Energy Project in December 2021, in partnership with HISD's Energy Institute High School (EIHS), Rice University Energy Association and CleanTech Clubs, Stanford University Professor Ariel Raz, Junior Achievement, and TXRX Labs.

The Puranik family is one of the pioneer families that immigrated to Houston in the early 1970s. Sudhir Puranik was a metallurgist, who found success with Worldwide Oilfield Machinery (WOM), a manufacturer of gate valves and other oilfield equipment. Sudhir and Rekha Puranik raised their family during the 1980s and 1990s in southwest Houston. Success of WOM led the Puraniks to establish manufacturing centers in Houston, Pune, Scotland and Pune. Rekha moved back to Pune to establish the Vision International Learning Center, a K-12 residential school for underserved children in Pune. The Puranik Foundation was founded 20 years ago and is the corporate social responsibility arm of WOM.

The ballroom at The Post Oak Uptown was transformed into a colorful and elegant visual showcase of the Puranik Foundation's impact in India and Houston with décor by Mandap Creations which was inspired by the Foundation's beginnings under a tree in Pune, India. Embracing beauty, grace, and pride, guests snapped photos of the mesmerizing life-sized peacock,

India's national bird, made from florals and appeared to grow out of the boxwood backdrop. From the lotus pond, the five teams displayed and pitched their innovative design projects to attendees to garner votes for the People's Choice Award. With a hopeful heart for the future, guests wrote down their wishes on leaves, and hung them among a Tree of Life.

The sound of a dhol drummer moved guests to their seats and emcee Casey Curry welcomed The Energy Project supporters and also introduced Executive Director Bhakti Salunkhe. Bobby Tudor, Chairman of Tudor, Pickering, Holt & Co, provided a virtual keynote speech followed by a proclamation presentation. On behalf of the City of Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Education Olivera Jankovska presented the Puranik Foundation with a "Puranik Foundation Day" on April 28th proclamation honoring the founders Rekha and Sudhir Puranik.

Dinner was vibrant and delightful with elaborate floral arrangements provided by Flowers by Nino and gold lotus lanterns. A salad of salt-crusted, oven-roasted red and yellow beets with avocado cream, candied walnuts, dried apricots filled with goat cheese, and fresh pea shoots complimented the décor along with papadum with spiced fruit chutney. The Richard Brown Orchestra entertained the guests while they enjoyed their choice of the pescatarian dish which included pistachio-crusted sea bass served along with cauliflower mousseline and roasted rainbow carrots or the vegetarian entrée, which included cauliflower steak masoor dal tadka served with green potato puree for vegetarian guests. Dessert is sweeter when there's a duo of pina colada coconut mousse and a chocolate caramel tart.

A The Energy Project partner, Stanford University Professor Ariel Raz, shared his remarks on The Energy Project followed by a video that summarized the students' work during the 10-week intern-

ship. In teams, students worked together to design innovative energy approaches to sustaining areas in alternative power generation, sustainable water usage, energy consumption, waste management, and urban design.

During the Lotus Awards, the sustainable consumption project titled "Karot" was awarded a \$15,000 grant for the implementation of the prototype that uses fish to help grow protein and plants in a home aquaponics system while "GHOST" an urban design for a better means of transportation to help Houstonians maintain mobility was awarded the People's Choice Award.

Event Chair and Global CFO and Executive Vice President of Worldwide Oilfield Machine, Rani Puranik dazzled guests with her voice during a singing performance that included a fusion of "Colors of the Wind" and an Indian classical raga called "nahi punyachi mojani" which means celebration of life and was followed by asking guests to light their candles during her closing remarks. The power of unity was displayed across the room as the crowd of guests held their candles up high.

The Lotus Innovation Awards Gala, produced by Paul-David Van Atta, was made possible with the support of the following sponsors and guests: Worldwide Oilfield Machine, Puranik Family, Joanne King Herring, former Lt. Governor of Texas David Dewhurst, Counsel General of Nepal Steve Payne, Reagan and Doug Bauer, Madeline and Richard Yates, Leela and Nat

Krishnamurthy, Leisa Holland-Nelson, Cheryl Byington, Beth Wolff, Cynthia Wolff, Katie Mehner, Nancy Parsons, Stephanie Tsuru, Carrie Colbert, Mary Grace Landrum, Maryanne Maldonado, and Sandija Bayot.

The Puranik Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in Houston that owns and operates the Vision International Learning Center, a school in Pune, India. The Foundation believes in providing educational opportunities that open minds, stimulate holistic perspectives, and inspire transformation. Seated on 27 acres of sustainable land, the school provides private education to un-

derserved children grades K-12 at no cost. Housing and meals throughout the week along with a curriculum enriched with nature exploration, mindfulness practices, critical thinking exercises, and leadership training are included.

Twice a year high school, college students, as well as teachers, professors and mindfulness practitioners from around the world are invited to visit the campus to participate in one of three week-long Global Service Leadership Programs hosted by the Foundation. For more information, visit www.puranikfoundation.org and follow the foundation on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.



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