

IndiaPost.com

AIF introduces youth chapter at fundraiser

Tuesday, 11.25.2008, 04:50am (GMT-7)

LOS ANGELES: The American India Foundation fundraiser at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel here was marked by the formation and presentation of a youth chapter and the recognition of two business leaders - Dean Scarborough CEO of Avery Dennison and Amit Kapur COO of MySpace.

The fundraiser netted the charitable organization close to \$500,000. Accepting the award from Victor Menezes, the Founder and Co-Chair of AIF, Scarborough spoke of his firm's involvement in India which employs over 1,000 people there.

He said the last five years in particular had been exciting for organized retail there and "a great place to invest." He said the first five years of their start up operations in Gurgaon had been tough but the past five years had seen sound growth and had been good. He listed off the various locations where his company has offices in India including a newly opened plant in Pune.

Accepting the award on behalf of all Avery Dennison employees, he said the firm had strong community values instilled early on by its founder. Kapur in his acceptance speech said MySpace had just invested heavily in India and that the organization saw him as someone to showcase to "younger Indians."

Just 27 himself, Kapur said he owed his meteoric growth to his parents who had raised him in a small South Dakota town where the biggest employer was a pork plant. A Stanford University graduate, he said his parents always encouraged him and his brother to go out and explore. The other person instrumental in getting him where he was, said Kapur, was CEO Chris DeWolfe who had taken chances and given him opportunities.

"Not too many CEOs will take risks with a 20 something kid," he said. The COO also spoke of his company's involvement in India. He said the sociability and self expressive nature of Indians now has a platform with MySpace.

Praising the engineering talent in India, Kapur said the firm's CTO was in India working with many of them to see how much to invest in technology. AIF CEO Sanjay Sinho stressed the importance of greater "collective philanthropy." He pointed out that despite the economic downturn those present were the fortunate few.

He set the tone for what was followed by each AIF official who came up to the podium - urging greater monetary contribution and the narration of a human interest story brought back from a visit to India, of those who had been rehabilitated through AIF support. Nimish Patel, Chair, AIF Southern California Chapter compared the role of the organization with the lofty principles enshrined at the Statue of Liberty and said the group could well say, "take us to your poor." A lot has changed over time he said, but our American principle of helping remains. The turbulent economy, he said, made it even more imperative to extend a helping hand.

AIF Board Member Navneet Chugh said the organization had raised over \$50 million. By seeming to lead from the front, the youth were able to lead the floor appeal and quickly raised \$37,000. This was matched by Trustee Anil Monga. The entertainment segments were varied with the Anjali Dance Theater, a part of the Sundar Kala Kendra Foundation dancing a colorful invocation piece. Rajiv Satyal, provided stand up comedy and the UCLA Bhangra team livened up the proceedings. TV actor Sendhil Ramamurthy was a

great hit.

India Post News Service
