

12th Annual IDRF Gala Dinner

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When: Friday, October 1st, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

Where: Royal Banquet Centre

8201 Weston Road, Vaughan, ON L4L 1A6

Directions: [Please Click Here](#)

We invite you to join a gathering of leading members of Ontario's professional, community, academic, and business circles at IDRF Annual Gala 2010. Come and celebrate philanthropists who, through their generosity, give hope and support to women, men and children in need, and join us in honoring beneficiaries for their courageous efforts to overcome unimaginable obstacles. Keynote address will be delivered by an internationally acclaimed dynamic speaker, Dr. Thomas Axworthy, OC.

Keynote Speaker Bio:

To learn more about Dr. Thomas Axworthy, OC, please [click here](#).

Presenting Sponsor:

Gold Sponsors:

To view past IDRF Galas, please click [read more](#).

IDRF 11th Annual Gala: A Great Success

On Saturday, October 17, 2009, IDRF held its 11th Annual Gala at the lovely Sheraton Parkway Hotel in Toronto. Five hundred guests and supporters turned out to honour the bravery of beneficiaries, who strive against difficult circumstances, and to celebrate IDRF's 25 years of humanitarian service.

The event featured a Keynote Speech by Dr. Redouane Al Fakir, Director of the Muhammad Institute for Sciences of the Cosmos at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Dr. Redouane spoke about the connection between science, the cosmos, and humanitarianism, and also spoke about Islam's absence from high-profile scientific fields such as space exploration and space-based autonomy. Overall, Dr. Redouane delivered a compelling speech which captivated the audience.

Guests were welcomed by Charles Coffey, Gala Co-Chair, and by Dr. Cassim Degani, Chair of IDRF Board of Directors. Jennifer Tory, RBC Regional President, brought Greetings from RBC, the Gala Presenting Sponsor. Indira Naidoo-Harris, the MC of the event, smoothly guided the event from start to finish and also introduced musical performances by Professor Bassan Bishara, and by Tariq Hameed, accompanied by Rauf Sheikh on the Tabla. The backdrop of the stage was designed beautifully by Mahla Ghasempour and Sashar Zarif.

Overall, the Gala recognized the dedication and generosity of donors, volunteers, and sponsors, remembered the bravery of beneficiaries, and celebrated IDRF's 25 years of humanitarian service. Thank you to all that celebrated this milestone with us and to all our donors, volunteers, and sponsors who have supported IDRF over the years and have made our humanitarian efforts worldwide possible.

IDRF is very appreciative of Dr. Reduoane Al Fakir, Indira Naidoo-Harris, our Presenting Sponsor RBC Financial Group, our Gold Sponsors (Par Pak, HSBC, Iqbal's, West GTA Endoscopy, Karim and Qaylah Jeeva, Continental Precious Minerals, Accenture, BMO) and Corporate sponsors for their active participation in the IDRF Gala. We thank the talented artists, the dedicated and energetic volunteers, and all our guests for their generous support of IDRF.

To view images from the event, please click the image below. [{gallery}Gala2009_Part1{/gallery}](#)
[{gallery}Gala2009_Part2{/gallery}](#)

11th Annual IDRF Gala Dinner

When: Saturday, October 17, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.

Where: Sheraton Parkway Toronto North Hotel in the York Grand Ballroom

600 Highway 7 East, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1B2

Directions: Please [click here](#)

PLEASE NOTE: THIS EVENT IS SOLD OUT.

Join us for an evening of celebration and gratitude. A special lecture will be given by Keynote Speaker Dr. Redouane Al Fakir, Astrophysicist and Cosmologist, on the connection between science, the cosmos, and humanitarianism. Dr. Al Fakir is currently the Director of the Muhammad Institute for Sciences of the Cosmos, at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

Keynote Speaker Bio:

To learn more about Dr. Redouane Al Fakir, please [click here](#).

Presenting Sponsor:

Gold Sponsors:

To view past IDRF Galas, please [click next below](#).

The 10th Annual IDRF Gala Dinner, held at the charming Liberty Grand hall in Toronto on November 1, 2009, was a huge success. The gala was held to celebrate the courage of IDRF's beneficiaries who are striving against complex barriers and vulnerabilities as well as to applaud the generosity of IDRF's donors. The event featured Kumi (Kumaran) Naidoo, a compelling keynote speaker. Guests were further welcomed by Program Host Andrew Ignatieff (IDRF Executive Director), Charles Coffey O.C.

(Co-Chair, Annual Gala Dinner), Winston Kassim (RBC's presenting sponsor), Dr. Cassim Degani (President, IDRF Board of Directors), and IDRF founder Dr. Fuad Sahin.

Dr. Naidoo, the President of CIVICUS (a world Alliance for Citizen Participation) and an appointee to the Eminent Persons Group by the U.N., delivered an thoughtful and empowering speech on the importance of participation. Naidoo spoke of the power struggles as well as the exploitation of the African people, and also talked about the ways in which your donations are making a difference. He further spoke about giving poor nations the chance to succeed by eliminating their debts and addressed the need for the private, public, and humanitarian sectors to come together to combat poverty and inequality.

'Dr. Naidoo reminded all of us very forcibly just how lucky we are in Canada, but that our luck comes with the responsibility to do whatever we can as global citizens to work through our international development organizations for global justice' said IDRF Executive Director Andrew Ignatieff.

Overall, IDRF's Annual Gala was a tremendous success. We would like to thank all our donors, honored guests, sponsors, volunteers, and staff for their ongoing support and generous contributions. We look forward to making a greater difference in the lives of those that need it most, to reaching more areas devastated by natural disasters and poverty, and to providing disadvantaged individuals with hope of attaining dignity, self-reliance, and social justice.

IDRF 2008 Gala in the Media:

Canadian Asian News -Nov 15, 2008 664.23 Kb

View Photos of the Event Below:

{gallery}Gala_08{/gallery}

9th Annual IDRF Fundraising Gala - November 3, 2007

Continuing the tradition of dynamic speakers, IDRF held a Gala dinner in the fall with Michael Adams as the Keynote Speaker. Mr. Adams (President, Environics) was named as one of the 100 most influential people in Canadian communications and is also the author of four Canadian best sellers. His current book project entitled *Unlikely Utopia: The Surprising Triumph of Canadian Pluralism*, focuses on the promise and challenge of Canadian multiculturalism. Many joined us at the Westin Harbour Castle in Toronto for exciting entertainment, a gourmet dinner, and celebrated over 25 years of People Helping People.

"I am deeply honored to serve as the Co-Chair of IDRF's 2007 Gala. My involvement in support of this wonderful organization is simply my way of expressing a heartfelt thank you for the incredible work done by IDRF. The focus on poverty reduction, literacy and healthcare through providing a 'hand-up' to the disadvantaged in the international arena speaks to me as a Canadian. All Canadians should be very proud that this Canadian-based organization is truly making a difference to so many and contributing to the development of civil society in so many countries. IDRF is simply the best and I wish it continued success."

Charles S. Coffey, O.C.,

IDRF Gala Co-Chair and Member of the Advisory Council of IDRF

Mr. Coffey, former Executive Vice President of RBC, is involved with a variety of organizations, such as Chair, Council on Early Child Development and Chair, National Advisory Council, Canadian Museum for Human Rights. He is well known for his extraordinary contributions to society through community leadership.

Gala 2006

Saturday, November 4, 2006

Marriot Eaton Centre Hotel Downtown Toronto

Madame Louise Arbour, United Nations Human Rights Commissioner, honoured IDRF by being our Keynote Speaker. Ms. Arbour's illustrious career included posts as Associate Professor and Associate Dean at the Osgoode Hall Law School of York University. She was appointed to the Supreme Court of Ontario the Ontario Court of Appeal and served as Judge in the Supreme Court of Canada. In 1996, she was appointed by the Security Council of the United Nations as Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda.

Dr. Fuad Sahin, one of IDRF's founding members, presented Madame Arbour with the IDRF Special Award, "Canadian Global Citizen Extraordinaire", to mark her many outstanding global contributions to human rights.

Carol Goar, Toronto Star columnist served as Program Director. Madam Justice Feroza Bhabha is the first Muslim woman as well as one of the few visible minority judges appointed to the Provincial Court Bench in Ontario introduced Madame Arbour.

The Sashar Zarif Dance Theatre provided the entertainment for the evening entitled Yearning for the Beloved - an exploration of the many paths towards spiritual growth through poetry, movement and song.

Gala 2005

Saturday, September 24, 2005

Marriot Eaton Centre Hotel Downtown Toronto

The keynote speaker was Dr. Gwynne Dyer, a renowned journalist, lecturer and broadcaster. His columns on international affairs appear in a dozen languages in 200 newspapers in 45 countries around the world. His speech on "The Impacts of the Great Game for Superpower Supremacy" was thought-provoking.

The speech was followed by a musical performance in several languages. He is a multi-instrumentalist, innovative composer, vocalist and producer. A 3-time performer by Waleed Kush Ensemble. The band leader, Waleed Abdulhamid, is a native of Sudan and sings in several languages. He is a multi-instrumentalist, innovative composer, vocalist and producer. A 3-time winner of the TAMA Award, his music has been featured on CBC, the Discovery Channel and History Channel.

Gala 2004

Saturday, September 25, 2004

Marriot Eaton Centre Hotel Downtown Toronto

The keynote speaker this year was Dr. Chris Giannou, Head Surgeon of the International Red Cross Committee who flew from Geneva for the IDRF event. For over 20 years, Dr. Giannou has worked tirelessly, tending to the wounded in war zones such as Chechnya, Palestine, Iraq, Somalia, Liberia, and Afghanistan, and simultaneously advocating passionately on behalf of the innocent victims of war. Dr. Giannou gave a thought-provoking speech on the emergence of democracy in the third world while western democracy faces lack of choice and deterioration of civil liberties. Rick Salutin, a renowned Canadian author and a regular contributor to Globe and Mail introduced the keynote speaker.

Ustad Irshad Khan, a well-known sitar player provided entertainment.

Gala 2003

Saturday, September 20, 2003

Marriot Eaton Centre Hotel Downtown Toronto

When Dr. Norman Finkelstein made his Keynote address, the gentleness of his demeanour gave way to the deeply felt passion of his message - and the audience was riveted. Afterwards, hundreds of guests thronged to Dr. Finkelstein for a chance to get his autograph on their copies of his latest books.

The evening was rounded off by 'ALPHARABIUS: Musical Influences and Exchanges of East & West', a distinctive performance by George Sawa & his group.

Gala 2002

Friday, September 27, 2002

Crystal Fountain Banquet Hall, Markham

Keynote Address was presented by a dynamic speaker Dr. Azizah Y. Al-Hibri, Professor of Law, University of Richmond, Virginia, USA. Dr. Al Hibri, who also holds a Ph. D in Philosophy, has published widely on topics relating to human rights, women's rights, and Islamic jurisprudence. The Professor gave a Keynote address on "Facing the Challenge : Muslims, especially women, of Today". Dinner was followed by "Poetry in Motion" a presentation from Azerbaijan, inspired by poets such as Rumi & Nasimi, by Sashar Zarif and company.

Gala 2001

Saturday, September 22, 2001

This Gala celebrated IDRF's 15 years of service to humanity. Haroon Siddiqui, Member, Order of Canada, and Editor Emeritus of "The Toronto Star" introduced the Chief Guest, Honourable Roy McMurtry, Chief Justice of Ontario. as a foremost judicial figure, and a champion of social justice and minority rights.

The Chief Justice gave a Keynote address on 'Canada's Pluralism in Relation to its International Responsibilities'. The subject found particular resonance with the audience, as Gala 2001 took place in the aftermath of September 11.

Dr. Fuad Sahin, Past President & Founding Member of IDRF, gave a stirring vote of thanks. After a hearty halal dinner, the evening concluded with lively Arabic / Middle Eastern musical performance by "The Layalina Band"

Gala 2000

September 23, 2000

Sheraton Hotel, Markham

The Keynote Speaker, Stephen Lewis, former Canadian Ambassador to the UN, kept the audience riveted with his impassioned speech. IDRF's video, "Global villagers" was unveiled by Steve and Dawn Deme of Villagers Media Productions. It showed lively scenes, filmed on location, from IDRF projects in Bangladesh. The video also featured some IDRF Board Members commenting on the Islamic philosophy behind IDRF's work and their own sense of learning through their involvement.

The guests were treated to the musical talent of Mose Neshama and the golden voice of Waleed Abdulhamid of Radio Nomad. The duo generously donated to IDRF proceeds from some of the sale of their new CD.

Gala 1999

Special Guest Speaker, Hon. Maria Minna, Minister for International Cooperation, gave a thought-provoking speech about the significance of development programs, such as literacy, in improving poverty conditions around the world.

Keynote Speaker Eric Margolis, Foreign Affairs Analyst, and author of "War at the Top of the World", (Right) was introduced by IDRF Board Member Asraf Asgarali, (Left), at the Gala. Mr. Margolis gave a stirring speech about the necessity for Muslims to leave aside their differences, overcome their apathy and speak in a strong united voice about issues affecting the Muslim world.

The evening was rounded off by quaseedahs and devotional chants by Ustadh Yevfiq al Jerrahi & the Whirling Dervish, and The Muslims of North America, followed by a Qawwali program by Rhim Jhim Music Arts Circle

Gala 1998

The Master of Ceremonies, Kassim Ebrahim, led the audience with style and grace through an evening consisting of stimulating speeches, slide shows, and special performances.

The guest speakers provided interesting views to the audience: Bill Whyte, Vice President, Canadian Bank of Commerce, spoke about the implications of potential bank mergers; while Haroon Siddiqui, Editor Emeritus of 'The Toronto Star' made a stirring call for more active involvement and participation of Muslims in mainstream life in Canada.

The speeches were followed by quaseedahs and devotional chants by Abdul Hameed Shah, Adnan Sirajedin & the Shaha'ba, Nihad Islamovic & his Bosnian Group and Ustadh Yevfiq al Jerrahi & Dervishes. They depicted religious traditions of various Islamic countries.