



November 16, 2007

## **Dr. Zaheer and Salma Lakhani celebrate 30 years in Canada**

Fellow Ismaili Muslims use opportunity to donate to Lois Hole Hospital for Women



Alberta's Minister of Health and Wellness, the Hon. Dave Hancock, was among the many distinguished guests who attended a special reception organized by Salma (left) and Dr. Zaheer Lakhani. The reception did two things: it marked the couple's 30th year in Canada, having been among the many Ugandans forced out of their country by then Ugandan dictator, Idi Amin, and allowed the couple to thank their many friends and mentors for enriching their lives.

The invitation was elegant in its simplicity, but the message it carried was an impactful reminder of the quintessential Canadian story...

*"Thirty-five years ago this fall, we were among the thousands of Ugandans who were expelled from their homeland, simply because of our Asian origins..."*

For Royal Alex cardiologist Dr. Zaheer Lakhani and his wife Salma, remembering where you came from means being ever-ready to recognize an opportunity to give back. And when the couple wanted to *"honour our friends and mentors, who have enriched our lives in so many ways..."* the Lakhani's also showed they know how to throw a party.

Held at the Tucker Amphitheatre at the Citadel, 175 guests -- members of the Ismaili Muslim

community, colleagues from the Cardiac field, and members of the various foundations and boards that the Lakhani's have served on over the years -- attended the reception.

Intended to serve as a thank you to their friends and mentors, the Lakhani's guests were quick to turn the tables around: former deputy prime minister Anne McLellan spoke of the generosity of Zaheer and Salma, and of the positive impacts Zaheer has made to Canadian society over the years, from his appointment by the Aga Khan to head the committee that served the growing Ismaili community from Red Deer north, to co-founding the Canadian Association of Police Boards, to chairing the Roundtable on Security for the federal government, to volunteering as a Director on the Boards of the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation and the Edmonton Community Foundation.

Edmonton Mayor Stephen Mandel also highlighted the many good works of this couple who, when they arrived in Canada as stateless refugees, very quickly stood out as exemplary humanitarians and community volunteers. "You could have chosen any place to live, but you chose Edmonton and we are grateful you did," said Mandel.

As a show of support for Zaheer and Salma, who serves as a volunteer on the Lois Hole Hospital for Women Campaign, their friends from the Ismaili Muslim community are making donations to the Lois Hole Hospital for Women, a charity of choice for the Lakhani's. So far, just over \$27,000 in personal donations has been raised.

"Edmonton is an incredible city and we enjoy a wonderful life here," said Zaheer, who, just last spring was honoured with a Membership to the Order of Canada. "Salma and I are so fortunate to count you all as good friends. We are indeed blessed."

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**For more information:**

**Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation**

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