

### Presidents Message

#### In This Issue



Professor Miguel  
Felicited

Welcome to December and **happy Yalda to everyone**. December 21st will be the longest night of the year which means the days will get longer from this day onwards. Yalda means “birth” and represents the symbolic birth of the Sun and **the victory of light over darkness**. The flames at the Mehraban Guive Darbe Mehr (MGDM) will continue to burn and keep our spirits warm.

Last month, we had a successful meet and greet with Professor Miguel Angel Andres-Toledo at the MGDM with over 100 in attendance. This was a joint venture with the FEZANA and the OZCF and many representatives from various North American associations attended.

The 8th World Zoroastrian Youth Congress (WZYC) is coming up in London, England in July 2023 the tickets went on sale on November 18<sup>th</sup>, and all 450 spots were sold out within 7 hours. We are delighted that so many Zoroastrian youths are so eager to attend such an important event.

Zoroastrians Got Talent was held last month which turned out to be another amazing evening organized by the youths. Let’s continue to support the youths in their future fundraising events such as the upcoming New Year’s Eve party (see pamphlet). If you are unable to attend the fundraising events, donations are

always appreciated at <https://zso.org/8WZYC>

It was an honor to attend the Cardinal dinner representing Zoroastrians as part of the Interfaith Group. This dinner was attended by over 1300 people and several high-level politicians as a fundraising event for various charities. We are still looking for a volunteer chair for the Interfaith Committee. Please contact me personally ([president@zso.org](mailto:president@zso.org)) if you are interested in discussing this position.



*Volunteers gather for volunteer appreciation dinner*

We had another successful volunteer appreciation dinner that was attended by over 120 ZSO members and most importantly, by a record number of youth. The event included Persian cuisine and an

open bar appreciating the time and effort of all our volunteers that have helped bring life to the MGDM.

It was with a heavy heart that at the volunteer appreciation I announced that our **beloved Farokh Farhadian**, our custodian will be leaving us at the end of January 2023 due to personal reasons. We are now actively



looking for a replacement custodian for the MGDM. If you know of anyone interested, please have them contact Mehrnaz Dehmiri at [assistanttreasurer@zso.org](mailto:assistanttreasurer@zso.org) and email a resume.

If you have any ideas or relevant contributions for the monthly newsletter, please email us the WORD document to [newslettereditor@zso.org](mailto:newslettereditor@zso.org)

The MGDM is now open for private bookings. For availability please contact Hoofrish Patel at [evp@zso.org](mailto:evp@zso.org)

For MGDM hours and all future events, you can always visit [www.zso.org](http://www.zso.org).

Wishing you all Tandorosti, Mitra Jam, ZSO President [president@zso.org](mailto:president@zso.org)

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### **Professor Miguel Angel Andres-Toledo at the MGDM**

On November 5th, there was a successful meet and greet event with Professor Miguel Angel Andres-Toledo at the MGDM with over a hundred in attendance. We wish to thank FEZANA for the initiative of bringing OZCF & ZSO together for this event. Our past president Mashya Amroliwalla was also very involved in this process, so our tremendous thanks to him

Prof. Andrés-Toledo is a scholar in the field of Avestan & Pahlavi languages and literature, as well as Zoroastrianism, Indo-Iranian linguistics, and the manuscript transmission of Avestan & Pahlavi texts. He is currently a professor at the University of Toronto teaching courses on Zoroastrianism.

He has previously held academic positions at the University of Salamanca, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the University of Copenhagen, and the Free University of Berlin. Among other publications, he is the author of the monographs “The thread of life and the noose of death in the Indo-Iranian tradition” and “The Zoroastrian Law to Expel the Demons”



*FEZANA Welcomes Professor Andrés-Toledo*

It was an honor to have him speak with us and answer questions regarding the program that is now offered at UofT. We were also pleasantly informed that the members of the public (us) may attend his lectures at U of T free of charge, however, we would not be offered a degree or a credit upon completion of the course.

*Written By: Bahram Jam*



## New FEZANA Officer Appointed from Toronto

Sharmin Mistry has been unanimously elected as FEZANA's Assistant Secretary recently. We welcome Sharmin as the fifth member of FEZANA's Executive Committee. Sharmin lives in Toronto and is an active member of the ZSO. She is also actively involved in ZYNA.

Originally from Mumbai, India, now residing in Toronto, Canada, Sharmin is a youth member at the ZSO. She is a marketing graduate from Seneca College currently working at a global media agency at Publicis Media.

Sharmin joined the ZSO as a youth committee member where she conducted donation drives and initiated events such as skating day, maple syrup tours, and youth committee outings and was recognized for her work by the President, Mitra Jam.

She is also a part of FEZANA's ZYNA committee where she received the opportunity to lead the Service and Advocacy sub-committee and currently heading "Attitude of Gratitude", a North American-wide initiative that encourages the Zoroastrian organizations to give back to the community by conducting acts of kindness and service. As a women empowerment advocate, her goal is to inspire Zoroastrian women to become an inspiration for other women, through guidance, motivation, and mentorship.

Sharmin can be reached at [asst-sec@fezana.org](mailto:asst-sec@fezana.org)



*Sharmin Mistry unanimously appointed Assistant Secretary*

*Reproduction from: FEZANA Email Newsletter November 2022*

## Seniors Corner

### Gourmet Food Fair



*Full house at the Darbe Mehr*

On Sunday, October 30th, the Darbe Mehr came to life. It was the Seniors Gourmet Food Fair which was held in person after 2 years due to the pandemic. The community was elated and the turnout was phenomenal. A special thank you goes out to Anahita Ogra who helped our committee in organizing this event. Vendors had received online orders and were requested to bring extra food so that those without online orders could also attend the event, and browse and buy the food of their choice from different vendors.

This year we had participation from Benaz Maswa (Mazda Caterers), Beshtarna Mehta, Fred Laher (Classic Caterer), Dina Amroliwalla, Farah Ardeshir-Maneckshaw (M5Bakes), Ferozshaw Ogra (Ogra's Desi Affair), Khushnuma and Hosie Bamboat, Katy Panthakee,

Khushamin and Hormuzd Chothia (Taronish Food Services), Percy Daruwalla (Parsi Food by Percy), Prochi Gazdar, Vahbeez Valodwala (PVR Eats and Treats), 100 Toronto Scouts, and Villie's Fine Foods. Anahita Ogra had a "Chai Bar". The Youth Committee had a Massage and Spa set up too.

At the food fair, a crocheted blanket was raffled and won by Fram Appoo, son of Avaan and Maneckji Appoo. On the whole, it was a really fun day enjoyed by all.

The Seniors committee has decided to donate part of the proceeds to the Youth Committee to help some of the Youth who plan to attend the World Youth Zoroastrian Congress to be held in London, UK, in July 2023. The Youth Committee would like to thank the seniors for their continuous support.

*Written by: Yasmin Khory*



## Seniors Corner – Nov 4<sup>th</sup>

On Friday, November 4th, Jay Franco entertained about 70 Seniors with his music. He sang songs that the Seniors were familiar with, and he also played the Violin. Quite a few Seniors had their dancing shoes and danced to Jay's tunes. One special mention here was the tango dance done by Kerban and Yavuz Hanoz, who are visiting here from Turkey.

Jay's performance was followed by a delicious Jardaloo Gose, Potato wedges, and Rotli, cooked by our very own Percy Daruwalla. Vegetarians had Jardaloo Paneer and Bhindi (Okra). The dessert was Mango Delight.

Our December events will be held on December 2nd and 16th. If anyone is interested in attending the Senior lunches please contact Yasmin Khory at 416-733-0699 or Katy Panthakee at 647-347-3334.



*Dancing with Jay Franco*

## Library Launch Update – Phase One complete

On November 19, 2022, the Library Launch team met for the fourth time to complete their 10 Volunteer hours for high school. Led by Aban Amroliwalla, Spenta Chotia, Donna Akbari, and Armaity Homavazir, the students have learned to catalog books using the Dewey decimal system, input the information online, stamp, barcode, and label books. Students also wrote book reviews for the current collection. Stay tuned for a new book review each month in the ZSO newsletter!

Special thanks to the parents who supported this innovative project. In our four weeks together, there was not a single absentee! Students came from across the GTA – including Mississauga and Newmarket.

The best part was the youth! They were polite, engaging, and extremely hardworking. In all of our sessions, they never took a break until the end. We are so proud of all their hard work. With their assistance, we were able to clear three large boxes and get the books on the shelves. We also reorganized an entire bookcase!

Here's what they had to say:

*"This has been a wonderful experience and I would recommend this program to anybody who wants to do some good for our wonderful ZSO, and who wants to learn about our Religion."*

*"I would recommend this to other youth as it's an amazing experience to make new friends and meet new people."*

*"Every day, we took ten minutes to read about our religion and I learned such interesting facts."*

*"I also learned how to spell correctly using the FEZANA Global Glossary website."*



*"I've explored and strengthened my knowledge of Zoroastrianism through teachings of the books."*

*"I would recommend the Library Launch project to other youth because you would be able to learn about the organization of libraries."*

Phase Two will begin in February 2023. Please contact **Aban Amroliwalla** at [abanpa@yahoo.com](mailto:abanpa@yahoo.com) for more information.

*Written by: Armaity Homavazir*

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### **Meditation Session By: Delna Mistry**

Breath in (4 seconds)...hold (4)...and out (4).....

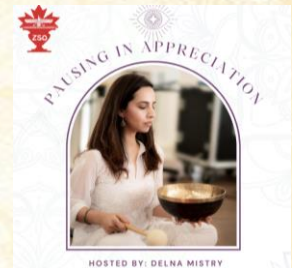
On a peaceful Sunday morning, when the crack of dawn was warm, Delna Mistry sat down from Dubai on Zoom to walk attendees through a peaceful meditation practice. Starting off by talking about the benefits of mindfulness, and how to reap the greatest benefits by using breathwork. A technique that Delna often uses when helping her clients is called box breathing.

The technique is done by  
First inhaling counting to four, one...two...three...four  
Hold the breath one...two...three...four...  
Letting it go for four one...two...three...four...  
Hold that for one...two...three...four

And repeat until you are completely relaxed. After her educational lecture, she walked us through a peaceful 30-minute guided meditation that relieved the attendees' stressors and helped jump-start their Sunday morning refreshed and relaxed.

A special thank you to those who took the time to attend this session, and to those who continue to come out to our events, in person and online.

*Written by: Araash Chothia*



*Delna Mistry hosts a virtual mindfulness session*

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### **Hidden & Unique Talents Brought to the Big Stage – Zoroastrians Got Talent**

On Saturday, November 12th, the ZSO enjoyed a night filled with dance, music, lights, delicious food, and great company. Starting the night off with Aloo Tikki and popcorn as appetizers, the audience settled down and the show began. Roxana Jam and Fravash Chothia were the hosts for the evening introducing acts, cracking jokes, and giving away raffles!

The event started with the under-18 age category consisting of guitar, singing, ballet, karate, dancing, and piano. Cyrus Rustomji took his electric guitar to the stage playing one of Metallica's greatest songs Master of Puppets which is no walk in the park, but Cyrus took it on. Mithra Chothia started with a karate sequence showing his quick moves and then put on a show fighting off 2 people on stage and finally concluded by bringing two cinder blocks on stage, stacking 6 wooden boards, and in one stroke, breaking them all. (To see all acts [click here](#)) the hall was packed with a crowd of over 120 people.

After a 10-minute break, the over-18-year-old performances had begun. A few notable acts included Kaizaad Tafti who started by calling a volunteer (Maneckji Appoo) on stage to prompt his freestyle rap with random words like water bottle, Karachi, and table. Kaizaad was rhyming the words into his freestyle - something



challenging, fun, and new for most. Another notable performance was done by Kaizer Irani, singing Phantom of the Opera in a theatrical, and unique way. There were many interesting and fun performances that followed and finally, to conclude the evening, Bahram Jam sang Don't Worry Be Happy which brought the audience to their feet, clapping and singing at the top of their lungs! A true moment for our community that will be ingrained in all of us for years to come.

Dinner was served at 9 pm while raffle & door prizes were announced as well. Thank you to WZCC (World Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce) for sponsoring us, by donating a brand-new Kayak. Congrats to Aspi Illava for winning the Kayak raffle!

After the audience gave in their ballots, they were counted during dinner and the results were in...

Over 18:

1st - Kaizaad Tafti (Freestyle rap)  
2nd - Nadia Jam (Flow art with lights)  
3rd - Tara Jam (Singing & Piano)

Under 18:

1st - Mithra Chothia (Karate)  
2nd - Benji Irani (Singing)  
3rd - Nazish Patel (Dancing)



*Yohan Ghadiali Playing  
The Beatles*

Thank you to everyone who came out, it's a pleasure to see the community come together and celebrate our unique skills and talents.

Thanks to our generous sponsors who help make these events happen, Hanoz Kapadia, Guloo Bahrucha, Cyrus Patel, Bapsy Surti, and WZCC.

All Participants

**Under 18 years:** Cyrus Rustomji, Benji Irani, Zenia Irani, Maya Zandian, Mithra Chothia, Nazish Patel, Yohan Ghadiali, Kareena Bhathena.

**Above 18 years:** Spenta & Khushru Chothia, Kaizer Irani, Meherzeen Daruwala, Nadia Jam, Kaizaad Tafti, Rohan Goswami, Tara Jam, Yazad Tafti, Rustom Chothia, Bahram Jam

If you are looking for more information on our fundraising campaign, it can be found here <https://www.zso.org/8WZYC> or email [youth@zso.org](mailto:youth@zso.org) for any further inquiries.

*Written by: Fravash Chothia*

Instagram - ZSOYOUTH and Facebook - ZSODM



*Participants posing for a group picture, what community is all about*

## Mental Health Corner

### Using Light when SAD

As the new ZSO newsletter editors, we thought that a “*mental health corner*” might be a value-added addition. We highly recommend that anyone in our community interested in writing on this topic to please contact us. We are NOT here to offer any medical advice, so **always consult your trusted physician** if you have any concerns with your physical and mental health.



As the winter season approaches and the nights become longer, there is a condition called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). The symptoms of SAD may include everything from low mood or sadness to full-out depression. Treatment for SAD may include light therapy, psychotherapy, and medications.

What I wish to talk about here is light therapy, also called phototherapy where one is exposed to full-spectrum bright light within the first hour of waking up each day. Light therapy aims to mimic natural outdoor light to positively change brain chemicals linked to mood.

Just remember how valuable light can be. It is no wonder that in Zoroastrianism, light is so cherished. However, since having a fire is impractical in my office, I have a small light box right in front of my computer to use in the mornings. These lamps can be bought for less than \$100 and in my humble opinion well worth the investment.



*Written by: Bahram Jam*

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### Good Parsi/Irani Info

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Minister for Minority Affairs Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani met Parsi Irani Anjuman of India in Mumbai and held extensive discussions with them on wide a range of issues pertaining to the Zoroastrian community. The major announcements she made at the meetings are:

- Udvada Railway Station will have an escalator so that elderly Zoroastrians visiting the holy village don't have to face trouble.
- Udvada Railway Station will be developed as a World Class Railway Station by the Government of India. Initial allocation of Rs. 20 crores done.
- Immediate initial support of Rs. 1 crore for the preservation of the Avesta language
- Reinstatement Avesta-Pahlavi studies at the MA level through the Institute of Distance & Open Learning
- Proposed to work with the community to get the status of Centre of Excellence for the institute running the Avesta-Pahlavi studies course and offered to take up the matter with UGC if the community desires.
- Proposals about the training of Mobeds will be supported by the Government of India.
- Medical support will be extended to entire families of all the Mobeds.
- Any Zoroastrian engaged in farming activity will be extended raw materials (seeds, fertilizer, etc.) and scientific support to enhance crop productivity through Krishi Vigyan Kendra.
- XYZ Foundation will be supported for various activities (conversations, seminars, conferences, etc.) that help in promoting and preserving Zoroastrian culture.
- Proposal to create a federation of different women-related Parsi organizations was put forth so that the Zoroastrian community can take optimum benefits of various schemes and programs run by the Government of India for the welfare and safety of women.

*Extracted and Condensed from Parsi Irani Anjumans of India Discussion*



## Newsletter Requests

Please note that the deadline for receiving submissions for the ZSO newsletter is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each preceding month. Any materials received after this date will be published on a best-effort basis.

**Editor:** Araash Chothia      **Assistant Editor:** Bahram Jam

Please note that all requests for inclusions in the ZSO NL should be emailed to [newslettereditor@zso.org](mailto:newslettereditor@zso.org). Please copy Hoofrish Patel at [evp@zso.org](mailto:evp@zso.org) for approval.

## Miscellaneous

### There will be no Farsi Newsletter this Month

#### ZSO Contacts:

*Emergencies:* Khushru Chothia (416) 677-7555

*Messages on the auto-dialer:* Pedram Yazdani at [admin@zso.org](mailto:admin@zso.org)

Renting MGDM hall (for post-funeral prayers/rituals or private functions): Hoofrish Patel at [evp@zso.org](mailto:evp@zso.org)

Kanoun Representatives for September 2022-2023 are as follows, if you have any questions please contact these individuals for Kanoun events:

Miss Negar Khodadai

Miss Faranak Mavandadnejad

Mr. Shervin Iranzade

Miss Khorshid chehr Zandian

Mr. Mehran Behdian

Miss Katayoon Behdin

Mr. Shahram Goshtasbi

Please copy Mitra Jam at [president@zso.org](mailto:president@zso.org) for approval

#### Newsletter advertising rates:

Inserts: \$200

Quarter page/Business card: \$55

Half page: \$75

Full page: \$125

Miscellaneous two-liners: \$15 - 10% discount for 12 consecutive months of advertising.



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[www.zstudies.ca](http://www.zstudies.ca)





# WINTER DONATION DRIVE



When: 3rd December, 2022 – 11th December, 2022  
**Drop off location: ZSO, 3590 Bayview Ave, North York,  
ON M2M 3S6**

(During visiting hours only)

All new or lightly used winter clothes, gloves, socks and boots will be accepted. All the donations will be donated to the refugees of Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine.

For more details please contact;  
Sharmin Mistry: (416)-475-6986



# ZSO YOUTH SUBSIDY FOR UK CONGRESS DEADLINE



**DECEMBER 15, 2022  
AT 11:59PM**

Make sure to sign up for the subsidy interest form on our Instagram page @zsoyouth (link in bio) to get more info!

**DO NOT MISS THIS  
OPPORTUNITY!**







# DINNER & DANCE

ZSO YOUTH FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR UK CONGRESS 2023

## 2023 NEW YEAR PARTY



**DECEMBER 31, 2022**

**8:00PM - 1:00AM**

**MEMBERS: \$45    NON-MEMBERS: \$55**

**RESERVE A TABLE OF 8 FOR THE PRICE OF 7 TICKETS**

**EMAIL US AT [ENTERTAINMENT@ZSO.ORG](mailto:ENTERTAINMENT@ZSO.ORG)**

**THEME: CASINO ROYALE    DRESS CODE: SEMI-FORMAL**

**VENUE: 3590 BAYVIEW AVE, TORONTO**

**BUY TICKETS AT: [ZSO.ORG](http://ZSO.ORG) > EVENTS > DEC 31 > REGISTER**

**FOR FURTHER INQUIRIES CONTACT: GULOO BHARUCHA: 905 - 475 - 8894**





*"The valuables we have may impress others, but the VALUE we hold is enough to inspire others!"*

*"Help where you can, Give what you can".*

The Zoroastrian Society of Ontario's (ZSO) Youth committee is actively hosting fundraising events to keep the youth engaged and involved in building a stronger community together. This year most of our activities are focused on raising funds to provide the youth an opportunity to attend the **8<sup>th</sup> World Zoroastrian Youth Congress (8WZYC) in London, UK (July 21 – 26, 2023)**.

The World Zoroastrian Youth Congress begun 25 years ago with a mission to bring together the Zoroastrian youth from around the world. It happens once in every four years. Over the years these congresses have brought together hundreds of Zoroastrian youth and enabled them to interact with others, as well as collaborate and work towards the challenges we face as a community. The intended age of these youth ranges from 18 to 37 years of age.

With your generosity and support, we are confident that once again we will be able to support our youths to discover new adventures and achieve experiences they would not have elsewhere. These social and engagement opportunities develop them into capable, confident, and successful individuals focused on giving back to their community and helping others.

Our goal is to raise \$40,000 to subsidize between 30-40 youths to give them an opportunity to engage and enhance their knowledge of our religion, create everlasting friendships with Zoroastrian youth from all over the world, and expand their connectivity within Toronto, and their greater worldwide network. The ZSO Youth have a fundraising vision to aid every youth from the ZSO to attend the 8WZYC. The total trip expense is likely to be over \$2,500 CAD per person (including airfare and accommodation).

As a token of appreciation, all official promotional sponsors (Bronze \$500+, Silver \$1,500+, Gold \$5,000+) will have their logo printed on the back of T-shirts given to all the ZSO youth attending the congress. For more information on sponsorship please contact Sohrab Bhiwandiwalla [email: [Youth@zso.org](mailto:Youth@zso.org) | Call: +1(289)-886-2309].

Here is how you can donate;

1. **Online:** [www.ZSO.org/donate](http://www.ZSO.org/donate) → Select the option "ZSO Youth 8th WZYC Fundraiser". Electronic tax receipt will be issued right away.
2. **Cheque:** Payable to "Zoroastrian Society of Ontario". In the memo section kindly, mention "ZSO Youth 8WZYC Fundraiser". Please be sure to complete the [donation form](#) and attach it with your cheque. This will ensure we have correct mailing address to send the tax receipt.

We look forward to your continued support.

Thank you,

ZSO Youth Committee





# DONATION FORM

Please complete the form below and send it along your donation cheque. This form will ensure we have your correct mailing address to send your tax receipt.

Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$25 and higher.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please mail cheques to : Zoroastrian Society of Ontario  
Attn: Treasurer  
3590 Bayview Ave  
North York, ON, M2M 3S6

**\*\*All cheques payable to Zoroastrian Society of Ontario**