

MAIYTRA, or Maharashtra Association of Indian Youth Together Representing America, is a sub-organization of BMM (Brihan Maharashtra Mandal of North America). BMM was set up in 1981 to coordinate the needs of increased Marathi settlers in North America. They began hosting biennial conferences to bring together Marathi speaking people to gather around familiar faces and customs and to celebrate their heritage. By 1994, attendance at these conferences rose from hundreds to thousands, making it difficult to provide for the individual needs of each age group within BMM.

Then came MAIYTRA. MAIYTRA was formed to cultivate this rich heritage among the second generation. Following in the tradition of BMM, MAIYTRA has also been hosting biennial conventions for Marathi-Americans aged 18-35, and setting up networks among members. Since 1994, MAIYTRA youth conventions have been held in Cleveland, Toronto, San Francisco, New York City, Detroit and Los Angeles, with the 2006 convention held in Chicago over the July 4th holiday weekend

Over the years attendance has grown to more than 600 and has included Maharashtrian from all over the world!

During the recent convention in Chicago, there were many activities catering to the educational and social needs of these young professionals, including numerous seminars, a cruise, hypnotist, comedian and speed dating. Uday Lele, the Keynote speaker and acclaimed entrepreneur urged attendees to embrace change and consider the power of asking.

Five individuals were honored as All*Stars for various accomplishments at the capstone evening banquet. The individuals and a brief description of their actions are noted.

- Ameya Patankar – significant community service at the University of Illinois
- Ankita Rakhe – leadership as Director of Diversity and Service Programming at Trinity University
- Rucha Tadwalkar – leadership as Outreach Coordinator at the Center for the Pacific Asian Family
- Anjal Chande – artistic excellence and achievement as an Indian classical dancer and musician
- Ankush Karnik – leadership in support of the Maharashtra Foundation

Being Marathi means different things to different people. Some identify being Marathi with having Marathi parents, having lived in Maharashtra, being married to or friends with a Marathi, or speaking Marathi. MAIYTRA provides a comfortable, social atmosphere in which young adults can explore various questions and concerns they have about the community and its role in their lives and in the world.

To learn more about MAIYTRA, visit www.bmmonline.org/maiya