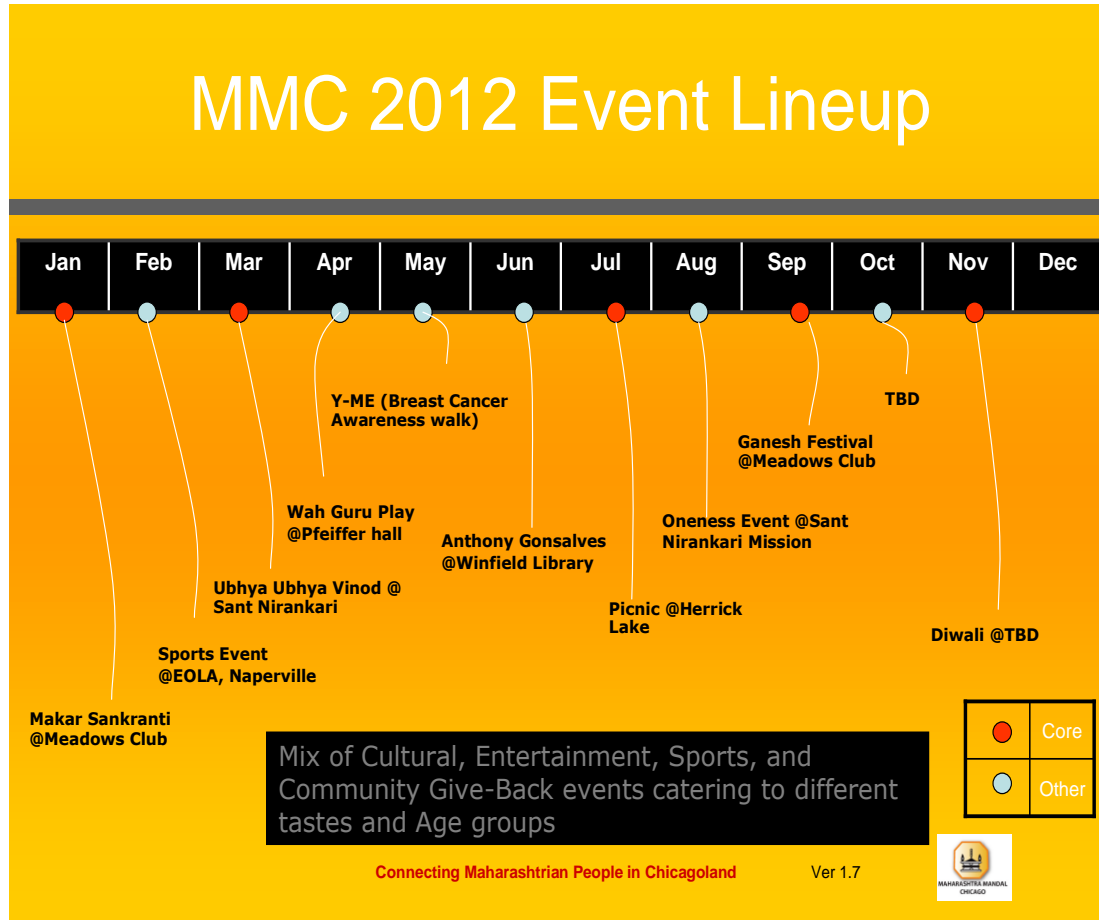




॥ गणपती बाप्पा मोरया ॥

I can't believe it is already September! Last five months were busy with lot of entertainment and community events. Here are some high points...



In April, MMC partnered with BMM to host Wah-Guru play from India in North Central College, Naperville. The highlight of this play was a phenomenal performance by legendary Dilip Prabhavalkar that was nicely complemented by Poornima Talwalkar, Girija Katdare, and Advait Dadarkar. The show was a hit in Chicagoland attended by over 300 people. The story is about a professor who is diagnosed with the terminal illness of Motor Neuron Disease (MND), a debilitating disease due to which the patient loses his muscular control and finally succumbs to it. The Professor and one of his students meet after several years. At that time the student is facing several professional and emotional challenges in his life. After that meeting the student engages in deliberate and frequent conversations with his professor, and starts finding peace and hope in the words of wisdom by his teacher. There is always a positive spin given by the professor on things that appears gloomy from the outside – hinting us to change our views on how we should be looking at life. All the 9 member Wah-Guru team became integral part of the families that hosted them. I was fortunate to host some of them along with Ramadas Thatte and Vidya Joshi. It was nice to get their perspectives on nuances of acting in plays. Basement theater members also got the opportunity to interact informally with Wahguru team.



During one of the conversations we learnt that Dilipji actually played harmonica in one of the drama scenes. One other tidbit was that he took lessons from a teacher in Mumbai to understand and prepare for the role of a patient suffering from MND.

In June, Basement Theater (part of MMC) arranged screening of a documentary made by Ashok Rane, an accomplished film critic, on the life of Hindi film music's first music arranger Anthony Gonsalves. The documentary includes series of interviews with Anthony cleverly interspersed with song sequences arranged by him working with many renowned music composers of his era viz: Anil Viswas, C. Ramachandra, Shyam Sunder, Naushaad, Khayaam, Madan Mohan, SD Burman etc. Anthony introduced western orchestra to Hindi film songs. He also composed introduction and interludes of the songs. "Mausam hai rangeen", "Barkha bahar aai", "Tumahre bulane ko jee chahata hai", "Aaja ri nindiya aa ja", "Aayega aane wala aayega", "Mausam hai Ashikana Ae dil kahin se unko doond lana", "Ae dil mujhe bata de" were some of his hit songs. He is remembered for his musical arrangements in Mahal, Naya Daur, Dillagi, Pyasa amongst many others. Salute to this unsung hero!

In July MMC had a summer picnic at Herrick Lake. It was also BMM Chicago convention's first anniversary. To commemorate it two billboards were displayed showing pictures of volunteers and main events that captured the essence of convention. Box cricket has been traditionally played for years during the picnic. This year we had participation from 12 teams. Hemant Chavan, Ravi Joshi, and Kedar Navkal took a lead role in coordinating box cricket activities. They meticulously planned and executed all things to perfection. This time MMC had arranged a caterer onsite to cook Dosa, Samosa chat, Paneer rolls. Spicy Kolhapuri Chicken, sponsored by Burrito Buggy was very popular amongst people. We ran into few issues that were beyond our control. The caterer's spare gas cylinder wouldn't work and it delayed making of Masala Dosa. However, when the situation was explained to the people they showed lot of patience and understanding, while the issue was being sorted out with help of MMC volunteers. Finally, it was decided to make the Dosas on a Coal Grill after attempts to fix the gas grill failed. There was an impromptu Dumb Charade competition on the side while the Dosas were being made and served. Some of the grown up kids entertained themselves in boat rides. The picnic went on till 7:30pm. Almost half of 180 people were present till the very end!

MMC participates in other Community events:

Anita Navkal, Secretary MMC 2012, led MMC's participation in Y-Me Breast Cancer Awareness walk in May. Several MMC members attended this event and raised money for this breast cancer support group. It was sad to learn that the organization shut its doors abruptly in July.

In August, MMC joined hands with other community organizations in the Oneness event hosted by Sant Nirankari Mission (a not for profit organization). MMC members Ravi Joshi, Jagdish Prabhu, Vaishali Tendolkar, Ravi Bamne, and Ashish Nagarkar paid rich tributes to Rajesh Khanna by singing some of his hit songs on Karaoke. MMC team was involved in the planning process and had also setup stalls for selling vada-pav, idli, ice cream soda, and lemonade. Some of these stalls were managed by the kids - right from cashiering through fulfilling the order. I was very much impressed by the efforts of the kids Samruddhi & Meehika Joshi, Sheel & Sanchi Sansare, and Hritik Vilekar.



I would like to acknowledge outstanding work of Vidya Joshi and other MMC volunteers in assisting one of the fellow Maharashtrians from India staying in Chicago on a temporary assignment. Amar Sohoni, was admitted to a hospital due to high fever that soon turned into a life and death situation. During this difficult time, Vidya and other volunteers offered necessary support to his wife in the hospital and even kept Amar's parents well informed about his recovery. After several weeks of rehabilitation, Amar has got a new life and is all set to begin work in couple of months. Amar and his family have been touched by the warmth and care received from MMC folks. BRAVO to these folks for exhibiting a true community spirit.

Important Updates:

One of the foundational work being done by MMC team is to work on a brand new website. We are working collaboratively with a Chicagoland company, VJ advertising, that is owned by one of Maharashtrian. The website was launched in first week of September. All the planned functionality is targeted to be completed in October.

The Credit card functionality launched in March has been very well received by MMC event attendees.

MMC will be celebrating Ganeshotsav on Sept 22nd at Meadows Club. We will be showcasing a play from Basement Theater Chicago, written by a youth artist, Kunal Savkur. We have also arranged a lecture by Prof. Rendalkar on Swami Vivekanand. I want to invite each one of you for this Ganapati - one of the most important festivals celebrated in Maharashtra!

~ Neelesh Vilekar