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Indians Benefit from Bike Riding

Bike to Work Day is May 12, 2011

(April 28, 2011) Oakland, Calif. — San Francisco Bay Area's 17th Annual Bike to Work Day, which will be held on May 12, 2011, aims to motivate and inspire non-bike riders and those already cycling to get involved. This year, there is a significant campaign to reach the Indian community to encourage members of the community to participate and educate members on the many benefits of bike riding.

Biking to work is a great way to fulfill the Surgeon General's recommended requirement of 30+ minutes of physical activity per day needed to stay healthy. This is particularly important, as heart disease is a very prominent health issue in the South Asian community today. Coronary Artery Disease is four times more prevalent in South Asians than compared to any other race. More than one in twenty South Asians suffer from heart disease.

"One of the most prognostic indicators of survival and successful aging is to exercise daily and often," says Ashish Mathur, Executive Director of the South Asian Heart Center. "We've found that one of the best ways to achieve that is to incorporate exercise into the daily routine so it simply becomes a habit, not a 'duty.' Cycling to work, taking a short walk after dinner—these kinds of activities can literally save your life, and they're easy to do."

2011 marks the first time Bike to Work Day marketing materials are being printed in Hindi. Posters in Hindi demonstrate the commitment the Bike to Work Day team has made towards reaching out to the community and the determination to reach more Indians about the benefits of biking. Additionally, during the official promotional photo and video shoots, South Asians were asked to participate and become role models for the Indian community. Images of Indians riding bikes hope to inspire and motivate other community members. Videos will be shown at Bart station kiosks, online, and on community cable stations around the bay area including on CreaTV San Jose. Also, the Bike to Work Day team was interviewed for a TV segment on WomenNow TV which will air in May and a radio program called Women Empowered.

Aravind Srinivasan, a freelance journalist, writes, "The cast for the shoot featured a diverse group of people reflecting the rich cultural diversity of the Bay Area...with a significant South Asian contingent working in the background to make this happen."

The Bay Area Bicycle Coalition, which is responsible for producing Bike to Work Day, has also joined forces with key Indian media outlets and organizations to promote Bike to Work Day. These partners include India-West, India Currents, Women Now TV, India Community Center, Women Empowered, and Hindu Times.

Executive Director of the India Community Center, Tanuja Bahal adds, "Getting Indians active is a mission for many organizations including ICC. We applaud Bike to Work Day's effort in trying to educate and motivate Indians to bike."

Bike to Work Day 2011 is presented by 511.org, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and Kaiser Permanente. The 2011 regional sponsors include Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Beyond Pix Studios, Clif Bar, REI, Adobe, and the Bay Area Bicycle Coalition. For more information on Bike to Work Day and events happening throughout the bay area in May, please visit www.511.org or www.YouCanBikeThere.com.

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Images, Interviews and video available by request