



For immediate release

Contact: 201-7922650, 201-3601553 | info@suratifpa.org

Surati for Performing Arts celebrated its Second International Rakhi Festival on Wednesday, August 18, 2021, outdoors in downtown Jersey City at Amiya Restaurant. In attendance were Mayor Steven Fulop of Jersey City, Ward-E Councilman James Solomon, officers from the JCPD, and the Jersey City LGBTQ community leaders, among others. It was a smaller than usual Surati event but of immense significance, especially in our present polarized world.

Although Rakhi traditionally involves sisters tying a symbolic decorative amulet on their brother's wrists, wishing upon their safety and long life, Surati envisions Rakhi as a global movement for promoting universal brotherhood, love, respect, trust, understanding, and unity across cultures, races, religions, and traditions. With this message in mind, Rimli Roy, explained the history and stories behind Rakhi and its relevance in society today in fostering the message of unity through diversity. She welcomed and thanked the guests for taking time out of their schedule to attend this very special event. This was followed by members of Surati including students tying Rakhis on the wrists of guests and invitees. After that Rimli performed a danced story-telling piece to the ancient stories of Rakhi for all to understand its significance, origin, and meaning. Lyricist and poet, Arati Roy from India, wrote the script and the recorded narration was by Dr. Priyanjali Sen of NYU.

Mayor Fulop remarked that he was happy to attend the event and thanked Rimli, the founder and artistic director of Surati, for the work that she and Surati have done in educating our communities about the culture and traditions of India for almost two decades.

Rimli also tied Rakhis on Eduardo Baez and Joseph Cameron from the LGBTQ community who organize the Pride Festival every year in Jersey City. Joseph spoke on their behalf and said he was very happy to attend and be a part of a festival that also promoted inclusivity.

Rakhis were also tied on Jersey City Police Department officers as a token of thanks for the work they do to protect our community. Officers from the Jersey City Fire Department were also invited but unfortunately, they could not attend due to the current COVID restrictions.

The event highlighted a book signing by author and publisher Priya Kumari, "My Raksha Bandhan", a story of a little girl named Tara and how she celebrated Rakhi. Priya Kumari is an entrepreneur and writes books for children and runs her own publishing company. Priya also conducted a Rakhi-making workshop for children, where she taught kids in attendance how to make quick beautiful Rakhis. The children were thrilled at being able to produce such pretty-looking wristbands that they proudly wore home.

The evening culminated with delicious Indian food and drinks prepared by Amiya, Jersey City, who partnered with Surati for this event and offered dinner at a discount and their beautiful outdoor space.

Jersey City
August 19, 2021.