

## Recharging at the relay

The first all Parsi "Love and Peace Team" of 28 Zoroastrians of Auckland participated in the 2012 Relay for Life, an annual fundraising event organized by the Cancer Society of New Zealand to celebrate cancer survivors and remember loved ones lost to the killer disease. With the youngest being 10 years old and the eldest 67, the team members walked 1,500 laps (one lap = 400 m), totaling 600,000 m (600 km) in the event that commenced at 4 p.m. at the Mt Smart Stadium in Auckland on February 18, 2012 and finished at 10 a.m. the next morning. The Love and Peace Team were able to raise NZD 3,890 for the Cancer Society of Auckland, notes a detailed write-up by Rashna D. Tata, former president of The Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand.

From the 44 teams that participated, the Auckland Parsi team took home the prize for the most "Intelligent team," winning the general knowledge quiz which was held at 4 a.m. The all night bands, zumba sessions and live entertainment proved successful in keeping spirits high and motivating the teams. "The most incredible and heart wrenching part of the whole event was the Memorial Candle Ceremony at 8 p.m. when the periphery of the stadium was filled with candles in white paper bags...which had been decorated with special messages from families and friends, in memory of those who had not survived. A special lap of the entire stadium was walked by all teams in complete silence to reflect...on the enormous toll that cancer takes" and rejoice in the good health that individuals are blessed with, wrote Tata.

For the Zoroastrians, their involvement this year stemmed from seeing their managing committee member Shernaz Petigara fight against cancer. "Shernaz was a well respected and popular community member, especially close with the little Parsi kids who attended her regular prayer classes. Her work with me on the Zoroastrian Association managing committee was valuable and much appre-

ciated. She was a tireless volunteer with all community affairs... Diagnosed with leukemia in 2009, this active and extremely community focused member of the Auckland Zoroastrian community had her happy, contented world turned upside down in a fraction of a second. It left her and her husband Sarosh and daughter Perzen shattered.

"Months of treatment followed with its own trials and tribulations. Every small step forward, sometimes also came with 10 backwards. Life was immensely stressful, but every small victory meant a new lease of life. With her deep faith in the effectiveness of her prayers, Shernaz never once wavered in her belief that she would come out healthy and smiling. A long, hard seven months later she was finally declared a very lucky survivor. Since then Shernaz had vowed to give back as much as she possibly could to the disease that tore her life and family apart. With the support of her family she started volunteering her services; she drove cancer patients for their treatment, cooked meals and offered support to patients and their families."

Family and friends who had been with Shernaz during her darkest days encouraged her to register the all-Parsi team for the Relay of Life that proved to be a moving and rewarding experience for both the young and the old gathered that day. With their Love and Peace Team the Auckland Parsis plan to regularly participate in future Relays for Life.

## Golf glory

At the annual Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club championship on March 16-17, 2012, Bayhaan Lakdawala emerged the winner in the men's category and

Nasha Sarkari in the women's category. Around 90 men, 35 women and 15 juniors participated in the event this year. Whilst 24-year-old Lakdawala lifted this trophy for the first time, for 21-year-old Sarkari, this was her fourth win, having won the event in 2008, 2010 and 2011, conveyed her father Rumi, a keen golfer himself.

Lakdawala who was inspired by his father Farad, has been playing since the age of 10. Sarkari has been playing the game since the age of six, seeing her elder brother Okshah (who now resides in Vancouver) enjoy the game. Both the youngsters practice at least thrice a week at the Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club and play a round or two on the weekends. To improve their game they take lessons from professionals at the Club. "Both are mulling their chances to be allowed to compete as a wild card entry in the main events that are scheduled in Dubai like the Omega Men's and Ladies Open where international players of top leagues participate. Since both are in the top end of the Order of Merit (OOM), chances of them being invited are good," reports Rumi.

Nasha who currently plays off 5 handicap was the junior overall champion, OOM — girls UAE from 2002-06. In 2009 she was declared the ladies overall champion (OOM) in gross and net division, UAE. She has participated in events at Sharjah and Abu Dhabi as well. Handicap, in golf, is a measure of a golfer's average score above par. On a golf course with a par (allowable strokes) of 72, a golfer who regularly shoots around 72 is a par or scratch golfer with a zero handicap, as explained on the website, golfink. The maximum handicap permissible to a

player is 28 for men and 36 for women, a lower handicap implying better the quality of the player, clarified Rumi.

Bayhaan who plays off 3 handicap enjoyed junior golf from 1996 to 2000 and was on the UAE national team and junior squad for the next four years. For two years he played high school

*Love and Peace Team of Auckland Zoroastrians at the 2012 Relay for Life*

