



MEDIA RELEASE
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NAZ RAYANI TO RECEIVE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Pharmacist and philanthropist is named as recipient of 2012 Leadership Victoria Award

Since 1974, Naz Rayani has been a tireless champion of community advocacy, cross-cultural understanding and inspirational philanthropy in Greater Victoria, both as a successful local businessman and distinguished community leader.

Naz Rayani will accept the Leadership Victoria Lifetime Achievement Award (sponsored by Il Terrazzo Ristorante) at the eighth annual Victoria Leadership Awards (VLAs) ceremony. The gala reception takes place on February 21, 2012 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Fairmont Empress Hotel and provides the occasion to honour all 29 nominees of the 2012 Victoria Leadership Awards in six prestigious categories. Led by Leadership Victoria, the annual awards are a partnership between Leadership Victoria, the University of Victoria, the Rotary Clubs of Greater Victoria, the Victoria Foundation and, new this year, the United Way of Greater Victoria.

"I am deeply humbled," says Rayani. "I have always derived solace, peace and contentment from my faith. It has sustained my efforts as a businessman, fundraiser, and father, and it guides my philanthropic and charitable endeavours in our community. Thank you Leadership Victoria for this great honour and for all the wonderful work that you do."

Rayani's desire to work in a field that combined healthcare, business and community involvement led him to Scotland as a young man to study Pharmacy at the Robert Gordon University of Aberdeen. He opened his first pharmacy in Nairobi, Kenya in 1972, but immigrated to Canada two years later to live and work in a more politically stable environment.

In 1978, Rayani purchased the Western Drug Mart /Pharmasave, Colwood and quickly built strong community ties by sponsoring local athletes and promoting health education programs and events. In 1986, Shopper's Drug Mart acquired his business and Rayani managed the large store in Langford until 1991, when he purchased the small independent Cadboro Bay Pharmacy.

It was a business that would provide him with a greater opportunity to invest in the community and participate in fundraising activities. In 2003, after discussions with staff and faculty about the increased need for on-campus services for students, he opened his second drugstore in the Student Union Building of the University of Victoria. In 2011, after recovering from a life-threatening illness, Rayani, along with his family, acquired the Peoples Pharmacy locations at Shelbourne Plaza, Fairfield Plaza and Fairfield Road at Moss Street.

Working to improve living conditions in Third World countries is a cornerstone issue that Rayani holds closest to his heart. The main focal point for his time and energy these days, aside from his business, is the "World Partnership Walk", which is held in Victoria on the last Sunday in May. Rayani helped to bring the Partnership Walk to Victoria 24 years ago to increase public awareness about global poverty and to help raise funds to support Third World economic development programs by the Aga Khan Foundation Canada. As testimony to his determination to promote and expand the reach of the Walk, a record \$250,000 was raised in sponsor donations in 2010, and Rayani personally raised over \$60,000.

A devout Ismaili Muslim and well-known spokesperson in Victoria, Rayani has also worked tirelessly to break down barriers among people of different faiths. To this end, since the late nineties he has conducted regular tours of the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centre (Mosque) in Burnaby to encourage community understanding and the acceptance of others. He also works hard to broaden community support for the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria, an organization that has given him a chance to play ambassador for Islam. Rayani has also participated in learning about other faiths and has been involved with St. George's Parish and the United Church in Cadboro Bay for many years.

In 2006, Naz was appointed as Member of the Order of Canada, by her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, at the Order of Canada Investiture Ceremony held at Rideau Hall in Ottawa.

“Naz Rayani is a unique inspiration to us all,” says VLA Chair Kate Mansell. “His interests span a wide range of activities and he has a special talent for bringing people from different backgrounds together to work towards improving our community. Victoria has benefited from his heartfelt philanthropy for over four decades.”

At the February 21st ceremony, the local organization receiving the fourth annual Victoria Foundation Community Leadership award and the recipients of the individual Victoria Leadership Awards in six categories — the Rotary Community Leadership Awards, the Vancity Youth Award, the University of Victoria Community Leadership Awards, The United Way of Greater Victoria Award for Collaboration and Partnership, the Royal Roads University Leadership Excellence through Coaching and Mentoring Award and the Leadership Victoria Alumni Award will be announced.

Leadership Victoria is a community-based, voluntary organization committed to developing, supporting, recognizing and honouring outstanding community leaders. Since its formation in 2000, it has become the go to organization for community leadership in Greater Victoria, graduating over 230 leaders who work collaboratively to resolve the complex challenges facing our city.

A full list of this year's 29 award nominees is available at www.leadershipvictoria.ca

A photo of Naz Rayani is also available upon request.

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