

Crossing Point Arts celebrates the life and work of Amarpreet Dhami-Anand, a passionate advocate for survivors of human trafficking and deeply committed warrior for social justice. A dear friend and great supporter of our work, Amar brought her considerable talents to help grow our nonprofit when it was still in its infancy. Prior to working with us she had provided direct services to survivors of CSEC (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children) at GEMS, in Harlem, where our connection began. As a Mental Health Counselor, writer and activist, Amar had much to offer.



Amarpreet Dhami-Anand
1981- 2017

In 2016 she threw herself into refining our Teaching Artist Training Program, one of the key elements central to our work. Her unerring instincts and knowledge surrounding the importance of providing safe creative spaces to survivors was her invaluable contribution. Amar's indelible presence will live on in our work as we continually employ her materials when training our new Teaching Artists. Her deeply humane, kind, generous, funny, fiercely loving and beautiful soul...ever inspiring! Amar's wonderful presence is sorrowfully missed.

How does one go about working with survivors of human trafficking?

Amar set a powerful example, and her successes were pronounced. She was known for her ability to reach some of the 'toughest cases.' These were young survivors who had been so deeply hurt and dismissed that they had concluded there was no point to open up, ever again. In Amar's presence things changed. Her warmth and direct approach, clear sense of boundaries and compassionate wisdom presented possibilities. They opened up to her, and were helped by her patience and ability to hear their truth. Those of us who answered the call to work with trafficking survivors continually learn about tragedy and healing. Amar held the deeply instinctual capacity to inspire healing.



'When Great Trees Fall'

photo by: Sophia Lane Lapple

And, there is always more to do.

Amar's creative life was equally rich. Authoring a children's book, and writing poetry were amongst her many varied projects. As a mother and wife, she filled her world with the love and wonder in which she lived. When Amar learned that cancer was her next challenge (July 2016) she took it on with the same courage and commitment as she did all things in life. Throughout her entire last year she continued to write poetry and make it available on her blog. In a sense, as she prepared her own spirit for it's transformation, she prepared all of her loved ones and family for her departure. Her brilliant work can be found at: www.AmarpreetDhami.com Amar lived her life of passion, service, love, laughter, beauty and truth. She is alive in our spirits, as she deeply transformed all those she touched.

Remembering Amarpreet...



One word to describe Amy: passion. Whether it was helping survivors regain control of their lives, or counseling those overcoming their addictions, or working with Anne on Crossing Point Arts' mission... Amy was passionate & fully invested with helping others. She found her calling with social justice and tried to be an advocate wherever & whenever she could.

I realize how fortunate I am that she chose to have me in her life & it is my hope that all those she worked with feel the same way.

~ **Nitin Anand**

I was present for Amar's group interview at GEMS. We had been looking for a Support Services Coordinator for some time. It was an incredibly important role as the individual would be the main point person for almost all of the 350+ clients/members at GEMS. To say that the standards for the candidates were high would be an understatement.

Unsurprisingly, Amar knocked our socks off. She was poised, incredibly intelligent, thoughtful, and reflective - her deep passion and genuine caring for the cause was unmistakable. I truly have never seen anyone react under such incredible pressure (15 + sets of eyes on her, all asking in-depth questions) in a confident, clear way as Amar did that day.

She was an asset to the organization and the backbone of our Support Services team. Her compassion and dedication made her a fast favorite among not only the staff, but the members/clients as well. The girls were so lucky to have her support. Her impression on me, on her clients, on the staff, and on the entire movement will never be forgotten.

~ **Aili Weeks Hermann**

Amar was a truly beautiful, loving and giving person. In our 3+ years of friendship, I always felt loved, safe and connected to her. When we became mothers, we grew even closer as we shared our babies' milestones with one another and would often discuss our hopes and dreams for our children's future together. She was funny as all get out and had a super witty nature that could warm even the coldest of hearts. She was always so candid and transparent with me about her journey with motherhood and, once she got sick, with cancer. I miss her in an aching, unrelenting way that I did not expect. I am simply heartbroken over this tremendous loss. Her departure has left a gaping hole in my heart that can never, ever be replaced.

~ **Rosalia Morel**

Amarpreet brought warmth and compassion to her work with survivors of human trafficking. She was such a great listener that members would sit at her desk for hours sharing their experiences with her, knowing they would get empathy and a non-judgmental ear. Her fellow staff looked to her for support and leadership, as she was always willing to lend a hand and contribute to a positive learning environment. Her strength was evident although she carried it in a quiet, reserved manner. She brought light and love to the space and she is greatly missed.

~ **Jessica Trudeau**

The day my path met up with Amar's something in me knew my life had changed. In her I sensed a rare strength, clarity of direction, fairness, fierce dedication and kindness, all connected through her loving and affirming presence. As it turned out, I sensed only a fraction of the immense and powerful soul I came to know as a dear and trusted friend and colleague.

Her work with survivors represented the fire that burned in her for justice in this troubled world, and her success in reaching the toughest cases, no small accomplishment. Whenever Amar sat in on any of Crossing Point Arts' workshops, the participants always seemed ignited in their spirits, and I came to understand that it was her profound support that was an invisible nod of consent that gave them access to inner-freedom.

Amar lived at a level I strive to emulate on a daily basis! She taught me more than anyone about living my life with my whole heart. I am filled with gratitude for the gifts she brought to my world, and miss her wisdom, smile and laughter more than I can ever say.

~ **Anne H. Pollack**

Remembering Amarpreet...

Like everyone who loved Amar, I have had a very difficult time processing her death. It's been especially hard doing so from so far away. From Germany, regardless of how frequently I think of my beautiful friend and her life, it still feels like she is present. It feels like when I return to America to visit my friends and family, I will call her up, we will arrange to meet for coffee- but more likely lunch- and we will talk for three or so hours. It's like knowing she's gone, but not believing it or feeling it. At all.

Having a difficult time with the realization of her death is one thing. Maintaining a memory of her everything is another. This is not difficult at all for her personality, her spirit, her person were so rich and embodied that I can feel her life when I think of her. But words continue to fail me. There is just no way to articulate her meaning in my life. She was the wordsmith. I wish she were here to help.

I look up to Amar. I miss Amar. I miss talking to Amar. I miss hugging and being hugged by Amar. I miss thinking about Amar on adventures with Nitin and Ajooni. I miss reading Amar's words. I miss seeing Amar's interests. I miss learning about Amar. I miss learning from Amar. I miss Amar's love. Amar wrote often about her deep admiration and love for trees. She often used trees as a metaphor or simile in her beautiful poetry. I also love being alone in a dense forest, or running on a wooded path. Her love of trees is one of the things I found intriguing, mysterious, and beautiful about her.

Sophia Lane-Läppel

When Great Trees Fall

by Maya Angelou

When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.

When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die,
the air around us becomes
light, rare, sterile.
We breathe, briefly.
Our eyes, briefly,
see with
a hurtful clarity.
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,
examines,
gnaws on kind words
unsaid,
promised walks
never taken.

Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.
Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.
Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance,
fall away.
We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable ignorance of
dark, cold
caves.

And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our sense, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.

