

# Sujal Parikh Memorial Symposium

## March 23, 2013

### Symposium Honors Former UMMS Student

**Sujal Parikh** was an M4 student participating in a one-year Fogarty International Fellowship in Uganda when a tragic road accident claimed his life on October 10, 2010. He had been in Uganda for just a few months working to address medical education issues and tackle critical problems associated with pediatric HIV/AIDS at the Joint Clinical Research Centre in Kampala. Sujal was born and raised in Dallas, Texas, the only child of Manoj and Sita Parikh. He received his undergraduate degree in public health and neurobiology from the University of California, Berkeley.

Sujal's passing had a profound effect on the University of Michigan Medical School community – even those who didn't know him well. He was passionate about social justice, access to medicines, medical education, and addressing human rights and health care disparities across the globe. He provided dedicated service and inspirational leadership to many groups including Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), the Global Health Education Consortium, Universities Associated for Essential Medicines, American Medical Student Association (AMSA) AIDS Advocacy Network, and the Uganda Village Project. Sujal was a passionate believer in the collective power of committed individuals to advance health and social justice, and he leveraged his networks within these organizations to make each of them stronger. Full of charisma and compassion, Sujal forged communities of friends and colleagues around the world.

In the wake of his untimely loss, those who loved him and were inspired by him came together to honor his work by creating the Sujal Parikh Memorial Symposium for Health and Social Justice. The symposium brings together a diverse group of students and professionals to learn from one another, create lasting connections, and generate new ideas for the advancement of health and social justice.



**Sujal M. Parikh**

Learn more at <http://sujalsymposium.org/>



*(left) Dr. Suzan Song used her more than 13 years of global health work in places like Burundi, Haiti, Liberia, and Sierra Leone to form her keynote lecture on Intent vs. Impact: Self-awareness in Global Initiatives.*

*(below) Dr. Brent Williams, Director of the Medical School's Global Health & Disparities Path of Excellence, led a break-out session and discussed objectives and methods to guide global health education.*





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### Third Annual Sujal Parikh Memorial Symposium for Health and Social Justice: *Examining the Why, Discovering the How*

A full day of presentations, discussions, poster and break-out sessions, and action stations provided a variety of opportunities for enthusiastic participants—many first timers and many previous attendees.

#### Keynotes

Two dynamic keynotes began and ended the symposium. **Dr. Suzan Song**, global child/adolescent psychiatrist at the Center for Survivors of Torture and policy consultant for the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, shared her growth of self-awareness from more than 13 years experience in post-conflict rehabilitation of vulnerable populations. **Ms. Ameena Matthews**, Senior Violence Interrupter at Ceasefire in Chicago, Illinois, closed the symposium with an intimate and powerful session on her experiences solving inner city youth conflicts from the university campus.

#### Panel Discussions and Break-out Sessions

Panel discussions and small sessions brought insight to the theme of examination and discovery. Multi-disciplinary talks included the roles of faith-based vs. government and public initiatives in global health, challenges and successes in veteran care, youth empowerment solutions through community change, a success story on tuberculosis advocacy, vaccine coverage disparities in Shanghai, China, promoting healthy sexualities through comprehensive sexual education, and a novel, student-led mobile medical outreach model for the unreached, service-resistant homeless of Detroit.

#### Action Stations

Symposium participants had opportunities throughout the day to participate in several types of actions stations. Actions ranged from signing legislative petitions in favor of gun reform and against sweatshops to volunteering for Physicians for Human Rights initiatives to creating a commemorative sign in honor of Sujal's own life actions.

*Sponsored by the Sujal M Parikh family, Global REACH, the Global Health & Disparities Track of Excellence, MESA/Trotter Multicultural Center, University of Michigan Public Health Student Assembly*

*(below) One of the action stations encouraged attendees to share what the Sujal Memorial Symposium meant to them by creating a small posterboard. Many, like the one shown, spoke to how Sujal's passion for the underserved inspired their own.*

*(right) Poster sessions included a variety of topics ranging from resource utilization for pregnant adolescents to societal norms among bereaved mothers in Ghana; from assessing anemia indicators in Indian preschoolers to raising consciousness to produce greater health equity in Southwest Detroit.*

