

Jamaica businessman to receive honorary doctorate

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By Cassidy Klein

Jay Sobhraj, co-founder of Zara Realty in Jamaica, will be one of the first recipients of an honorary doctorate from the University of Guyana in recognition for his work in furthering education and access to technology and mental health resources for young people in Guyana and Queens.

“It is a tremendous honor to receive this recognition from the University of Guyana,” said Sobhraj. “My family has enjoyed success in the United States and we feel a deep obligation to repay that success by helping others, primarily young people, from Queens, New York to Georgetown, Guyana to further their education and help realize their dreams.”

The honor recognizes The Jay and Sylvia Sobhraj Foundation, started in 2007 by Sobhraj and his wife, which has donated more than \$2 million to various causes.

The foundation runs specialized high school preparatory classes for public school students across Queens. It also donated a computer lab to Richmond Hill High School.

In Guyana, the foundation helped to create the country’s first psychology degree program and worked to establish mental health services for university students.

Sobhraj was born in Guyana in 1948 to a family of rice farmers. He went on to earn a degree in engineering from Middlesex Polytechnic in London. He started Zara Realty in 1982 after working in the oil industry in the United Arab Emirates.

Zara Realty, located at 166-07 Hillside Ave., provides affordable housing and owns or manages more than 3.1 million square feet of commercial real estate in the New York region.



Jay Sobhraj will be among the first-ever recipients of an honorary doctorate from the University of Guyana.

A representative for The University of Guyana said Sobhraj was chosen for the honor due to his “combination of business acumen, personal distinction in the field of real estate development, connection to The University of Guyana through generous philanthropy as well as exceptional service to the Guyanese community in Guyana and the United States.”

Sobhraj will receive an honorary doctorate of the University Degree at a ceremony on Nov. 10.

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