



CITY NEWS

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'International Show' celebrates 10 years

BY ALLISON FUTTERMAN
Correspondent

Maha Gingrich has been active in the Charlotte community for years.

A southwest Mecklenburg County resident, she has served and continues to serve on several boards, including International House and the Women's Inter-Cultural Exchange. She is the second woman to be named president of the Charlotte North Rotary Club in the club's more than 60-year existence. She is also the international community liaison at Central Piedmont Community College and assistant to the vice president. In addition, she is a dancer and choreographer who teaches classical Indian dance.

Gingrich is heavily involved in another project. She's the host of "Charlotte, A City of International Success." The TV show is a joint effort between CPCC TV and WTVI PBS Charlotte. The show features people from all around the world who have become part of Charlotte's international community. This September marks the 10th anniversary of "International Success."

During the past 10 years, Gingrich has interviewed individuals who represent many cultures and industries. Gingrich said she loves hosting the show and getting to meet so many interesting people.

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Maha Gingrich, host of "Charlotte, A City of International Success"

She conducts a pre-interview with the guests, taking time to get to know them and their life stories. When the show is taped, Gingrich works from memory, rather than using a list of questions.

Making her guests feel comfortable is important to her, Gingrich said. The show is shot in each guest's home, which also gives viewers a glimpse into their world.

Her advice to her guests is simple. "Be yourself," she reminds them. She encourages them to concentrate on having a conversation. "It's just you talking to me and me talking to you," Gingrich said.

She said she also reassures
Gingrich focuses on people
themselves."

you. It's your story."
are just successful for

She said she likes featuring community members who have helped the community grow.

"It's a great honor to showcase them and what they are doing for the community," she said.

Two of the many who stand out in her mind are Dr. Francis Robicsek, former chairman of Carolinas Medical Center's department of thoracic and cardiovascular surgery, and George Couchell, founder of Showmars restaurants.

Gingrich is connected to the Charlotte international scene as well, because she moved from India to Charlotte when she was a teenager.

"I'm very sensitive to honoring each guest's culture," she said. "It's very important to respect cultural habits, body language, tone of voice, the way you address them. All of that matters."

Each show covers where that person came from and where they are now. Topics have included loss of job, career change, personal loss, going into a new field or trying to be an entrepreneur while dealing with financial challenges. Gingrich said she hopes the show not only entertains, but also inspires and encourages viewers on their own journey.

Gingrich calls herself a lifelong learner who is humbled to learn from others. During the years, she has interviewed more than 70 guests, such as the late Dan Ramirez, former Mecklenburg County commissioner, and Luis Guillermo Solis, president of Costa Rica. CPCC will honor past guests at a private celebration on Sept. 24.

"My life has been enriched by all those stories," she said.

Allison Futterman is a freelance writer: aliwrites10@gmail.com

LEARN MORE:

Beginning Sept. 13, "International Success" will air Sundays at 1:30 p.m. on WTVI PBS Charlotte, channel 5. The show can also be viewed at www.cpcc.edu/tv.



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