



Monthly Visions

A Time Well Spent

Millie Li, Youth Arts & Activism Community Action Team Member

In Fall of 2007, I participated in New Visions' Youth Theater Program (YTP), an 8-week program to develop youth leadership in domestic/dating violence prevention in Asian communities through the use of theater. What enticed me to join the YTP was its structure: an educational environment that encouraged open dialogue. In addition to learning about dating/domestic violence through discussions, which was pivotal to our productive sessions, we also explored theater concepts as well as gained skills in improvisation and facilitation. The facilitators provided us with ample guidance whenever we were confused about any topic, not to mention delicious meals and fun ice-breakers.



Participants of the Youth Theater Program 2007

One of the exercises that impacted me the most during the program was role-playing, in which participants assume a character and act out a story. Through this technique I, along with other participants, got to experience domestic/dating violence first-hand from various perspectives: from the victim to the abuser. This exercise allowed me to understand the issue more thoroughly. As a result, I feel that I can discuss, perform, and explain the topic of domestic/dating violence more effectively.

After the Youth Theater Program, the participants decided to take our roles within the program to the next level by creating a new community action team within New Visions—Youth Arts and Activism Community Action Team (YAACAT). Being a part of this team means having the freedom to use different approaches to raise awareness about domestic/dating violence to other youth like us. Such environment also provides us with opportunities to exercise leadership, facilitation, and planning skills. By joining YAACAT, I have expanded my knowledge about domestic/dating violence within the Asian community, and I am still learning!

The time and effort put into New Visions' Youth Theater Program and the YAA CAT have been well worth everyone's time. I have learned various new skills that will prove valuable later in life, learned about a rarely discussed topic, and had a good time while learning. I genuinely hope that more youth will join our efforts to prevent domestic/dating violence in our communities.

Event Name	What it is	Date & Location	Contact
Shantiwood: <i>Provoked</i>	A free showing of <i>Provoked</i> , a true story of a battered wife, Kiranjit, who fought back, first against her husband and then against the system	Sat. Sept. 20, 2008 2:30-5:30PM Location TBA	shantiproject@umich.edu 1.888.4Shanti
Sexual Assault and Teens – Impact, Education and Prevention	Free conference to provide an in-depth look at the ways in which sexual assault impacts a teenager's life	Sat. Sept. 20, 2008 9am-3pm Eastern Michigan University Student Center	Michelle DeFrancesco michelled@safehousecenter.org 734.973.0242 x290 www.safehousecenter.org
Telling Our Story: From Victim to Survivor	A Domestic Violence Candle-light Vigil	Wed. Oct. 1, 2008 6-8:30PM Wayne State University Student Center Bldg., Rm. 289	Pamela Jarido Pjarido53@yahoo.com 313.267.9552

Reflection: Youth Theater Program 2008

By Elsa George, New Visions' Community Action Team Facilitator

Working towards ending domestic violence does not just begin with the adults. Unfortunately, youth are also exposed to domestic violence as well. Since domestic violence is caused by social norms and gender restrictions that maintain women's lower status in the society, it is important to educate youth on the negative behaviors/beliefs/attitudes that contribute to such violence.

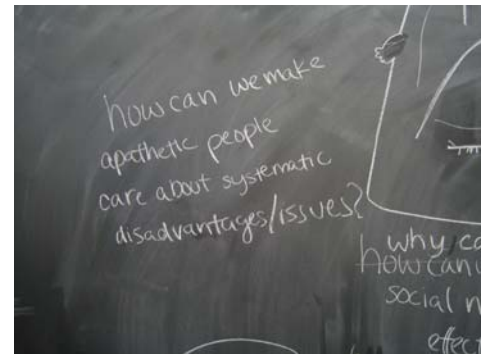
In August 2008, New Visions conducted the 2nd Youth Theater Program (YTP 2008), a series of training to develop additional youth leaders in dating/domestic violence. Specifically, the program aimed at guiding the youth in becoming more open, knowledgeable, and comfortable in talking about domestic/dating violence in order for them to not only raise awareness about the issue in their community but also help others to take action to end it. The program also provided the participants with the opportunity to apply theater to the knowledge that they gained from the sessions.

The participants are currently in the process of developing a script that addresses dating violence. The participants will perform the script by the end of the year for their parents, peers, and other community members.



What was special about the YTP 2008 was that it was facilitated by youth who participated in the Youth Theater Program last fall. These youth participants continued on to become New Visions' Youth Arts and Activism Community Action Team (YAA CAT) after they completed last year's program.

The YAA CAT members showed their level of understanding about domestic/dating violence throughout the program, encouraging and challenging the new participants to critically think about the issue. In addition, even though, they were new to the process of facilitation they became more comfortable each session.



As this was the first time I facilitated this program, it was encouraging to see youth interested in working to end domestic/dating violence and having a desire to make a difference. They had the aspiration to learn more about the topic and allow themselves to recognize their own preconceived notions regarding not only dating/domestic violence but also gender roles/expectations. It was an honor to see them grow throughout this process. What was most important was the fact the participants knew how to have fun as well.

New Visions is a community-university partnership whose mission is to inspire and support sustainable community action for ending violence against women in Asian communities of Southeast Michigan. Affiliated with the University of Michigan School of Social Work, we work with local Asian communities and domestic violence-related agencies to achieve one vision: "Asian women are safe, and Asian communities are free of violence."

Overall, I was very impressed with the facilitators and participants. Participating in the YTP 2008 was both beneficial and challenging for participants and myself. The participants had to allow themselves to be vulnerable and open-minded with each other. Seeing the youth show interest in being agents of change provided me with hope that domestic/dating violence CAN be stopped. Regardless of the stereotype that youth are apathetic when addressing social issues, these youth members are taking action and staying committed. I look forward to seeing the youth grow more as leaders in domestic/dating violence prevention.





The Shanti PROJECT

—Stronger Community. It Starts at Home.

The Shanti Project is a community-based project working on the prevention of domestic violence in the Gujarati community (a part of the Indian community). It is a sister project of New Visions.

A unique aspect of The Shanti Project is the myriad of activities it conducts. Not only does the project increase awareness through brochures, posters, public service announcements, and internet advertising, it also conducts monthly activities to reinforce the messages and promote action.

The project stresses the importance of individuals and community in preventing domestic violence and ultimately eliminating it. The messages that we advocate give concrete steps that you can take in your relationship and in your community to prevent domestic violence. Messages use the acronym ALSO and STOP, and are:

The Shanti Project
U of M School of Social Work
1080 S. University, Ann Arbor, MI 48109
www.shantiproject.org
1-888-4SHANTI, shantiproject@umich.edu

With my partner/spouse, I will:

- A**sk about expectations—wants, needs, changes.
- L**isten to thoughts, fears, and wishes.
- S**upport decisions and actions.
- O**wn the changes we make.

These simple steps are the small steps that we need to take to make our community safer and stronger! Join The Shanti Project and pledge to prevent domestic violence. Remember - "*Stronger Community, It Starts at Home!*" For more information visit – www.shantiproject.org

Upcoming Workshop:

Building a Strong Community: Take Action Against Domestic Violence

Wednesday, September 17, 2008

6PM—8:30PM

Plymouth Cultural Center (525 Farmer Street—Card Room, Plymouth, MI 48170)

Call/Email shantiproject@umich.edu or 1-888-4Shanti

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