



# Monthly Visions

## Reflection: Member Recognition Dinner 2007

Sun A Lee, Outreach & Engagement Community Action Team Member

On December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007, New Visions hosted their second annual Member Recognition Dinner, which honors the work their volunteer members do around preventing domestic violence in Asian communities.



This was also my last day as a Master of Social Work student at the University of Michigan. I had just finished my last exam and last class, and felt strange and exhausted. I felt emotional and overwhelmed by all the experiences at the School, and in Ann Arbor over the past three and half years. Among these experiences, it is almost impossible for me to recall my life here in Ann Arbor without mentioning New Visions, of which I've been a member for the past two years. My involvement with New Visions has been very important and meaningful to me.



The Member Recognition Dinner was interesting and filled with warmth. I was happy to see familiar faces, and reminisce about old times. This event was a great opportunity to learn about the activities of other Community Action Teams. I felt very proud to be one of the New Visions' members. I would like to express my gratefulness to all New Visions staff for hosting this event, which included a delicious catered dinner, a certificate ceremony, and a boisterous quiz bowl. And, I thank them for doing a wonderful job to end violence against women in Asian communities of Southeast Michigan.

I have always been interested and passionate about women's issues, particularly violence against women. As a woman, I feel it is my responsibility to help change society's attitudes and behaviors that contribute to violence against women. As a member of the Korean Committee, and now the Outreach and Engagement Community Action Team, I have helped organize a community-wide event, published an article about domestic violence in a local Korean newspaper, and participated in trainings. Amongst these activities, I am happy to have helped create a small gathering in the



Korean community, "A Cup of Tea in the Afternoon," where Korean women can freely talk about domestic violence and other topics.

I am very sad that it's time for me to leave New



Visions, as well as Michigan, for the next stage of my life. I believe the experience I had with New Visions will help me become a better activist to work for social change as well as a dedicated social worker.

Thank you, New Visions for the memorable experiences and learning!

**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."

## Reflection: Social Work Graduate Class Performance

Ted John, Arts & Activism Community Action Team Member



On November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007, the Arts and Activism Community Action Team (AACAT) performed a sketch entitled, “*A Night Out*”, for a graduate Social Work class (SW708, Special Issues in Interpersonal Violence) at the University of Michigan. “*A Night Out*” depicts a couple in a dating violence situation and how the survivor and her friends react to the violence that has occurred.

In order to prepare for this performance, we had many rehearsals at which we would run through lines and gradually move off the script. I enjoyed going to rehearsals because it was a supportive and collaborative environment. I knew that everyone was there with a common interest in acting and in creating awareness about domestic violence.

In the weeks leading up to the performance, the team members switched into high gear, and the sketch really started to come together.

The performance itself was great, especially the forum theater segment\*. Interestingly enough, I felt like I learned as much as, if not more than, those who were part of the audience. The comments the audience made about certain characters after they had “stepped into the character” gave me a fresh perspective on those characters.

For example, there is a character named Catherine in the sketch who is clumsy and somewhat of a follower. A gentleman from the audience chose to step into her character and played her the opposite. He demanded attention and made sure his thoughts were heard. Reflecting upon his performance, the audience member said he chose to be outspoken to



make the other characters pause and recognize the significance of the situation. So much so that this otherwise quiet and non-confrontational individual spoke up and confronted the situation head on.

I look forward to being a part of more performances, and learning more about the issue of domestic violence through this work and the audience members we meet along the way.

\*Forum Theater is when the audience is invited to the stage to replace a character and enact what he/she believes the moment calls for. The goal of this type of theater is to explore various solutions to the same problem.



### Holiday Giving

Financial support is always needed and welcomed in order to sustain our community efforts and fulfill our mission. New Visions is a non-profit organization under title 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. All contributions to New Visions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. For donations, please make checks or money-orders payable to the University of Michigan and mail to New Visions: Alliance to End Violence in Asian/Asian American Communities, UM School of Social Work, 1080 S. University, Mailbox 182, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1106.

Thank YOU for  
your time and  
support through-  
out this year to  
help end violence  
against women in  
Asian communi-  
ties.

Have a safe and  
warm  
holiday!



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## Op. Ed: In Response to Oct. 24th Column in *Kyocharo* about Domestic Violence

Sungwon Park, Outreach & Engagement Community Action Team Member

People often think of domestic violence as a private matter. It is NOT. Domestic violence, a pattern of abusive behaviors used by adults or adolescents against their intimate partner for power and control, is a serious health problem that can have severe consequences for the individual physically, psychologically, and emotionally. It is a social problem and a crime for which batterers need to be held accountable.

In the October 24th, 2007 issue of *Kyocharo*, a Korean newspaper in Michigan, an article was published on the consequences of domestic violence in the United States. Specifically, the article discussed that domestic violence is treated seriously in the United States. If police get involved, the batterer may be arrested. In addition, children can be removed from the home because of safety issues. The article concluded by stating that once police become involved, the situation becomes very complex. Even if the victim withdraws his/her charge against the partner, the criminal process may not be stopped. Overall, the article encouraged Koreans in a domestic violence situation **not** to seek help from the police.

Domestic violence occurs in all communities, the Korean community is not an exception. According to an assessment by New Visions conducted in 2004, of the 195 Koreans surveyed, 23% responded that they or someone they know have experienced domestic violence. When asked where individuals in the community seek help for domestic violence, 34% indicated friends, 26% religious organization, 22% family, 20% domestic violence programs, and 19% police. Most significantly, 17% of individuals do not seek help at all, which would mean that individuals endure the abuse alone.

In the United States, Korean individuals who are in abusive situations face many barriers in seeking help. Many individuals suffer in silence due to family honor, shame, lack of financial resources, fear, effects on children, and language difficulty. However, domestic violence can have serious consequences. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, approximately one third of women who are murdered are killed by their intimate partners. Considering the seriousness of violence, a local ethnic newspaper like *Kyocharo* should provide information on available services where individuals can seek help; it should encourage abused individuals to assess the situation and make the best decisions for themselves.

Korean individuals who are in abusive relationships already face many barriers. Victims should be given more choices—whether it be seeking help from a domestic violence service agency, police, or others—as to where they get the help they need. Although many Koreans still believe domestic issues should be solved within the family, domestic violence is a problem that not only involves individuals and families, but the entire society. Therefore, it must be addressed by the community rather than be concealed within the family.

**Monthly Visions** is a collaborative project between New Visions and authors. The views of the authors may or may not reflect the views of New Visions. We encourage submissions (poetry, artwork, articles, short stories, prose in English or your native language) to further the mission and philosophy of New Visions. Submitters will work with New Visions staff to ensure content is consistent with its philosophy and mission. For more information about the newsletter, please e-mail us at [monthlyvision@umich.edu](mailto:monthlyvision@umich.edu).

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