



Monthly Visions

Shanti Che?

By Nikita Patel, The Shanti Project Community Action Team (CAT) member



TSP CAT Members at Shanti Che?

On Sunday, June 3rd, the Shanti Project hosted its kick-off event entitled, *Shanti Che?* (Got Peace?). The Shanti Project (TSP), a sister project of New Visions, is working on a communications campaign to prevent domestic violence in the Gujarati community of Southeast Michigan. Gujaratis are people from Gujarat, a state in India, and are the largest and one of the most structured groups in the area. The kick-off event was held in order for the community to learn about the project and the campaign activities. The event was emceed by a local Indian radio personality named Narendra Sheth, and included live performances by Maya Dance Troupe and Yoni Ki Baat, both UM based groups, and Nartan Dance Academy. The performances addressed the themes of harmony, peace, and respect. The 60 attendees enjoyed a lunch catered by House of India, as well as a raffle with a variety of

prizes. All in all, *Shanti Che?* was a success, and the CAT is excited and ready for their next event! To learn more about TSP, visit www.shantiproject.org



Celebrate Father's Day: Give the Gift of Respect

Adapted from Founding Fathers website: www.founding-fathers.org

On Father's Day 2003, hundreds of men including Tom Brokaw, Russell Simmons, Joe Torre, and Ted Waitt made a historic public statement to call for an end to violence against women and children. This statement appeared as a full-page ad in the *New York Times*, and became known as Founding Fathers Declaration:

We call ourselves Founding Fathers because we intend for this crucial beginning to give way to a new kind of society—where decency and respect require no special day on the calendar, where boys are taught that violence does not equal strength and where men stand with courage, lead with conviction and speak with one voice to say, "No more."

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 achieve one vision: "Asian women are safe, and Asian communities are free of violence."

Since then, many men have joined Founding Fathers campaign, part of the Family Violence Prevention Fund's Campaign for Next Generation, to prevent violence against women and children. Each year, in honor of Father's Day, Founding Fathers celebrate the strength and courage of men who are actively involved in ending violence against women and children.

This Father's Day, honor your father, grandfather, husband, brother, or son with a gift in his name to the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF). For every dollar you donate, the Ford Foundation will match it dollar for dollar in support of the FVPF's violence prevention training, education, and awareness programs.

In recognition of your support, the name of a man of your choice will be published online at the Founding Fathers website (www.founding-fathers.org), and all gifts or pledges of \$500 and above (received by Tuesday, June 12th) will be acknowledged in a special full-page statement in the *New York Times* on Father's Day.

To learn more or to donate, visit www.founding-fathers.org.

Reflection: *A Life Interrupted*

By Beverly Brooks, New Visions volunteer

A Life Interrupted, based on a true story and produced by Lifetime TV, premiered on April 23rd. It is based on the story of Debbie Smith, a rape survivor, who lived in fear for six years, only to learn that DNA evidence from her rape kit matched a man already in prison for unrelated offenses that were committed shortly after her rape. Due to the backlog in DNA evidence test, she had to wait six years to see justice. Ms. Smith was appalled to find that hundreds of thousands of rape kits were left for years - unopened, unexamined - while the victims suffered and the criminals walked free—free to do it again.

Ms. Smith's courage helped to pass an anti-rape bill, the Debbie Smith Act, in 2004. The Debbie Smith Act provides funding for: speedy processing of DNA evidence kits; the collection and processing of DNA evidence; training sexual-assault forensic examiners; and, aids prosecutors and law enforcement in gathering and using DNA evidence.

After watching the movie, I found a message board on the Internet filled with messages from other rape survivors who were all deeply affected by the movie. Many described experiencing painful memories as they related their own experiences to Ms. Smith's, and many actually shared their own tragic stories. Many others, who didn't identify themselves as rape survivors, expressed empathy for survivors like Ms. Smith. It was difficult to read all the messages, yet it shows the great effect the movie is having on its viewers. I also felt encouraged by the stand Ms. Smith took, and the battle she waged on behalf of rape survivors.

A Life Interrupted is well worth watching. It is encouraging to see how one woman not only survives but fights back—and affects change on a greater level. Judging by the responses of many viewers, including myself, it is a very optimistic portrayal of not giving up, and fighting to right societal wrongs.

Lifetime TV has launched a campaign, *End Violence Against Women*, as one of their lifetime commitments. They have produced and featured various movies to raise awareness about the issue and encourage viewers to take action to end violence against women. Celebrities like Nicole Kidman, Martina McBride, and Christina Aguilera have joined in this effort. Ending violence against women does not require grand campaigns—it can start with YOU by talking to your friends, family members, and coworkers about the issue. Together, we can take action to challenge norms, traditions, and beliefs that contribute to its prevalence.

See Lifetime TV for more details, www.lifetimetv.com/endviolence/getthefacts/facts_debbie.php

Debbie Smith



Invitation: Join or Create a Small Gathering

The Outreach and Engagement CAT would like to invite YOU in creating a small gathering to talk about domestic violence, and other related issues, through film, books, and other mediums. The small gatherings will be a safe and open space for you to meet new people, and learn about issues such as domestic violence that are seldom discussed but important to address. These small gatherings can involve members of your own community, friends, colleagues, or family, as well as individuals from other Asian groups. For those interested in participating in a small gathering, or in creating your own group, please contact Eun Joo Lee for more information 734.615.2106 or eunjl@umich.edu



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Youth Theater Program Postponed

We would like to announce that our Youth Theater Program has been postponed until Fall 2007. We will keep you posted on our plans.

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. This publication is funded by the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, through Award Number US/CCU533485 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.