



Monthly Visions

Introducing Michigan Interagency Support for Asian/All Women (MISAW) Project

Over the past six years, New Visions has partnered with various local and state domestic violence programs. Although New Visions' primary focus is on prevention of domestic violence, one of our goals is to work with local/state domestic violence programs to strengthen their capacity to meet the needs of Asian survivors and families. Currently, in the state of Michigan, there are no/limited domestic violence programs for Asians and women with limited English proficiencies. Some programs rely on a Language Line, volunteers, and other resources on an as needed-basis; many have brochures in various Asian languages. However, access to services for Asian battered women is not just a language issue; it is also about having access to socio-culturally appropriate assistance.

In 2006, New Visions developed a model, *Michigan Interagency Support for Asian (All) Women* (MISAW), to provide the necessary assistance and support to Asian women through coordination of services among existing domestic violence programs. Recently, we have garnered support and partnership to pilot this model at two of the local domestic violence programs, Serenity Services (serving Detroit area) and HAVEN (serving Oakland county area). This pilot project of MISAW is being developed in collaboration with Serenity Services, HAVEN, New Visions, and MCADSV's (Michigan Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence) Building the Safety Net project.

The goal of the pilot Michigan Interagency Support for Asian/All Women (MISAW) Project is to work in collaboration with domestic violence programs in Southeast Michigan to create a system of care that can provide socio-culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate assistance to Asian & Pacific Islander (API) battered women. The MISAW project consists of three components: 1) organizational capacity building through training, technical assistance, and consultation; 2) resource coordination or sharing; and 3) provision of direct services for under-served population groups through or in consultation with multi-lingual roving advocates.

The MISAW project is not simply about providing services to API battered women. Rather, it is about increasing capacity to create organizational changes to ensure that the needs of API and ALL battered women are met. As such, we envision that through our efforts, there will no longer be a need for a special project like MISAW because all domestic violence programs would have the capacity to serve ALL women in socio-culturally and linguistically appropriate ways.

"Revolutionary Steps: Engaging Communities to End Violence Against Women"

New Visions participated in a symposium sponsored by the National Domestic Violence Resource Network (DVRN)* and Transformation Detroit** from May 13th thru 14th, 2008 in Detroit.

As reflected by its theme, "Revolutionary Steps: Engaging the Community to End Violence Against Women," the symposium focused on understanding the community context within which domestic violence occurs in order to provide and develop socio-culturally appropriate responses. The symposium was attended by representatives from local, state, and national domestic violence and related organizations.

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."

The symposium featured various presentations on exemplary programs around the country that provide services to diverse survivors of domestic violence and engage diverse communities to address domestic violence. It also included breakout sessions to learn from promising strategies to address domestic violence in diverse communities, and discuss and strategize ways to address cultural, social, and service needs of individuals and families.

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At the Symposium, New Visions' project director, Dr. Mieko Yoshihama, and Larmender Davis, executive director of Serenity Services (a domestic violence program in Detroit) gave a presentation on "*Michigan Interagency Support for All Women (MISAW): A Dream or Reality?*" (Please see above article for details about the MISAW project). The presentation helped raise awareness of the importance of acknowledging the social and cultural context of the communities the programs are serving, and finding ways to transform or strengthen the programs to provide socio-culturally relevant services to ALL women. (*cont'd next page*)



“Revolutionary Steps... “(Cont’d from Page 1)

In addition, a video, “*Telling Our Stories: The Cultural Context of Domestic Violence in Detroit*,” was premiered at the symposium. In March 2008, Eun Joo Lee, New Visions’ project coordinator, participated in a video production on responses to domestic violence in diverse communities of Detroit. The video featured the efforts of 6 programs in the metro-Detroit area: New Visions, ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services), LAVIDA (the Southwest Detroit Partnership to Prevent Intimate Violence Against Latina Women), and Unity Detroit (a collaboration of domestic violence programs (Serenity Services, YWCA Interim House, and Looking for My Sister) in Detroit to provide better services to victims of domestic violence). In the video, Eun Joo Lee shared the history of Asians in Michigan and provided an overview of the strategies New Visions use to prevent domestic violence in Asian communities of Southeast Michigan. The video provided an opportunity to highlight and learn from the efforts of various organizations in both providing services to and engaging diverse communities to address domestic violence.

The symposium served as a great source of inspiration and learning. For New Visions, it was an opportunity to share and celebrate our efforts throughout the years.

*DVRN is a “a network of five centers that provide resource information, training and technical assistance to Federal, State, local and Tribal agencies, domestic violence programs, local community- and faith-based organizations, and other entities and individuals who provide services to domestic violence victims.”

**Transformation Detroit is a partnership of human and social services in Detroit dedicated to “promoting safe, healthy and prosperous families and communities.”

Youth Theater Program 2008 (Coming in Aug! Inquire w/ eunj@umich.edu)

Member Spotlight: Kyung Sook Jang, Outreach & Engagement Community Action Team Member



Kyung Sook Jang has been an active member of New Visions’ Outreach & Engagement Community Action Team (CAT) since June 2007. Kyung Sook’s interest in working with New Visions grew when she attended New Visions’ community-wide event, “Creating New Visions,” in May 2005. At the event, she was inspired by Dr. Jin Sook Hong’s courageous story as a survivor of domestic violence. Having lived in the Korean community in Ann Arbor for the past six years and learning that many Korean women in the community were in domestic violence situations, Kyung Sook wanted to find opportunities to constructively address the issue of domestic violence. And she did.

As a member of the OE CAT, Kyung Sook has been actively involved in planning and organizing, *A Cup of Tea in the Afternoon*, a small community-based gathering where 4-8 Korean women meet to discuss about domestic violence and related issues on a regular basis. Kyung Sook shares, “I was most proud of the day that we had the first gathering in the community. We had planned for so long and it was finally happening! Now, I am so happy to see how the gathering has grown. The gatherings have expanded not just in the number of participants but we have really helped participants to recognize domestic violence as an issue that they can do something about. Change is possible!”

When asked about what changes she saw in herself through her work with New Visions, Kyung Sook replied, “I realized that throughout my 16 years of marriage, I tolerated everything without giving voice to my rights within the family. Now, I know that I should not be silent and should work to regain my rights. And this, I know, will also help in raising my daughters as strong and healthy women.” She adds that working with the members of the OE CAT has been a joy and an inspiration.

This month, Kyung Sook is relocating to Korea, where she plans to pursue a Master’s degree in social work. She says, “I would like to continue to work in an open environment, where I can affect change. I would also like to encourage people, in whatever position they are in, to begin or continue to dialogue about domestic violence, human rights, and other related issues with others. Such dialogue can create change that may have seemed impossible.”

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