



Monthly Visions



Honoring Those Affected By Domestic Violence

By Sheila Krishnan, The Shanti Project Community Action Team Member



The Shanti Project Community Action Team members Sheila Krishnan, Jagdish Pandya and staff member Elsa George attended the fourth annual Domestic Violence Vigil at Wayne State University in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month on Oct. 1, 2008. Serenity Services, a domestic violence services agency in Detroit, hosted the vigil, and several local Detroit organizations had tables with information at the event including New Visions and The Shanti Project.

Judge Ruth Carter of the 36th District Court of Wayne County spoke of her new role in managing the domestic violence docket for the court and the importance of the creation of this position, specifically when prosecuting repeat offenders. Her role is important because she recognizes and remembers repeat offenders. Having that continuity in the position increases the effectiveness in prosecuting perpetrators. Additionally, personnel from the Detroit police department forensics unit relayed statistics of domestic violence deaths in the city and discussed their work in identifying sexual assault and domestic abuse.

The most memorable part of the event was the stories shared by several domestic violence survivors. It served as a reminder of the true focus/goal/mission of our work to prevent domestic violence. The survivor portion of the evening began with a spoken word presentation describing the death of a woman's sister as a result of an abusive relationship. Following this, a handful of survivors shared their personal stories of mental and emotional abuse, in addition to physical abuse. One of the most emotional stories of the evening was told by a young woman who shared a childhood/youth perspective of witnessing domestic violence and the impact it has had on her life.

Perusing the information on different tables and informally speaking with representatives allowed the attendees to get a sense of the diversity of the agencies that serve specific demographics throughout the greater-Detroit area. The Latino organization, "La Vida," began its presentation with the speaker asking the question, "Me puedes ayudarme?" meaning, "Can you help me?" in Spanish.

The audience, mostly non-Spanish speakers, could not understand her

and therefore failed to realize she was asking for help. The speech highlighted the issue of language as a barrier for women who are in need of services but because they do not speak English, have no access to them.

The event concluded with a candle-lighting ceremony in honor of those who have been affected by domestic violence. Their names were read in their honor as well. The vigil adjourned with everyone—agencies and people in attendance alike—enthusiastic and committed to the issue of domestic violence. Many people mentioned how the event has grown over the past four years and that they are looking forward to further collaboration and awareness opportunities.

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."

Gender Violence and Human Rights: 16 Days of Activism in 2008

By Michael Bertenthal, Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program Intern

The Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) has announced that this year's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This year's event, called "Human Rights for Women <—> Human Rights for All," runs from November 25 until December 10. These dates symbolically link the first day, the International Day Against Violence Against Women, with the final day of the event, International Human Rights Day.

The "16 Days" also include November 29, International Women Human Rights Defenders Day and December 1, World AIDS Day.

Beginning in 1991 with a mission of raising awareness about gender-based violence, the 16 Days of Activism attempts to join international and local work on this significant human rights issue. Since its inception, over 2000 organizations in 154 countries have participated.

The roots of the event date back to 1981, when a group of Latin American women, calling themselves the "feminist encuentros" met at a conference to discuss the state of the women's movement in Latin America. They denounced all forms of gender violence including domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, and state-initiated violence.

The Encuentros championed the cause of the Maribal sisters who were murdered by the dictator of the Dominican Republic in 1960 for their activism for democracy and justice. November 25, the opening day of the "16 Days," marks the anniversary of their death, which ultimately stirred a movement against the brutal dictatorship.

To get involved, you can increase your and others' awareness on gender violence, volunteer with an organization that works to prevent gender violence, or advocate for continued support of universal human rights for women.



In addition to participating in New Visions' programs, there are some upcoming events in the local community dealing with domestic violence and human rights.

On November 7 and 8, the National Conference on Health Issues in the Arab American Community will occur in Dearborn. To register, contact Shorouq Shenaq at (313) 216-2240 or sshebaw@accesscommunity.org.

Visit: <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html> for more information on the international 16 Days campaign.

Our Voices, Our Actions: Be the Change

Friday, December 5, 2008

A theatre performance by New Visions' Arts & Activism Community Action Team

and

A vocal performance by Dr. Jin Sook Hong

Time: 7:30 - 9:30 (reception follows)

Location: Stamps Auditorium, University of Michigan

SPOTLIGHT

Hsun-Ta Hsu, Arts & Activism Community Action Team

Hsun-Ta Hsu, a Master of Social Work (MSW) student at the University of Michigan, has been an active member of New Visions' Arts and Activism Community Action Team (AA CAT) since January 2008. Hsun-Ta first heard of the organization through a fellow classmate, Miku Kawakami, who was completing her internship at New Visions. His interest in joining New Visions increased when he learned that the AA CAT used theater for social change. At this time, Hsun-Ta had encountered clients who experienced domestic violence. Thus, he felt AA CAT was a way to show the community what his clients experienced in abusive relationships and explore possible approaches to prevent it from happening in the first place.



As a member of AA CAT, Hsun-Ta has performed the script, "Step-Up," at the Plymouth Gurdwara. On the day of the theater-based workshop, Hsun-Ta came to the workshop with an attitude that both the men and women would not be open to expressing their views on domestic violence. However, the opposite occurred. He was encouraged by the responsiveness of the audience members. Both the men and women expressed their view that domestic violence was wrong. Hsun-Ta felt that the aspect of Forum Theater, which allows audience members to step into a scene and assume a character, was a necessity because it created the type of dialogue that is needed to promote thoughts and actions. It also allowed the community to be aware that domestic violence is not a family issue but an issue that the community can address.

Prior to starting the MSW program and joining the AA CAT, Hsun-Ta received a social work degree in Taiwan. As a social worker, he worked with the Taiwanese army where he provided consultation for soldiers. He also worked at a youth center in Taiwan where he provided referrals (such as employment, education, etc) to youth who had dropped out of school.

Currently, Hsun-Ta is completing his MSW degree in Social Policy and Evaluation, focusing on children and youth in families and society. He also has an internship at the Detroit Initiative. With the Detroit Initiative, Hsun-Ta is involved with the Body and Mind program. The Body and Mind program has workshops for children ages 5-9, which addresses both safety and hygiene. During his spare time, Hsun-Ta enjoys playing softball, watching movies, and constructing architectural models with legos.

When asked about his future goals, Hsun-Ta expressed his anticipation in graduating by this December. He plans to pursue his doctorate and hopes to work in Taiwan as a policy advocate for children and youth. As an advocate, Hsun-Ta states, "Domestic violence not only does damage to the partner but also to the children."

Reflection
Reflection

Youth Theater Program 2008

By Helen Nguyen-Tran, Youth Theater Program 2008 participant

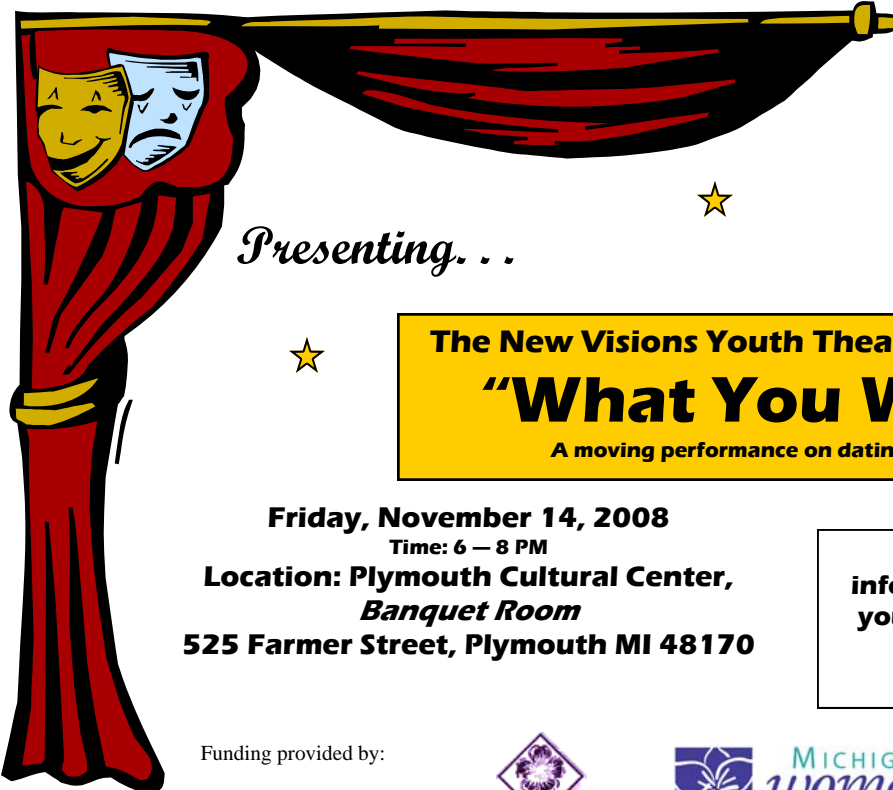
When I was first introduced to New Visions, I didn't know what to expect. Now, I only have one word to describe it: eye-opening.

Being a participant of New Visions' Youth Theater Program, I have learned how to be a considerate and active listener in group discussions containing serious content. I also learned how to be an effective facilitator. In addition, the content of the program about dating/domestic violence was very informative and I have expanded my knowledge about it. One very important thing I learned from this Program is that the obvious can be hidden: violence can be happening behind closed doors. I now know that dating/domestic violence can happen *anywhere at anytime*. I also know what measures to take if these situations ever occurred to me or anyone else.

Another important thing that I learned is that silence is sometimes very necessary. Before participating in this Program, I always felt the need to say something to avoid the "tension" that comes with silence. However, after this Program, I realized that silence is very important, especially when facilitating. The wordings of the questions are also very critical in order to facilitate a meaningful discussion.

Through the Program,, I have also learned the use of theater as a tool for social change. I learned the different types of theater and acting such as improvization, importance of facial expressions, and others. I have always had an interest in exploring this area but didn't have the chance. Thus, being a part of this Program was a very big achievement for me. I think what was also great was that the group worked very well together, and learned a lot from each other.

I learned all of these in a span of 6 meetings and I would have to name this one of the best experiences in my life!



Presenting...

The New Visions Youth Theatre Program in

"What You Want"

A moving performance on dating violence

Friday, November 14, 2008

Time: 6 – 8 PM

**Location: Plymouth Cultural Center,
Banquet Room**

525 Farmer Street, Plymouth MI 48170

**For more
information or to tell us
you're coming, contact
734-277-6164 or
elsag@umich.edu**

Funding provided by:



**MICHIGAN
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FOUNDATION**

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

By Sohani Patel, Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program Intern

October is a month known for celebrations such as Halloween. However, few people are aware of the fact that October represents causes from Breast Cancer Awareness Month to Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Both are equally prevalent issues in our society, but fewer people partake in activities related to domestic violence.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month initially began in 1981 as the Day of Unity as an attempt to unite advocates across the country that were fighting to end violence against women and children. The Day of Unity quickly became a *week* filled with various activities, and soon enough became a *month* of awareness in 1987. All around the country powerful and creative events are organized, aiming to educate the public about the prevalence of domestic violence and its toll on society. At these events and activities people can learn about how to utilize different resources and services, such as shelters and organizations that help both victims and advocates, in relation to domestic violence.

Purple is the recognized color for domestic violence awareness. The color purple represents the courage, survival, honor and dedication to ending domestic violence. Help show your support by wearing a purple ribbon throughout the month of October and beyond. Distribute purple ribbons to clergy, police chiefs, judges, librarians, emergency room personnel, and others in your community.

We ask that members of our community speak out against these senseless crimes. There are many ways that you can help us raise our voices collectively to make an impact for change:

- Talk about the issue.
- Schedule a gathering of friends or colleagues and simply discuss the issues and offer resources.
- Volunteer with organizations working on these issues such as New Visions.
- Host a fundraiser for a domestic violence program.

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