



# Monthly Visions



## *A Doctors Appointment Debut*

Author: Elsa George, Arts & Activism CAT Member

As a graduate student in the School of Social Work, I rarely have time to volunteer. A few months ago, Neel Pandya and Eun Joo Lee presented on New Visions in my Multicultural and Multilingual Community Organizing course (COMORG 657). Their presentation brought two of my passions together - social work and theatre. I never thought these two could be interrelated. The idea of using Forum Theatre as a tool for community organizing was new to me.

After their presentation, I knew that this was an organization I wanted to become involved in. Soon after joining their mailing list, I received an email about auditions for a new sketch entitled, *A Doctors Appointment*. After I auditioned, I was notified that I had been chosen to play the role of Lily - a high-powered advertising consultant, who is in a domestic violence situation with her long-time partner.

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, the team performed the sketch in front of over 50 medical school students at the University of Michigan in West Lecture Hall. The sketch addresses the issue of domestic violence and how it is handled in the health-care field. The story follows Lily, as well as Dan, a third year medical student who discovers Lily's situation and struggles to bring it to light. The story is further complicated by the fact that Lily's long-time partner is a doctor and Dan's superior.

The performance involved the use of interactive theater, in which audience members have opportunities to ask questions to actors while they stay in character. During the interactive session, students asked probing questions and made relevant comments. In addition, they suggested types of strategies which could be implemented in order for Lily to get the proper services.

In order to develop my character, and her backstory, I had to immerse myself into the mentality of a woman in a domestic violence situation. Although it was challenging to portray her, I was pleased to see that many students were concerned with properly addressing domestic violence amongst patients. The questions they asked each character showed that they were pondering over the issue. For example, one audience member asked Lily, "Do you feel being a part of the API community affects your response to this?"

Working with the AACAT has been a fun and exciting experience for me. The team welcomed me with open arms and I felt both comfortable and accepted. They provided me with constructive criticism and gave me encouragement. I hope to continue my involvement with the team in the future.

**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."

## Member Spotlight: Mi Dong

Mi Dong is an active member of the Organizational Accountability Community Action Team, and is celebrating her 3<sup>rd</sup> year as a volunteer for New Visions. Mrs. Dong first joined New Visions to increase and encourage volunteerism amongst the Pfizer Asian Network (PAN) members. She served as the president of PAN when it was founded and worked as an advisor for the group for many years. When she was leading the community outreach committee three years ago, she wanted PAN to not only support Asian community organizations financially, but be involved on the ground for a good cause. Since joining, Mrs. Dong has supported New Visions in many ways such as obtaining funding from Pfizer to support the October



2004 kick-off event.

For the past 25 years, Mrs. Dong has been with Pfizer. Currently, she serves as the Director of Intellectual Property Strategy Management Group, leading lifecycle management and strategy.

In addition to working at Pfizer and with New Visions, she is currently serving as the President of the Council of Asian Pacific Americans (CAPA) in Michigan, an organization aimed at uniting Asian Pacific Americans and the community at large through culture, education, and community service. As part of her role, Mrs. Dong wishes to work as a mediator and a resource by identifying issues and challenges faced by Asian Pacific Americans and assisting in solving the issues. Mrs. Dong hopes to enhance education and community service components of CAPA by finding ways to support and be engaged in various Asian communities.

When asked about what has changed through her involvement with New Visions, Mrs. Dong states that her passion to educate and raise awareness about domestic violence in Asian communities has grown. In addition, she is able to recognize certain aspects of Asian traditions and customs that contribute to domestic violence. Regarding New Visions, Mrs. Dong says, "I am impressed by how people, especially young people, come together for a common goal and work tirelessly and passionately to talk about a sensitive issue as domestic violence, and find solutions to end it." She hopes to continue her community involvement with the same passion and commitment.

## Untold Story: Stalking and the Virginia Tech Incident

Author: Eun Joo Lee, Project Coordinator



Over the past few weeks, we have heard about the tragedy at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, better known as Virginia Tech, that occurred on April 16, 2007. Seung-hui Cho, the gunman and also a senior at the University, killed 32 people, wounded at least 24 people, and subsequently took his own life. This incident is deemed the worst shooting rampage in the history of the United States.

Although there are still more questions to be answered about the violence that he perpetrated that day, we have learned that Mr. Cho stalked at least two female students in 2005. He sent them email/text messages and showed up in person at their dorms. The two women did not press charges against him, but campus police were notified in both instances.

In the United States, 1 in 12 women and 1 in 45 men will be stalked in their lifetime (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Stalking, "a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear" ([www.ncvc.org/src](http://www.ncvc.org/src)), is a crime in the United States. However, it is difficult to prosecute. Stalking can be difficult to identify at first; the stalker may send multiple emails/text messages and call the victim constantly. Stalking may escalate to the point where the victim may feel threatened and in danger for his/her life.

While the massacre at Virginia Tech brings attention to the prevalence of violence in our society, we should also pause to recognize the high prevalence of violence against women—stalking—which occurred.

The National Center for Victims of Crime, Stalking Resource Center. See [www.ncvc.org/src](http://www.ncvc.org/src).

Tjaden, P. & Thoennes N. (2000). Full report of findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. Washington (DC): Department of Justice (US). Available from: URL: [www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles1/nij/183781.txt](http://www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles1/nij/183781.txt).

## Youth Theater Program 2007

**When:** June 20-29, 10-5pm daily (excluding weekends), free

**Where:** Philippine American Community Center of Michigan

For more information, please contact Neel Pandya, 734.615.2123 or email [nvytp2007@umich.edu](mailto:nvytp2007@umich.edu)

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