



New York Asian Women's Center E-Newsletter – April 2010

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1. The Mei Hua Society Raises \$12,000 for NYAWC at its New Year Banquet

On February 17, 2010, Mei Hua Society ushered in the year of the Tiger with its annual Chinese New Year dinner gala. NYAWC was the proud beneficiary of the event for the second year in a row. The gala—featuring a ten course traditional Chinese banquet—was organized at the Golden Unicorn Restaurant, and was attended by 130 people. Through the backing of the generous guests, the Mei Hua Society raised \$12,000 for NYAWC. On behalf of NYAWC, Executive Director



NYAWC Executive Director Larry Lee and Board Chair Jessica Lee with Mei Hua Society Benefit Committee Co-Chairs Gloria Chin Besthoff, Marylin Chou, and Jannette Lau, on left, and Marie Lee, on right, at the Mei Hua Society gala

Larry Lee thanked the attendees and the Mei Hua Society. He said, "Mei Hua Society's concern for and assistance to domestic violence survivors and their children is very heartening. The dinner helped NYAWC raise friends, awareness and much needed funding. We are very appreciative." Funds generated this year will be used to renovate community offices in Queens and Brooklyn that will offer counseling, advocacy and other related services to domestic violence survivors. At a time when a tough economy has severely impacted funding, the Mei Hua Society's support will help NYAWC continue to provide comprehensive services to battered women and their children.

2. Hitting Home Trains Child Welfare Case Workers

For the last 28 years, NYAWC has continuously strived to improve its services to New York's growing Asian population. As a part of this effort, it has partnered with many service providers by establishing programs such as Hitting Home. Through Hitting Home, NYAWC collaborates with child welfare agencies that serve Asian American families. NYAWC offered a three part training series on February 5th, 2010, which was attended by 14 case workers from the Chinese American Planning Council and Chinatown YMCA. The Hitting Home project was designed to sensitize child welfare case workers to the dynamics of domestic violence in the Asian community.

The first training covered current statistics and the unique cultural aspects that make Asian domestic violence cases different from those of non-Asians. The training also helped child welfare professionals understand the ways in which Asian children may react differently to violence at home. The third training was used to discuss high-risk factors for domestic violence such as substance abuse and other addictive behaviors. The training was a success with the participants, who said that a cultural context will definitely help them to improve services to members of New York City's Asian community.

3. Drawing & Truth: Guest Speakers Influence NYAWC's Teens

DAT (Drawing & Truth) is going strong its second year with an exciting series of events for NYAWC teens. The DAT program enables adolescents affected by domestic violence to explore themselves through digital art and therapeutic activities. On December 5th, 2009, DAT held its first Writing Workshop, with guest instructors Corinne Manabat, a passionate spoken-word artist and documentary filmmaker, and Davina Wan, an inspiring poet, youth gang specialist, and former NYAWC volunteer. Combining unique perspectives and love for expression, they used storytelling, image-association, and poetry-building to encourage exploration. Responses to these exercises were thought-provoking and surprising. Shown a stark image of a homeless man sleeping in the street, a quiet student wrote furiously in her notebook; the class clown pondered deeply on the circumstances that led this man to become homeless. These responses were recognized as small but considerable steps towards recovery and growth.

Corinne returned to the program on February 27th, 2010 to speak as a documentary filmmaker for Career Day. Joining her were Diana Lui, who shared thoughts on being an architect; Gerald Kong, on music production and the industry; Kevin Chan, on his journey from dancing in college to investment managing; and Mitchel Wu, on Asian American Studies and Project Collegebound. Students chatted excitedly about possible careers long after the event concluded.



Diana Lui enlightens students by sharing why she loves being an architect

Events like these help expose DAT students to positive role models, while adding strength to the foundation of their futures. NYAWC thanks the guest speakers and instructors for taking such an enthusiastic part in their lives.

4. New Board Member: Narges M. Kakalia



NYAWC is delighted to announce the arrival of its newest board member, Narges M. Kakalia. Ms. Kakalia joined NYAWC's Board of Directors in February 2010. She is a Litigation Associate at Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris Glovsky & Popeo, PC. Ms. Kakalia comes to NYAWC with 10 years of experience assisting survivors of domestic violence. As part of her pro bono work, she represented abused women to obtain orders of protection and immigration benefits. Prior to her current position, Ms. Kakalia was Program Assistant & Legal Intern at Sanctuary For Families, Center For Battered Women's Legal Services.

"I am excited to be a part of such a terrific organization with deep roots in our communities," said Ms. Kakalia. "I am looking forward to working with the larger NYAWC community to strengthen the organization."

5. Volunteer Council Established

NYAWC recently established a Volunteer Council comprised of volunteers and representatives from Asian American affinity groups. The Council will support the organization's mission and work by strengthening and expanding NYAWC's volunteer base, and by making volunteering a more rewarding and fun experience for volunteers.

The Volunteer Council will operate under a Steering Committee, led by Sonia Chawla Jhawar and Kirthana Sunder. Those interested in joining the Volunteer Council can e-mail NYAWC's Volunteer Coordinator at xzhen@nyawc.org.

6. NYAWC Receives over \$5,000 from Three Fundraisers

In an effort to end violence against women and girls, the V-Day Campaign's annual February benefit events supported NYAWC's work. As a part of the V-Day Campaign, Hunter College's V-Day Team put on performances of *The Vagina Monologues* and CABARET: "If my Vagina Could Talk...", which raised over \$1,860 for NYAWC. The agency was also selected by the Fourth Universalist Society as the recipient of its fundraiser. Proceeds from the Society's performance of *The Vagina Monologues* totaled around \$2,000 for NYAWC.

In March, Brooklyn Law School's Asian Pacific American Law Students (APALSA) contributed \$1,400 from their fundraiser. Bon Chon donated chicken wings for the well-attended eating contest. First, second, and third place winners received Tuition Certificates donated by bar exam prep company BarBri. Additionally, 2 VIP Box Seat tickets to see the Knicks were sold as a raffle.

NYAWC thanks all of the supporters of the three fundraisers.



Contestants at the APALSA eating contest

How can you help?

Volunteer! NYAWC's volunteers find fulfillment and enjoyment by enriching the lives of women and children.

Donate! Your tax-deductible donation will help to provide emergency shelter, counseling, advocacy, and other crucial services to battered women and their children.

For more information on how you can get involved, visit <http://www.nyawc.org>, or contact xzhen@nyawc.org to volunteer your services or fmui@nyawc.org to make a donation.