



New York Asian Women's Center E-Newsletter – December 2009

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1. Peace House Opens

The New York Asian Women's Center (NYAWC) is excited to announce the opening of its newest emergency residence, Peace House. Peace opened for operations on October 3, 2009, and is licensed to house up to 20 survivors of domestic violence. It replaces Phoenix House, a 15-bed shelter that closed the day Peace opened.



The Chinese and Japanese character for "peace" is a woman with a roof over her head (安). From this concept came the name for Peace House. A substantial, modern facility, Peace is set in landscaped grounds and has 20 bedrooms, a dining room, a group counseling room, a spacious childcare room, a client computer lab, and various other offices.

On October 30, NYAWC held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening. NYAWC supporters NYS Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senator Daniel Squadron attended the event, along with many other public officials and representatives from various agencies serving domestic violence and human trafficking survivors. At the event, NYAWC honored former Board Chair and current Advisory Board Chair Kyung Yoon and former Executive Director Tuhina De O'Connor with plaques commemorating their contributions to getting Peace House open.

2. 27th Anniversary Benefit and Phoenix Awards

On Thursday, October 1, NYAWC celebrated its 27th year of service with a reception and awards ceremony at the Broad Street Ballroom. Over 150 people attended the *27th Anniversary Benefit & Phoenix Awards: A Time for Peace*, an event that raised nearly \$60,000 through sponsorships, ticket

sales, a silent auction, and a raffle. Proceeds from this event will go toward NYAWC's mission of protecting and supporting survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking.



Andrew Prozes, CEO of LexisNexis Group, was honored with the 2009 Phoenix Award for his leadership and advocacy on behalf of victims of human trafficking. LexisNexis, under Mr. Prozes's guidance, offers financial, legal, and technical support to organizations working to eradicate human trafficking. It also promotes human rights through its work at the LexisNexis Rule of Law Resource Center.

"We named the event *A Time for Peace* both to commemorate the opening of Peace House, our new shelter space, and also to celebrate our commitment to peace," said Benefit Chair Audrey S. Lee. "It has been a turbulent year, full of economic hardships and marred by so much violence. So on the 27th anniversary, we wanted to focus instead on the good work NYAWC does, on the hope it gives to clients—and the hope it gives to us."

Guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres and cocktails, and performances by Ms. Lee, Broadway actress Hazel Anne Raymundo, and musician Chris Milletari. Liz Cho, co-anchor of WABC Eyewitness News, and

David Henry Hwang, a celebrated playwright and screenwriter, served as masters of ceremonies. The event encouraged guests, staff members, and volunteers to meet and interact, fostering a sense of community among attendees. "It wasn't just about raising funds. It was also an opportunity to thank supporters, and a chance for all of us to celebrate our shared values and to endorse a message of peace," said Ms. Lee.

For NYAWC, the anniversary benefit was an auspicious start to another year of service. In spite of the recession, donations from sponsors and proceeds from the silent auction exceeded those from previous years, a testament to the importance of the organization's work and to the generosity of its supporters. In addition, Joshua Goldfein, who won the raffle's grand prize of \$715, generously donated his winnings back to the organization.

NYAWC extends its heartfelt thanks to the supporters of the event, especially: The Grace and Mercy Foundation; the CBS Corporation; Avon Products, Inc.; Kirkland & Ellis LLP/Jay Ptashek & Karen Elizaga; LexisNexis Group; the Estee Lauder Companies, Inc.; Active International; Audrey S. Lee; Julian Liao & Clara Chae; Linda Lew Woo; Starside Drugs; WAC Lighting; and WABC-TV. The organization also thanks its board of directors, the benefit committee, the event coordinator, and the staff members and 31 volunteers whose tireless efforts made the 27th *Anniversary Benefit and Phoenix Awards* a reality.

See pictures of the event at <http://www.nyawc.org/events/past.html#Gala2009>.

3. NYAWC Launches *Safety First*

NYAWC has received a two-year \$300,000 federal grant from the Office on Violence Against Women to start a first-of-its-kind yet replicable program, *Safety First*. NYAWC is teaming up with Lutheran Medical Center (LMC) and Lutheran Family Health Centers (LFHC) to promote safety among Asian American women through outreach and additional services at health care facilities.

As the East Coast's first organization to address domestic violence issues in Asian communities, NYAWC is all too aware of linguistic and cultural barriers barring Asian American domestic violence

survivors from seeking help. *Safety First* attempts to remove these barriers in health care facilities. First, it offers a domestic violence cultural outreach training curriculum for LMC and LFHC staff. Second, it provides training sessions for Lutheran staff referring Asian American domestic violence victims and post-referral feedback. In effect, it arms the Lutheran staff with a deeper understanding of domestic violence in the Asian American community, as well as a better means of identifying Asian American survivors. Further, *Safety First* provides culturally and linguistically appropriate onsite services to domestic violence victims identified by Lutheran staff, referrals to NYAWC emergency shelters and services, and referrals to other service providers. Finally, *Safety First* spreads the wealth by sharing its best practices with other agencies.

4. Upcoming Event

The Mei Hua Society Chinese New Year Banquet
to Benefit New York Asian Women's Center

Wednesday, February 17, 2010, 6:00pm
The Golden Unicorn Restaurant
18 East Broadway (between Catherine St. & Market St.), NYC
Tickets: \$150; \$125 if ordered by January 31, 2010
Silent Auction, Boutique and Raffle
Ten Course Traditional Chinese Banquet

Please join the Mei Hua Society and New York Asian Women's Center for a festive evening and a delicious ten course traditional Chinese banquet as we usher in the Year of the Tiger. Proceeds from this event will benefit the New York Asian Women's Center. Funds raised at this banquet will support much-needed repairs and renovations in NYAWC's two emergency residences, which provide a safe haven for over 70 survivors of domestic violence and their 130 children every year.

Seating is limited, so reserve early!

Purchase tickets online at <http://www.nycharities.org/events/EventLevels.aspx?ETID=906>

For more information, visit <http://www.nyawc.org/events/upcoming.html> or contact Florence Mui, Development Manager at 212-732-0054, ext 105 or fmui@nyawc.org.

5. *Home Court Advantage* Protects Children of Domestic Violence Survivors

In the war against domestic violence, NYAWC has the home court advantage in one of its most recent initiatives, *Home Court Advantage*. The project protects children who are clients of NYAWC from the trauma of family separation and divorce resulting from domestic violence. *Home Court Advantage* teaches these children coping mechanisms and improves the quality of attorney representation and NYAWC counseling they receive.

Home Court Advantage is a collaboration between NYAWC and the Children's Law Center. The project helps the children understand the role of their attorneys and teaches their attorneys about Asian American cultural norms that impact the child's communication patterns. Thus, it strengthens the attorney-client relationship, allowing for stronger representation and protection. In addition, the project trains NYAWC counselors to more fully understand how intimate partner violence affects children and to know the laws that govern and protect them. Finally, the project helps domestic violence survivors find the words to talk with their children. Indeed, *Home Court*

Advantage has attracted recruits, one of which is the Avon Foundation for Women, who recently awarded a \$50,000 one year grant to NYAWC for the project.

6. Thanksgiving Baskets for Shelter Clients

NYAWC would like to give a heartfelt thank you to the Calvary Baptist Church in Manhattan for its generous donation of Thanksgiving baskets to our clientele and staff. On November 21, members of the Calvary Baptist Church delivered Thanksgiving baskets to both NYAWC shelters just in time for the holidays. Each basket included a Thanksgiving meal donated and contributed by church members, including chicken, stuffing, vegetables, and pie. This is the third year in a row that Calvary Baptist Church has generously donated the Thanksgiving baskets.



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.