



## October 2009 E-Newsletter

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### **1. NYAWC Receives Three New Grants**

Wonderful news! The New York Asian Women's Center has received a two-year, \$300,000 federal grant to help Lutheran Medical Center better identify and serve Asian women survivors of domestic violence. NYAWC has also received \$50,000 from the Avon Foundation to help its children's lawyers learn to be more culturally conscious. The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies has also provided a generous \$20,000 grant, which will enable NYAWC to hire a part-time South Asian-language-speaking counselor for children. These grants will provide invaluable benefits to NYAWC's clients. More information on these projects, and these generous grant providers, will appear in upcoming issues of NYAWC's e-Newsletter!

### **2. NYAWC Participates on Human Trafficking Panel**

On Thursday, September 24, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence hosted an expert panel on human trafficking, with special emphasis on the impact of human trafficking on New York City. Human trafficking victims are not only subject to degrading and slave-like conditions, but they are also often overlooked by the institutions meant to protect them. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 enables the federal government to issue T-visas to victims of trafficking, but in practice few such visas are issued. Of the estimated 17,000 people trafficked into the United States each year, the number trafficked from Asia is unknown due to underreporting.

Participating on the panel was Haemy Lee, manager of Project Free, NYAWC's human trafficking special initiative. Ms. Lee spoke about the impact of trafficking on New York's Asian community. Victims of this crime face multiple threats, including abuse by traffickers and deportation by immigration officials. Many survivors experience language and cultural barriers, and are unaware of the rights they retain regardless of their immigration status. They may also fear for the safety of their families in their home countries. Human trafficking takes many forms, including prostitution and servile marriage, crimes that pose unique challenges to both victims and the legal system.

Ms. Lee also discussed services available for trafficking survivors, including Project Free, which provides culturally sensitive services, advocacy, and residential services to victims of human trafficking in New York City.

### **3. Peace House Community Dinner raises \$30,000**

On Thursday, August 27, NYAWC hosted a community dinner at the Sheraton LaGuardia East Hotel in Flushing, Queens to benefit Peace House, the NYAWC's newest emergency residence. Over 150 members of the Queens community attended to support NYAWC's work in this area.

Flushing is both a vibrant, diverse community and a major hub of human trafficking. Each year, thousands of Queens residents call NYAWC's 24/7 hotline for victims of domestic abuse and trafficking. The dinner celebrated the heritage of Queens' Asian immigrant community while also raising awareness of the cultural and language barriers facing



immigrant victims of abuse. The evening featured traditional music and dance performances, and community leaders spoke about the importance of instituting protections for immigrant victims. The evening also featured a discussion on Asian poverty with My9 News reporter Ti-Hua Chang and Howard Shih from the Asian American Federation. WNBC news anchor DeMarco Morgan served as the evening's master of ceremony. The evening concluded with a raffle and silent auction.

The event raised \$30,000. NYAWC is very grateful to all attendees, and gives special thanks to the dinner's sponsors: WAC Lighting, Starside Drugs and Peter Koo, Stevenson Printing, Ber-Yuh Yang Medical Practice, Cathay Bank, the Chinese American Women's Commerce Association, Fanimation, the Flushing Chinese American Community Association, Lutron Electronics Co., Inc., Mid-County Mechanical Inc., the Rotary Club of Flushing and

President Anthony J. Civitano, and the West Hempstead Rotary Club. NYAWC also extends thanks to the benefit committee and all the volunteers who made the event possible.

#### **4. Spotlight on a Staff Member: Kaori Nagao**

Victims of domestic violence and human trafficking have a friend in Kaori Nagao, who has served as a supervisory counselor for the New York Asian Women's Center for the past three years. Ms. Nagao was born and raised in Japan but says that her commitment to social justice stems from her childhood travels in South and Southeast Asia. Ms. Nagao lived in Indonesia, Vietnam and, most recently, Bangladesh, where her eyes were opened to the realities of life in the developing world. Her family's domestic helper was illiterate and did not know his own birth date, and people picked through the family's garbage each day. Beggars everywhere cried out for "baksheesh" (money), and even toddlers approached Ms. Nagao to ask for money. Though she was initially interested in a career in fashion, Bangladesh created in Ms. Nagao a change of mind and heart.

When she came to New York as an exchange student, Ms. Nagao discovered art therapy, a field that merged her dual interests: psychotherapy and the arts. After working for several years in Japan, she pursued a graduate degree in art therapy at New York University. A challenging 1.5 year internship at St. Vincent's inpatient psychiatric unit convinced her that she could make a real contribution to society and to women as a therapist and advocate. After graduating from NYU, Ms. Nagao began work at NYAWC as a counselor.

Ms. Nagao also raises awareness about the issue of domestic violence in a column she writes for a Japanese paper, in presentations she gives to New York's Japanese community, and through her participation in the Japanese Medical Assistance Network, hosted by Consulate General of Japan in New York. Ms. Nagao says she feels greatly rewarded by her work, and that it gives her sustenance in return.

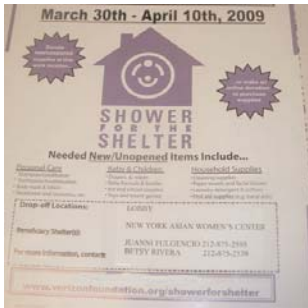
#### **5. Save the Date! Mei Hua Society's Annual Banquet to Benefit NYAWC: February 17, 2010**

NYAWC is extremely grateful that it has been chosen, for the second year in a row, to be the beneficiary of the Mei Hua Society's annual Chinese New Year banquet. 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 women and 130 children every year.

In February 2009, the Mei Hua Society generously donated \$10,000 to NYAWC's Community Outreach and Education Program, supporting efforts to reach out to women in need and efforts to teach the Asian communities and broader society about the realities of domestic violence and human trafficking.

The Mei Hua Society banquet will take place on February 17, 2010, at Golden Unicorn Restaurant, 18 East Broadway, New York City. Stay tuned for more details!

## 6. Shower for the Shelter Aids Domestic Violence Survivors



This year, the Verizon Foundation sponsored its third annual national "Shower for the Shelter" collection drive, in which the National Network to End Domestic Violence paired Verizon offices around the country with local domestic violence shelters. Donated goods—including toiletries, canned foods, books, and new toys—were collected at Verizon offices and delivered to partner shelters.



This year's donations to NYAWC were made possible by the generosity of employees at five Verizon offices, as well as their friends and families.

Thanks also to Verizon campaign site coordinators and the NYAWC volunteers who managed the donation process.

## 7. NYAWC Speaks at Flushing Rotary Luncheon



NYAWC Board Member Shelley Wang served as a guest speaker at a Flushing Rotary Club luncheon on Thursday, September 3. Ms. Wang spoke to around 20 Rotary Club members about the unique role NYAWC plays in New York's Asian community and about the services the Center provides to vulnerable immigrant women. She emphasized the need for community support in identifying victims of abuse, providing assistance to survivors, and raising awareness about the issues of domestic violence and human trafficking.

The discussion gave voice to victims who are too often invisible, and emphasized the role that both organizations and individuals can play in stopping violence against women. The event was part of NYAWC's neighborhood outreach and fundraising efforts, intended to motivate local communities to recognize and address the needs of abuse victims.

### 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 [www.nyawc.org](http://www.nyawc.org), or contact [xzhen@nyawc.org](mailto:xzhen@nyawc.org) to volunteer your services or [fmui@nyawc.org](mailto:fmui@nyawc.org) to make a donation.