



New York
Asian Women's Center
2005-2006 REPORT



celebrating

25
YEARS

of empowering women
and children to live free
of violence in 2007





Our Mission

THE NEW YORK ASIAN WOMEN'S CENTER advocates for the rights of women to govern their own lives, free of abuse. Our mission is to help battered women in the New York Asian communities overcome violence and live safe and independent lives. NYAWC also works to raise public awareness about domestic violence, bringing to the forefront of the community's consciousness an agenda for social change.

How can you help?

1) Help a Battered Woman

- Support her decisions
- Do not blame her for the abuser's actions
- Talk to her separately from her abuser
- Use non-family members as translators
- Encourage her to seek help

NYAWC's 24-hour multilingual hotline is **1-888-888-7702**

2) Volunteer

You can enrich the NYAWC's services by:

- translating
- tutoring
- babysitting
- fundraising
- assisting with other tasks

For more information on how you can get involved, visit www.nyawc.org

3) Make a Tax-Deductible Donation

- Send a check payable to the NYAWC to:
**Attn: Development Manager
New York Asian Women's Center
39 Bowery, PMB 375
New York, NY 10002**
- Or make an online donation via www.nyawc.org

Success Stories of NYAWC Clients

“

I did not call at first because I was scared that I would have to leave my home. But when the abuse got worse, I called and talked to a counselor. My counselor helped me overcome my fears. She also helped me get legal services so that I could apply for my own visa, get an order of protection against my husband, and eventually a divorce. My children and I were able to stay in our home, near our friends and their school, and thanks to NYAWC I have found a job to support us.”

Diana

“

When I first heard that I could move into a shelter, I was scared because I did not know what to expect. But after I arrived at the New York Asian Women's Center's shelter, my years of living in fear began to melt away. I have my own room there for myself and my baby. I have made friends with several of the other women and every night we make dinner together and talk about our lives. It feels so good to have other women who have gone through this to talk to.”

Helen

“

When I first came to the NYAWC, I did not understand what had happened to me. The abuse started so gradually, I did not realize how bad it had become. I never thought it could happen to me, and since we weren't married, I did not know if it would be considered domestic violence. Talking to my NYAWC counselor about the violence helped me see it for what it was.”

Sue

“

When I was with my husband, he would always put me down – calling me stupid and saying that I could not leave him because I would never be able to take care of myself. I believed him because I did not graduate from school, never had a job, and did not speak English. I wanted to take English classes, but he would not allow me to leave the neighborhood around our house and I did not have my own money to pay for classes.

The police referred me to the NYAWC after my husband was arrested for beating me. I was so scared to be on my own at first and thought about returning to him. But my counselor taught me that I can take care of myself. I have a job and my own apartment now. And I am paying for English classes with money from my own bank account!”

Julie



Letter from the Executive Director

I HAVE WRITER'S BLOCK. This is the last biennial report I will be writing for and I don't know which memories to speak about. Are my most memorable moments from our Rose House crisis? Or more of the daily interactions with an amazing staff? Or watching the children sit on Santa's lap? So many fond memories intertwined with so many difficult times we've survived. One thing is for sure, the work in the field will continue to inspire and awe me. We have made so many strides forward and yet the work seems never ending.

As I say good-bye, I leave with a sense that the world is a safer place for women and their children and yet new forms of violence against women are emerging. Our work in trafficking is only beginning and I am afraid we've made little progress to combat the magnitude of the problem. Society needs to work on the demand side of supply for that is the only way this problem will be resolved. With no demand, suppliers will have to find more lucrative ways to make money. As a start, we should teach our children that it is not usual and customary to frequent brothels and it is not ok to objectify women and other vulnerable populations. Mutual respect for each other would do a lot for reducing all types of violence in the world, wouldn't it?

As I close out my tenure with the New York Asian Women's Center, I'm proud to look back on our accomplishments. We've purchased our first shelter and have been granted another one from the state. We boast 15 languages and over 60 staff. It has been a true joy to have worked for the Center for 8 years and I will miss it tremendously. I consider it a privilege and an honor to work with such a dedicated staff and board. I remember when the Center had only nine beds and 12 staff – small but mighty. Together we forged ahead to build what the Center is today. In the future I see the Center as an advocate and a voice for Asian Women not just locally, but globally as well. Further, I hope to see a day, when the services of the Center are no longer required. Until then, I will always support the Center and will be part of the NYAWC family.

My best for the future,



Tuhina De O'Connor

25

th Anniversary Gala

On **Wednesday October 10, 2007**, the New York Asian Women's Center will be celebrating 25 years of empowering women and children to live free of violence with our annual benefit gala. To be held at the

1982

Founder Pat Eng launches the New York Asian Women's Center as part of a graduate school project, organizing its first meeting on November 12, 1982 to discuss issues affecting Asian women rarely addressed in the community – specifically focusing on domestic violence. The first meeting was attended by 10 women. Interest grew to include a group of 25 women by the end of the first year.

1983

NYAWC launches a community awareness campaign on domestic violence issues.

1984

All-volunteer counseling training program is held. First ever hotline for battered Asian women is launched with limited hours of availability. NYAWC receives its first grant of \$750 from the Astraea Foundation.

1985

Volunteers personally take battered women and children into their homes during emergency situations, effectively creating the first organized shelter program for battered Asian women on the East Coast. First fundraising event is organized by a coalition of community women's groups.

1986

In response to a physical assault of a woman at a community space, NYAWC and other groups mobilize the community with the first major undertaking to raise public awareness through the Coalition Against Violence in the Community.

1987

Functioning as an all-volunteer organization for the first five years, the Center hires its first full-time staff member, Barbara Chang.

1988

Safe Apartments program is developed, offering families longer shelter stays and more options for safety.

1989

NYAWC and other community groups organize the "Cultural Defense" forum in response to the sentencing of Dong Lu Chen, an immigrant man who had beaten his wife to death with a hammer and was sentenced to only five years of probation.

1990

First ever 24-hour Asian multilingual hotline in NYC, staffed solely by volunteers, is established. Governor Mario Cuomo awards NYAWC with the Eleanor Roosevelt Community Service Award. Pat Eng, Founder/Executive Director receives Susan B. Anthony Award from NOW-NYC.

1991

President George Bush awards NYAWC with the President's Volunteer Action Award. Inaugural issue of Center's trilingual newsletter is published.

1992

City officials honor NYAWC and its volunteers for 10 years of unrelenting efforts to combat violence against women in "A Tribute to Volunteers" ceremony held at City Hall. Pat Eng, Founder/Executive Director receives Gloria Steinem "Women of Vision" Award from Ms. Foundation For Women, and Woman Warrior Award from Asian Pacific Women's Network.

beautiful **Tribeca Rooftop** in downtown Manhattan, the fun-filled evening will include a reception, silent auction, open bar all night and a three course sit down dinner.

For information on this event please contact **Vicki Shu Smolin**, our Benefit Coordinator at 1-646-263-6044 or vicki_shu@yahoo.com

1993 “Sister/Buddy” program is established to pair volunteers with shelter residents.

1994 NYAWC receives Celebrating Women’s Lives Award from Sakhi for South Asian Women.

1995 Children’s Program is established, offering counseling, play-therapy and parenting skills services. Originally founded as a membership organization, NYAWC changes its bylaws to reflect its institutional growth and operation as a staff-based organization.

1996 Through MFY Legal Services, free legal services are made available to women with limited financial resources. Immigrant women and children receive legal assistance to become permanent residents of the U.S.

1997 Celebratory 15th Anniversary event “In Honor of Battered Asian Women’s Strength & Courage” is held at City Hall.

1998 An asian youth mentor program is launched as a collaborative project with a university’s asian youth program.

1999 NYAWC opens a second emergency shelter facility.

2000 Volunteers help create and launch the official NYAWC website: www.nyawc.org

2001 NYAWC establishes our first 24-hour staffed shelter facility and also receives Nav Nirmaan Community Service Award.

2002 Governor George Pataki presents NYAWC with the Justice, Freedom and Courage Awards to End Domestic Violence. NYAWC adds a third residential facility for battered women and children. Landmark 20th Anniversary Gala “Rising From the Ashes: Celebrating 20 Years of Women’s Courage & Strength” is held at the Tribeca Rooftop.

2003 NYAWC makes its first purchase of a shelter facility. Tuhina De O’Connor, Executive Director, receives the Hero Award from the Robin Hood Foundation.

2004 NYAWC’s first owned (as opposed to rented) shelter, known as Rose House, opens to serve battered women and their children.

2005 NYAWC is awarded a 20-bed facility from the New York State Homeless Housing and Assistance Corporation. NYAWC is honored as a Community Champion by Newsweek and launches Project Free: Ending Modern-Day Slavery program for victims of human trafficking.

2006 NYAWC receives the Caring for Children Award from the Coalition for Asian Children and Families. NYAWC is selected as a New Yorker of the Week by NY1 News. NYAWC establishes OurSpace, a SAFE Kids Drop-in Center to serve more children from its Shelter Alternatives program. NYAWC establishes a Vocational Center that can be used by women in its Shelter Alternatives program.



Our Services

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HE RANGE OF SERVICES NYAWC provides is rooted in our philosophy of empowering women and children to live free of violence. We support women's choices, as each of our clients has a unique life story and a distinct set of painful circumstances that affects how she chooses to deal with her situation. NYAWC provides free, confidential and multilingual services that are tailored to meet the individual needs of our clients. We are the only organization in New York that provides culturally and linguistically appropriate domestic violence services to a Pan-Asian population.

From 2005-2006, NYAWC continued to expand and bolster its services

- NYAWC's **three emergency domestic violence shelters** flourished, now offering up to 57 shelter beds. Each shelter is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and provides essential services such as childcare. In the past two years, we were consistently at full capacity, serving women and children who were in danger and had no other option but to flee from the violence in their own homes.
- NYAWC's non-residential program, **SAFE (Shelter Alternatives: Fostering Empowerment)**, was created to empower women within

their own communities, helping them rebuild and govern their lives free from abuse without entering the shelter system. SAFE offers a range of culturally appropriate and language accessible services for victims of domestic violence that educate them about their rights and options, support them through counseling and advocacy, and protect them by formulating safety plans. SAFE services include: Counseling, Advocacy, Translation/Interpretation, Support Groups, Entitlement Assistance, Education/Employment Assistance, ESL Instruction and more.

- In 2005, NYAWC launched **Project Free: Ending Modern-Day Slavery**, which works on multiple levels from direct services to policy/advocacy and training in order to address the horrors of human trafficking.
- NYAWC's **Children's Program** continues to serve the unique needs of children who have witnessed or been victim to violence in their own homes. Our comprehensive program now includes everything from assessing and identifying high-risk behavior in children to providing counseling and play therapy, support groups, mentoring programs, and parenting skills classes.
- In 2006, NYAWC opened the doors to



OurSpace, a community and vocational center in a safe and undisclosed location where women and children can safely access tutoring, support groups, homework help, ESL classes, employment-based services and more.

- In 2005, NYAWC initiated **Tools for Success: Vocational and Housing Services**, a program that aims to build women's resources and ensure safety through building financial independence and self-sufficiency. Tools for Success assistance is tailored to the needs of each individual client. The assistance we provide can range from life skills as basic as learning how to use public transit to highly specialized services for clients with disabilities. For most of our clients, however, Tools for Success focuses on three key elements: financial education, vocational training and housing assistance.

The Center has expanded to more than 60 full-time staff and close to 200 volunteers, enabling us to enrich our services and increase our capacity to serve more clients.

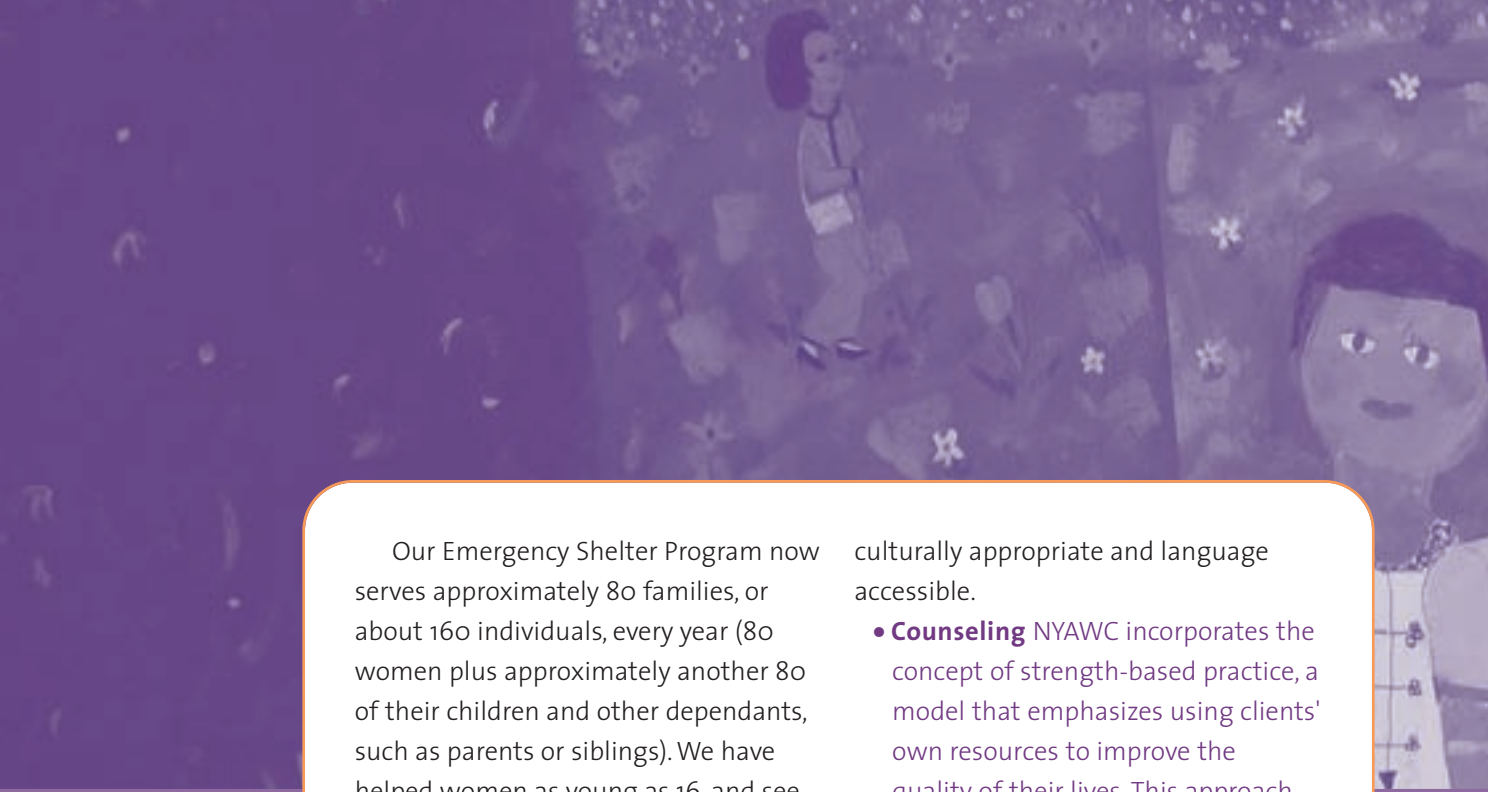
Emergency Shelter Program

THE EMERGENCY SHELTER PROGRAM is vital to the mission of the New York

Asian Women's Center. The Center's shelter capacity has grown over the last two years thanks to the generous support of the Robin Hood Foundation. Between 2004 and 2006, our total shelter capacity grew from 46 beds to 57 beds in three shelters.

Our shelters continue to provide women in need with a safe haven where they can begin their lives anew, free of abuse. As the only licensed shelter program in New York State tailored to the unique needs of Asian women, our shelters allow Asian immigrant women who might otherwise feel isolated and alone within the shelter system to feel at home and understood.

When a woman first enters one of our shelters she is greeted by the smell of familiar foods in the kitchen and by the sound of her own language. Even women who do not share a common language and culture are able to share their common experiences through a translator during our support groups. Our residential services allow women to build their own support network of survivors, many of whom continue to help one another even after leaving our shelters. This support and reaffirmation that they are not alone helps speed women and children's recovery from a life of fear and violence to one of empowerment and freedom.

An illustration in the top right corner shows a woman and two children in a garden. The woman is standing and looking towards the left, while two children are sitting on the ground. The background is filled with various flowers and plants.

Our Emergency Shelter Program now serves approximately 80 families, or about 160 individuals, every year (80 women plus approximately another 80 of their children and other dependants, such as parents or siblings). We have helped women as young as 16, and see cases of battered women in their 70s. The average age of our clients is 37 years old. Our clients are of many different Asian ethnic backgrounds including, but not limited to: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Filipino and Vietnamese. We also have a number of non-Asian clients every year who are in need of our assistance.

In addition, NYAWC maintains three safe homes, where clients who are contemplating future options available to them can be hosted for a brief period. Safe homes are provided through the generosity of volunteers, former staff members and other supporters.

SAFE

SHELTER ALTERNATIVES: FOSTERING EMPOWERMENT program supports our belief that it is a woman's right to live her life free of abuse without having to leave her home or enter the shelter system. The goal of SAFE is to provide services for women within their own communities, respecting their personal needs and choices. All services are

culturally appropriate and language accessible.

- **Counseling** NYAWC incorporates the concept of strength-based practice, a model that emphasizes using clients' own resources to improve the quality of their lives. This approach motivates women to believe in their ability to make positive changes in their lives.

- **Advocacy & Interpretation** With 25 years of experience, advocacy is one of NYAWC's cornerstone services. NYAWC staff members accompany victims to appointments when interpretation and/or advocacy are needed to ensure that they receive appropriate services. Due to limited English ability and little knowledge of the complex system of courts and social services in the U.S., advocacy is a necessity for many of our clients. Through the use of role-playing and other techniques, advocacy sessions become the training ground for women to become proponents of their own needs.

- **Housing Assistance** Staff members help women to explore alternate housing options if they wish to leave their current home. Counselors help women to find affordable housing or apply for public housing if they are eligible. Our housing assistance focuses on respecting a woman's



needs and choices, preventing her from becoming homeless by finding sustainable housing, and helping her stay in the community in which she feels most comfortable.

- **Support Groups** Bilingual support groups connect women with each other and help break through the isolation that our clients often experience. Women gain new support and friendships, a vital part of recovery for those with few family or friends to support them.
- **Entitlement Assistance** All of our clients are screened for eligibility and need for Public Assistance. Counselors and Caseworkers assist with the completion of any application forms and securing needed benefits, as well as advocating on the client's behalf.
- **Educational/Employment Counseling and Assistance** Clients are assisted in planning for their future with the creation of education and employment plans. Women also have access to vocational training, resume assistance and more through our SAFE Vocational Center.

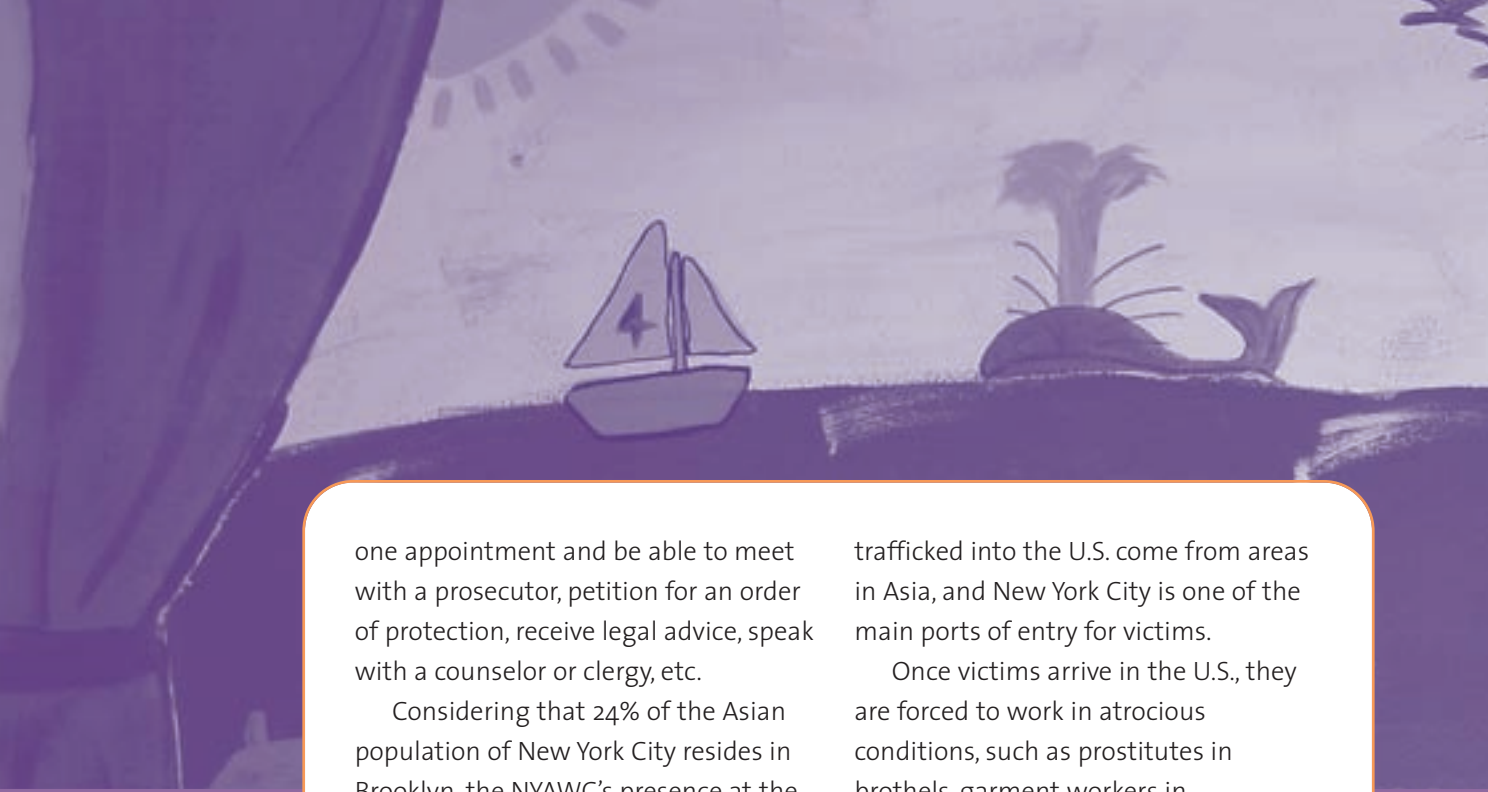
Thanks to the Center's continued funding from the NY State Crime Victims Board, the NYC Human Resources Administration and the support of Sanctuary for Families, Legal Aid Services, Queens Legal Services, South

Brooklyn Legal Services, Urban Justice Center, Connect Community Partners and the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office, we have been able to continue meeting our SAFE clients' needs. We have grown in our staffing and now provide services to approximately 400 women per year through our SAFE services. At intake, the majority of SAFE clients reported they had experience verbal abuse, emotional abuse, threats, physical abuse, psychological abuse and economic abuse. Much fewer women reported abuse at discharge in all categories. The largest decrease was seen in the number of women who reported physical abuse.

FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER, BROOKLYN

RECOGNIZING THAT BROOKLYN has the highest number of reported domestic violence crimes citywide, NYAWC and other domestic violence service providers collaborated with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence and the Kings County District Attorney's Office (Brooklyn) to implement the President's Family Justice Center National Initiative.

The first Family Justice Center (FJC) in New York City was established in Brooklyn, providing victims of domestic violence with a "one-stop shop" for their needs. In the FJC, women can make just



one appointment and be able to meet with a prosecutor, petition for an order of protection, receive legal advice, speak with a counselor or clergy, etc.

Considering that 24% of the Asian population of New York City resides in Brooklyn, the NYAWC's presence at the FJC is vital to the community that we serve. Through the generous help of the Independence Community Foundation, the NYAWC is able to provide language accessible and culturally-sensitive services for Asian women at the FJC. As the only active on-site partner at the FJC, NYAWC alone served over 75 women through the FJC in 2006.

Project Free

ENDING MODERN
DAY SLAVERY



HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS A FORM of exploitation synonymous with modern-day slavery. Victims of trafficking come to the United States under numerous circumstances, including being lured by false promises of employment, being sold to traffickers by family members and kidnapping.

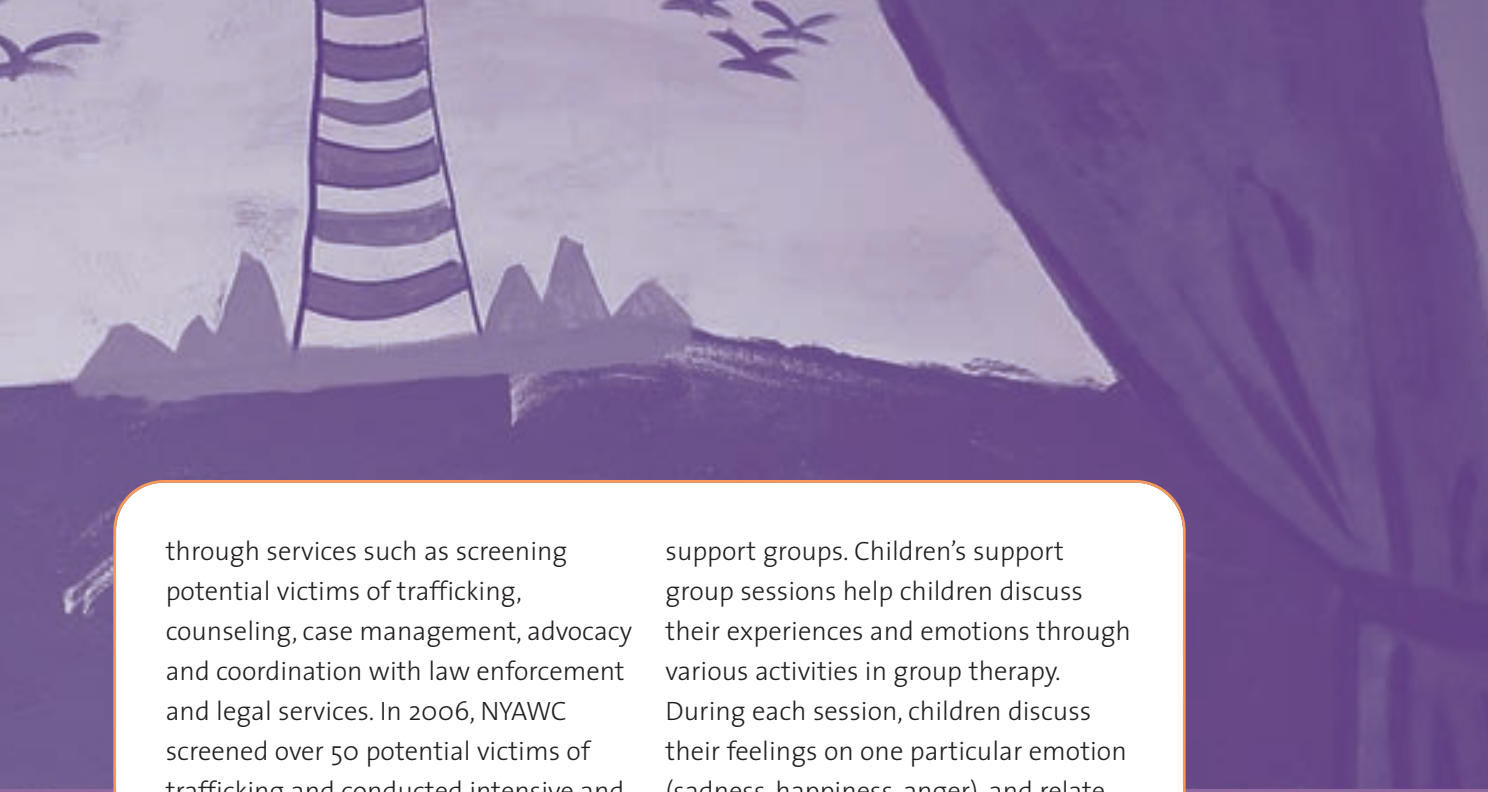
It is estimated that between 18,000 and 20,000 men, women and children are trafficked into the US every year. Approximately 80% of trafficking victims are female, and 70% of those female victims are trafficked for the commercial sex industry. It is estimated that approximately 40% of those

trafficked into the U.S. come from areas in Asia, and New York City is one of the main ports of entry for victims.

Once victims arrive in the U.S., they are forced to work in atrocious conditions, such as prostitutes in brothels, garment workers in sweatshops, domestic workers, etc. They are severely underpaid (if paid at all), not given access to health care, forced to have sex without prophylactics, forced to have abortions and are often brutally abused. If they try to escape, traffickers threaten them not only with harm to themselves, but also with threats against family members in their home country. These cruel and inhumane environments can lead to severe bodily injury and intense psychological trauma.

Seeing the need for culturally sensitive and language accessible services for Asian victims of trafficking in New York City, the New York Asian Women's Center has initiated Project Free.

Thanks to funding from the **Korean American Community Foundation**, NYAWC has been able to expand its successful model of service for Asian immigrant victims of domestic violence to assist victims of human trafficking, who often face similar challenges. Project Free helps victims regain their freedom and recover from trauma



through services such as screening potential victims of trafficking, counseling, case management, advocacy and coordination with law enforcement and legal services. In 2006, NYAWC screened over 50 potential victims of trafficking and conducted intensive and ongoing services for 4 victims of trafficking.

Project Free also conducts outreach to Asian American communities, law enforcement, and other service providers in New York City to heighten awareness about trafficking, and participates in policy advocacy to impact positive change in laws around human trafficking in the US and New York State.

Children's Program

CHILDREN ARE OFTEN DIRECTLY abused by batterers or are witnesses to domestic abuse. In either case, these experiences haunt children through their youth and adulthood. NYAWC offers a variety of children's services to help children overcome this trauma. From July 2005 to June 2006, we provided 821 individual counseling sessions to 113 children.

NYAWC provides children with counseling, play/art therapy, support groups, mentoring programs, special events, case management and children's

support groups. Children's support group sessions help children discuss their experiences and emotions through various activities in group therapy. During each session, children discuss their feelings on one particular emotion (sadness, happiness, anger), and relate that to their experiences with domestic violence. This form of therapy is used as an outlet for children to relieve themselves of negative or positive energy in a healthy way, while allowing them to recognize that these emotions are normal. NYAWC held 20 children's support groups from July 2005 to June 2006.

The Center also assists mothers by advocating on their children's behalf in schools, daycare centers, courts, doctor's offices and other settings. NYAWC continues to give parenting skills classes to assist mothers in creating healthy relationships with their children. Not only does it serve to improve the client's parenting skills, but more importantly, it helps provide a safe and secure environment for the children. Offered to all mothers receiving any of our services, these workshops help mothers focus on the variety of ways that they can positively discipline their children. U.S. laws defining child abuse are also discussed.

NYAWC's ongoing children's services also include a mentoring program

sponsored by a university, an annual summer picnic, holiday party, birthday parties, art classes and outings to numerous community events.

OurSpace

(DROP-IN CENTER FOR
WOMEN AND CHILDREN)

LAUNCHED IN 2006, NYAWC established a new program targeting children and women that we serve through our SAFE and Emergency Shelter programs.

NYAWC has been able to expand vocational assistance to our women clients by creating a vocational center that is accessible to them. Named OurSpace, the facility officially opened its doors in 2006. At OurSpace, women have access to computers in a safe, confidential location, as very few of them have access to computers and the internet at home. By using the computers in the Vocational Center, victims of domestic violence are able to search for jobs online (critical to securing employment in today's society), research educational opportunities online, create resumes and complete independent-study computer trainings through CD-ROMs.

Women can receive one-on-one vocational assistance when requested in the following topics: Resume Writing, Job and Education Searching, Interview Skills Prep, Completing

Applications/Paperwork, basic computer and internet use, GED Prep and ESL.

Also in 2006, OurSpace opened its doors to serve children. Child witnesses of domestic violence often have a high level of isolation, and the trauma that they experience and their need for emotional support is constant. The OurSpace Kids Drop-in Center is a secure, confidential space in which these children can receive a variety of supportive services, and also acts as a gateway to more in-depth services from the Children's Program.

Housed in a confidential location, the Drop-in Center provides children of the 5-18 years old age range with a safe haven from violence, connects them with peers in similar situations, gives them access to educational and other resources, and allows NYAWC staff to screen children who may be at high risk and in need of further services. The facility provides children with access to a computer center where they can do research for school assignments and play educational games, as well as receive one-on-one homework assistance and tutoring from NYAWC staff and trained volunteers on site. The Drop-in Center holds support and peer discussion groups run by NYAWC staff. Besides weekday after-school drop-in hours, the program also offers additional special activities, summer

activities, recreational trips and more.

Tools for Success

VOCATIONAL AND
HOUSING SERVICES

THE NEW YORK ASIAN WOMEN'S CENTER is committed to empowering women in abusive situations to forge their own paths and find ways of achieving economic independence. Although Asian Americans are often stereotyped as members of the highest socioeconomic levels, the bulk of new immigrants coming to New York City are working class. Of the women that we serve, many of whom have one or more children, 75% come to us with incomes of less than \$5,000 per year. An additional 14% have incomes of less than \$15,000.

For women who have experienced domestic violence and are working to begin their lives anew, finding employment is one of the most important steps in the recovery process. However, for many of the women that we serve this is a difficult process. Approximately 94% of our women have limited English proficiency, which poses a barrier to employment. Additionally, women in violent relationships are often forbidden from holding a job, obtaining job training and skills required for employment, simply in order to increase their financial dependency and isolation. Lack of

training and employment experience is yet another barrier that domestic violence victims face.

With these factors in mind, in 2005, NYAWC created Tools for Success, a program that offers a continuum of services to help women achieve self-sufficiency and start their lives anew. Tools for Success assistance is tailored to the needs of each individual client, however, for most women this program focuses on three key elements: vocational training, housing assistance and financial education.

Vocational training and financial education includes instruction in ESL, job-related skills, money-management and life and computer skills necessary for self-sufficiency. These skills are a vital part of making a woman workforce-ready, and are taught by volunteers using both group and individual instruction. NYAWC's housing assistance focuses on keeping women and children from becoming homeless by assisting them in finding sustainable housing, given their resources and the benefits available to them. This results in settling multiple women and families safely back in the community. The Center assists women with obtaining permanent public housing and Transitional-Tier II housing after they have left NYAWC's residential program.



Community Outreach

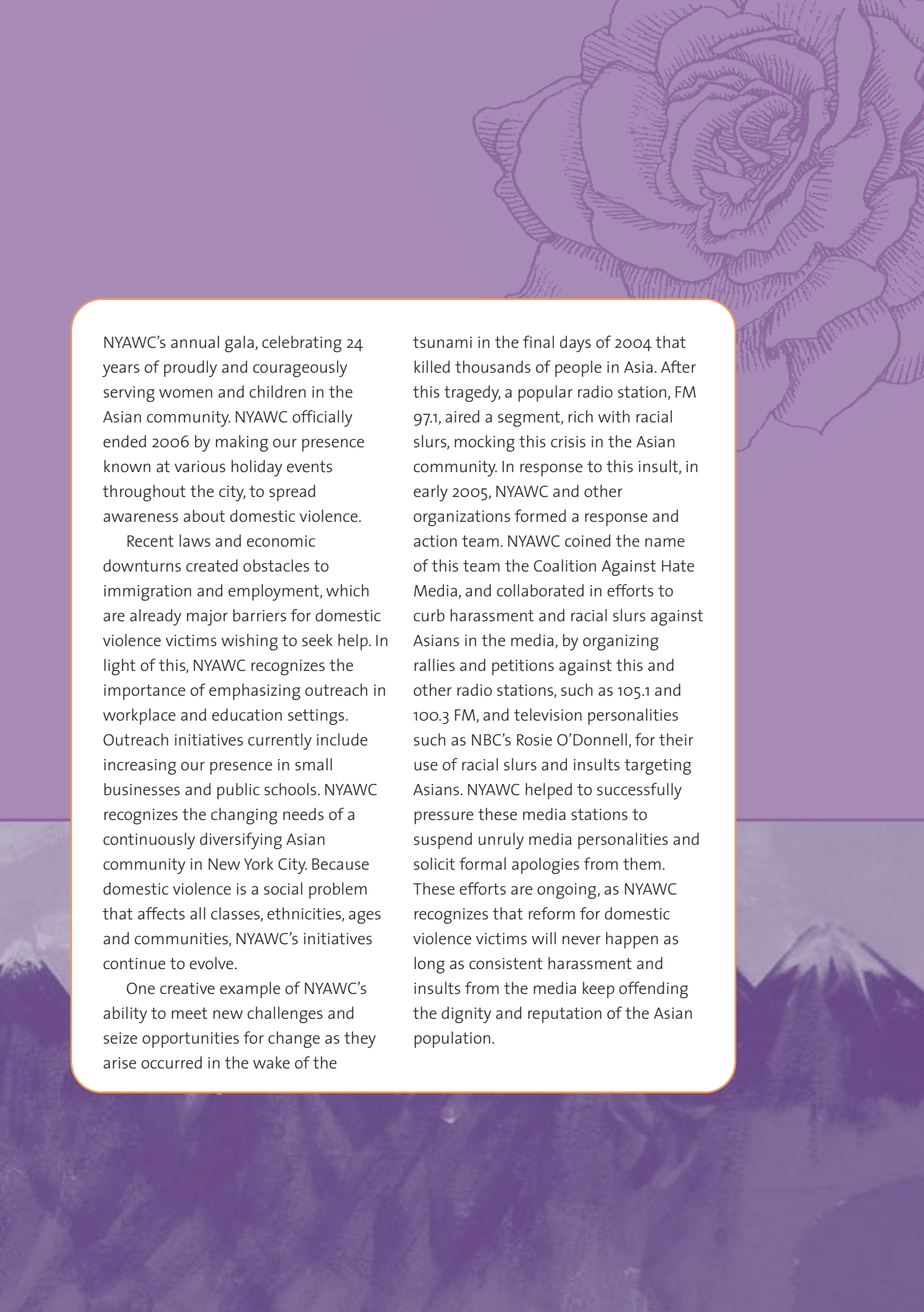
THE OUTREACH ACTIVITIES OF NYAWC have been wide-ranging, evolving in response to changes in our community and events around the world. NYAWC has strengthened our partnerships and collaborative efforts with other major agencies that work on domestic violence issues. As a member of the Central Brooklyn Domestic Violence Program, we launched a program in 2005 reaching out to faith-based communities. We worked closely with Safe Horizon and Voices of Women Organizing Project (V.O.W.). We also worked closely with the New York Immigrants Coalition on issues deeply affecting the Asian community, such as voting and immigration issues, and helped launch projects such as monitoring voting booths and organizing multiple rallies for immigrants' rights. Yet, NYAWC cannot ignore the demands of healthcare, which are closely associated with domestic violence victims' needs. We have thus strengthened our partnership with community health care organizations, such as the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center, Asian & Pacific Islanders Coalition on HIV/AIDS (APICHA), and various public healthcare facilities throughout the city.

We have also strengthened our commitment to spreading community awareness about domestic violence to

youth. In a string of college-campus initiatives to recognize safety for women carried out between 2005-2006, NYAWC provided workshops on safety tips, dating violence, domestic abuse and stalking to students at colleges such as the Borough of Manhattan Community College, Queens College, Columbia University and New York University. NYAWC recognizes the increasing need to educate young Asian Americans from diverse social classes on these issues.

NYAWC also increased our presence in New York City in the context of legislative initiatives. In April 2005, NYAWC and other domestic violence organizations, such as Safe Horizon, lobbied New York State Legislators for reforms to assist domestic violence and sexual assault victims. We have also been solidifying our presence within the courts and police departments throughout the city. We provide regular training on domestic violence in the Asian community to various police precincts, focusing on geographical areas with high Asian populations.

In October 2006, NYAWC held a media conference followed by a candlelit vigil of remembrance to honor the brave women who, unfortunately, did not survive partner abuse. We also unveiled our new and improved website to the public. These events precipitated



NYAWC's annual gala, celebrating 24 years of proudly and courageously serving women and children in the Asian community. NYAWC officially ended 2006 by making our presence known at various holiday events throughout the city, to spread awareness about domestic violence.

Recent laws and economic downturns created obstacles to immigration and employment, which are already major barriers for domestic violence victims wishing to seek help. In light of this, NYAWC recognizes the importance of emphasizing outreach in workplace and education settings. Outreach initiatives currently include increasing our presence in small businesses and public schools. NYAWC recognizes the changing needs of a continuously diversifying Asian community in New York City. Because domestic violence is a social problem that affects all classes, ethnicities, ages and communities, NYAWC's initiatives continue to evolve.

One creative example of NYAWC's ability to meet new challenges and seize opportunities for change as they arise occurred in the wake of the

tsunami in the final days of 2004 that killed thousands of people in Asia. After this tragedy, a popular radio station, FM 97.1, aired a segment, rich with racial slurs, mocking this crisis in the Asian community. In response to this insult, in early 2005, NYAWC and other organizations formed a response and action team. NYAWC coined the name of this team the Coalition Against Hate Media, and collaborated in efforts to curb harassment and racial slurs against Asians in the media, by organizing rallies and petitions against this and other radio stations, such as 105.1 and 100.3 FM, and television personalities such as NBC's Rosie O'Donnell, for their use of racial slurs and insults targeting Asians. NYAWC helped to successfully pressure these media stations to suspend unruly media personalities and solicit formal apologies from them. These efforts are ongoing, as NYAWC recognizes that reform for domestic violence victims will never happen as long as consistent harassment and insults from the media keep offending the dignity and reputation of the Asian population.



Volunteering

VOLUNTEERS ARE INTRICATELY important to the services that NYAWC is able to offer to our clients. In fact, The New York Asian Women's Center was founded and run entirely by volunteers for the first five years of its existence.

Today, many of the Center's volunteers are Asian professionals in their 20s and 30s who devote the little time they have, weeknights and weekends, to our activities. More than half of the Center's 200 volunteers are fluent in an Asian language, enabling them to make connections with our clients as well as provide translation in up to 15 Asian languages.

All NYAWC volunteers must go through an extensive training that deals with issues surrounding domestic violence and the proper way to approach the women and their children who come to NYAWC for services. Once trained, the Center considers its volunteers to be ambassadors to the community. They partner with staff to attend community bazaars, fairs, rallies, and marches to inform the community that domestic violence does exist in the Asian community, but that there is help available.

With the inception of OurSpace, NYAWC's community and vocational center, many volunteers have been trained in teaching and tutoring techniques by an experienced ESL

teacher. These volunteers have since begun to hold classes at OurSpace that are available to all our shelter and SAFE clients on weeknights and weekends. Classes include ESL, computer and resume building/interview skills. Some of our tutors go directly to our shelters to tutor our clients in their respective languages as well.

Since 1990, thanks to volunteers who take hotline calls in their homes, NYAWC has been able to operate the only 24-hour domestic violence hotline serving the Asian community. Now, volunteers still help supplement NYAWC activities and support the hotline on weekends. In fact, one of our hotline volunteers has been working with the Center for the past 18 years.

Some of the other ways volunteers continue to contribute are in the areas of website maintenance, research, graphic design, providing child care, friendly shelter visits, donation gathering and sorting, fundraising, mailings, conducting activities and helping at Center events such as picnics, holiday parties and fundraising events. With the help of our energetic volunteers, the Center can do more than just provide basic direct services to our clients. With the help of our volunteers, the Center can accomplish all our goals of empowering our survivors.



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