



Phoenix

New York Asian Women's Center

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Winter
2008-2009

NYAWC 26th Anniversary Fall Benefit Gala

On November 6, 2008, NYAWC celebrated its 26th anniversary at our Fall Benefit held at the Tribeca Rooftop in Manhattan. Nearly 350 friends and supporters of NYAWC came together to celebrate the Center's legacy of exemplary service to and advocacy for battered women.



Gala Honorees: Phoebe Eng, Taina Bien-Aimé, and Carol Robles-Román

Our excellent Mistress of Ceremonies was Michelle Yu of NY1 News. Guests were treated to eloquent speeches by Donna Lee, Chair of Board of Directors; Larry Lee, Executive Director; and Shelley Wang, Board Member. Ms. Wang spoke passionately about the need to support Happy House, NYAWC's newest shelter. In support of Happy House, she pledged to make a generous matching donation of \$10,000.

The gala was graced by the presence of 2008 Phoenix Award honorees: Taina Bien-Aimé, Executive Director, Equality Now; Phoebe Eng, Vice Chair, Ms. Foundation

for Women; and Carol Robles-Román, Deputy Mayor for Legal Affairs & Counsel to the Mayor. Throughout the evening, guests visited the silent auction table to view and bid on the wonderful array of auction items generously donated by our supporters.

NYAWC is pleased that despite a very difficult economic time, the gala raised almost \$75,000 to support the Center's programs and services for survivors of domestic violence. We thank our gala supporters and attendees for their generosity, belief in the New York Asian Women's Center, and confidence in our abilities to empower women and children to live free of violence. We also thank our board of directors, benefit committee, event coordinator, staff, volunteers, and others whose organizational abilities and tireless work made the evening a success. For a full list of sponsors, silent auction donors, and benefit committee members, please visit our website's event's page.

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Executive Director Larry Lee Reflects on His One Year Anniversary



My first year at NYAWC has been astonishing! Just being hired was quite historic. But, being accepted by the staff, the clients, collaborators and the board has been a blessing. I was and continue to be amazed at the amount of effort and care we provide to each individual. It is understandable considering how many survivors live in abject poverty; can't speak English; are unable to negotiate many tasks of daily living; and, cannot deal with service providers and entitlement specialists who rarely speak Asian languages. The breadth of survivors' needs - financial, legal, housing,

employment and health - and the depth of issues - psychological, literacy, relationships and immigration - require enormous knowledge, time and effort.

I am so gratified by how open the staff has been at exploring ways to better help our families and in trying new ways to engage and reach survivors and their children. Our digital art therapy, program at child welfare agencies, and our expansion of our services to trafficking survivors are good examples. Although I rarely interact with our women they feel free to contact me. In fact, one week, I received a phone call each day plus complaint letters. That barrage was later followed by an apology letter saying she was contacting me not because any

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The Living Portrait Exhibit at NYU

Reported by Christine Park and Iffat Khan, Volunteers

To educate college students about domestic violence during October 20 to 31, 2008, the Living Portrait was exhibited continuously at various sites throughout the New York University campus. A collaboration between composer Woody Pak, new media artists Heather Greer and Liubo Borissov, and NYAWC, the Living Portrait brought viewers to participate in the piece by incorporating audio and visual media, which would begin to play when it detects an individual's movements. A floor-to-ceiling screen displayed a flowing montage of portraits of domestic violence survivors and staff from NYAWC's shelter. Meanwhile, their voices spoke of their experiences, starting with the violence suffered as a victim, the decision to move to shelter and moving on to life's new possibilities as a survivor of domestic violence.

On October 28, NYAWC hosted a panel discussion on NYU campus focusing on the development of programs to engage the community in domestic violence work. Ms. Greer, a professor at New York University's Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP), spoke of how rewarding this particular art project was for her. She was trying to present different stories, but she found that it came together as one story with many voices. Many of the experiences shared common elements. Ms. Greer said that it was interesting to view art not as a piece of work in itself, but as a means to bring about change and engage the individual.



Students viewing The Living Portrait

Along this theme, NYAWC host Julie Kim Richards, described the development of a new program at NYAWC. The Digital Art program for youth was recently launched to help youth who witnessed domestic violence learn a new, popular, and useful skill that would also help express themselves. Guest speaker Purvi Shah, the Executive Director of SAKHI, explained how its programs were designed to foster community based leadership. Finally, guest speaker, Professor Holly Maguigan, spoke about the limitations of the criminal court system and why the system can be better supplemented with alternatives that seek to empower women.

The Living Portrait project was made possible thanks to funding from private donors and a grant from the Asian Women Giving Circle.

Julie Kim Richards wins Emerging Social Work Leader Award

NYAWC Director of Client Services, Julie Kim Richards, was selected by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) - New York City Chapter to receive the 2nd Annual Emerging Social Worker Leader Award. We are so proud of Julie's latest achievement! She and 11 other emerging leaders of the social work profession were recognized for their visionary and exemplary work at the 2nd annual NASW-NYC awards dinner, which was held on December 4 at the Grand Harmony Restaurant in Chinatown.



Julie has spent the last 8 years fighting domestic violence at the NYAWC. As Director of Client Services, Julie is responsible for the management and oversight of the largest division of NYAWC consisting of more than 20 staff members and interns who provide counseling, case management, and advocacy/accompaniment to 400 women and children survivors of domestic violence and trafficking annually.

Julie also helped create Hitting Home, a program whereby NYAWC

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Doctor Erases Physical Scars for Asian Survivors of Domestic Violence

In October 2008, Dr. Edmund Kwan, a New York based surgeon specializing in plastic and cosmetic surgery for ethnic patients, announced that he will waive his surgical fees for reconstructive surgery on patients who are survivors of domestic violence in honor of domestic violence awareness month. NYAWC assisted Dr. Kwan in selecting a patient. "Reconstructive procedures are the most rewarded surgeries I can perform on a patient," said Dr. Kwan. "Breast cancer survivors, burn and abuse victims are reminded daily of a traumatic time in their life. My hope is to continue to partner with organizations like NYAWC to raise awareness on these issues and provide patients with an opportunity to erase the physical scarring they've endured."

Spotlight on Clients' and Volunteers' Experiences

Success with Negotiating the Court System

Ms. S's husband twisted her arms and hit her whenever they had an argument, but she did not realize that what she was going through was domestic violence. Only after her neighbor called 911 for her and the police got involved, did she realize she had hope and deserved safety.

Besides the physical abuse, Ms. S was financially abused. When her husband stopped working abruptly, he did not seem to wish to find another job. Ms. S had to work full-time to support her child and husband while going to nursing school. Her husband took her efforts for granted and kept pushing her for more money.

When Ms. S came to the New York Asian Women's Center for assistance, her counselor helped her to understand domestic violence and the various types of abuse she was exposed to. At Ms. S's request, the Center helped her file for a divorce and obtain a green card under the Violence Against Women Act. Furthermore, Ms. S petitioned for child support when her abuser started working again and started receiving a small sum of money. When he stopped paying child support, she went to family court with her NYAWC case manager and filed a summons of violation of support order. The court ordered her husband to pay back the child support arrears. Since then, Ms. S has been receiving regular payment of child supports. It was a small victory for her.

Not only is Ms. S now receiving regular child support payments, but she is educated and empowered in terms of how to navigate the family court system to collect the unpaid child support if the same situation happens in the future.

Annual Picnic Recap

On a sunny Saturday in August 2008, NYAWC held its annual summer picnic for battered women and their children. More than 30 women and 45



Children participating in a raffle

children who are current or former NYAWC clients joined staff and volunteers for a festive afternoon of fun activities and delicious food. The menu included cuisine from many Asian ethnic origins, such as sushi, fried rice, noodles, egg rolls, roast pork buns, as well as American staples like hamburgers, chicken wings, hotdogs and sandwiches. In preparation for our December holiday party, counselors helped children write letters to Santa. Volunteers organized fun games for the



NYAWC's Executive Director Larry Lee, Board Member Shelley Wang, and Volunteer Steven Kasper

children to play on the grass field. Meanwhile women enjoyed playing bingo for prizes and chatting with each other under shaded trees. The afternoon ended with a raffle drawing of special prizes for women and children, as well as small parting gifts, balloons and souvenirs for everyone to take

home and enjoy.

Thank you to all the volunteers and staff for their generous donation of



Children and volunteers playing games

food, prizes, time and effort. Also we would like to thank those who could not join us at the picnic but who generously donated to the event. This year's picnic could not have been a success without their help!

Executive Director Larry Lee's Reflections

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one was wrong but because she was very distraught.

Initially I was greeted by "You mean a man is going to lead us (women)?" But, now colleagues seem pleased with the Center's directions and are partnering with us. From the beginning of my tenure the NYAWC board has been extremely supportive. Beyond taking a chance on hiring a male they have given this male the opportunity to fulfill his dream - to work with staff toward developing best practices at providing services for Asian American domestic violence survivors.

Director of Client Services, Julie Kim Richards wins Award

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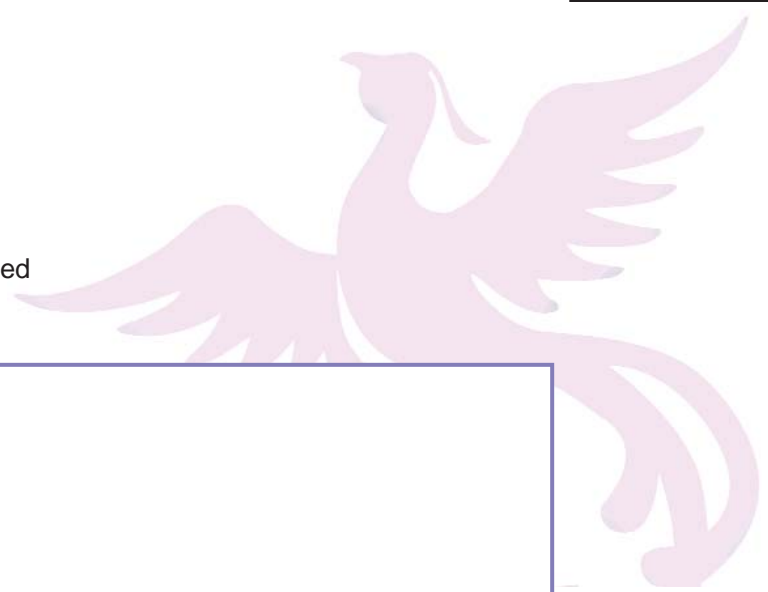
provides counseling at child welfare agencies to mothers whose children are abused or neglected. Hitting Home is the first - and only - such program in New York City.



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What is the significance of the Phoenix?

The Phoenix is a mythological bird reborn from fire and ashes. The New York Asian Women's Center chose the phoenix as its logo to symbolize the strength of the women who have experienced abuse at home.

☐ **Yes!** I want to help women and children live a life free of abuse.
Please add me to the **NYAWC** mailing list.



Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____ E-Mail: _____

☐ I am enclosing a check in the amount of \$ _____

☐ I am including my credit card information to make a tax-deductible donation.

Name on card: _____

☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ American Express (check one)

Card Number: _____ - _____ - _____ - _____

Expiration Date: ____/____/____ Donation Amount: \$ _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Support the NYAWC!

Volunteer!

Enrich the lives of women and children with our dedicated group of volunteers. For more info visit www.nyawc.org

Donate!

Checks payable to the NYAWC can be mailed to:

NYAWC

39 Bowery, PMB 375

New York, NY 10002

**Attn: Development
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**Or donate online at
www.nyawc.org**

Join our mailing list:

Fill out the form on the left and mail it to the above address.

Your contributions will help provide emergency shelter, counseling, advocacy, and other crucial services to battered women and their children.