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For Immediate Release

Local Torture Survivors to be served through Federal Grant

Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI)'s Center for Survivors of Torture has been awarded a major grant to serve local survivors of torture.

San Jose, California—October 12, 2006 -- Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI) is pleased to announce the receipt of a federal grant sponsored by the Department of Health Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement. AACI will receive \$380,000 annually over the next three years.

AACI will provide these services through its specialized program, the Center for Survivors of Torture (CST). The goal of this project is to provide direct services to the large numbers of torture survivors who reside in Santa Clara and neighboring counties. The funding is for the full array of direct services, including medical, economic, social, psychological and legal, as well as indirect services such as training and education for other service providers. Services will be provided in Santa Clara, San Mateo, Monterey and San Benito counties.

Congress has estimated that there are over 400,000 survivors of torture in the U.S. California has one of the highest populations of both undocumented and legal immigrants, many of whom are victims of war trauma and political torture. Within California, Santa Clara County is home to significantly high numbers of immigrants, refugees and asylees; there is a clearly established need for assistance and services to Santa Clara County individuals and families affected by torture.

AACI's strengths are in the area of clinical services - medical, psychotherapy, psychological evaluations, psychiatric services – AACI's own resources will be used to provide these services. AACI has collaborative agreements for legal services with Santa Clara University Law Clinic, Stanford University Immigration Law Clinic and the Asian Law Alliance, all of which have considerable experience with torture survivors and refugee populations. AACI will collaborate with Catholic Charities, which has a major local resettlement program to provide vocational training, employment, housing and other social services. AACI also plans to collaborate with other local social service organizations focused on the refugee population and ensure that there will be no duplication of services. In partnering with other community based organizations, AACI's CST will be able to offer a full range of services to clients in the most economical way.

The funds will also be used to train and educate medical, legal, social service and community service providers to enhance coverage of services to the survivor population. AACI contracts with the Institute for the Study of Psycho-Social Trauma, a group of experts in the field of torture treatment, who will conduct the trainings for community service workers and mental health staff from the County as well as other community based organizations.

CST will provide these specialized services to torture survivors and spread awareness about this population and its specialized needs to service providers including physicians, nurses, social service workers, teaching professionals, employers, lawyers and many others who affect the daily lives of the survivor population. Sensitivity to torture survivors' specialized needs and awareness of the issues they face will go a long way in their successful healing.

Letters of support for the funding were received from bipartisan local congressional leaders. Congressman Mike Honda said, "AACI is the premier organization in Santa Clara County in providing services to torture survivors. This grant will allow AACI's Center for Survivors of Torture to continue and expand these services."

About Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI):

Focusing on the diverse Asian American community, AACI's mission is to improve the health, mental health, and well-being of individuals and their families by providing an array of human services. AACI empowers the Asian American community by working collaboratively for equality and social justice. (www.aaci.org)

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