

AACI VOICE

WINTER 2006

Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI):

Established in 1973, AACI is the largest community-based organization focused on the well-being of Asian Americans in Santa Clara County. Based in San Jose, AACI provides multilingual services to over 9,000 individuals annually. Services are provided in over a dozen different languages, including several Chinese dialects, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Lao Mien, Thai, Korean, Tagalog, Ilocano, Hindi, English, and Spanish.

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New Year Brings Accolades and Support

AACI Volunteers Named "Movers of Mountains"

Two of AACI's volunteers, Gerald Gray and Victor Wong, recently received the 2006 Mover of Mountains Award from the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Association of Santa Clara Valley. Mr. Gray and Mr. Wong were recognized at a breakfast on Martin Luther King Day, January 16, 2006, at the Wyndham Hotel in San Jose.

The Mover of Mountains Award is given to individuals who volunteer their time and have made significant contributions to the welfare of our community, who by their good deeds, or acts of caring or assertion of leadership, have made our community a better place to live, without the expectation of recognition.

Gerald Gray is a psychotherapist and social worker who volunteers at AACI's Center for Survivors of Torture (CST). Census and county data indicate there are more than ten thousand torture survivors in the Santa Clara Valley, where there is a large refugee, immigrant, and asylee population. AACI founded CST in 2000. Since then, over 230 survivors of political torture from 41 countries have received a variety of specialized services. Mr. Gray helps torture survivors come to terms with their experiences, tackle their often complex problems, and start a new life in Santa Clara County.



Victor Wong was one of the founders of AACI over 30 years ago. Now a retired IBM engineer, Mr. Wong continues to serve as a volunteer in AACI's senior center, teaching English and citizenship to Chinese seniors every week. Thanks to Mr. Wong's good work, over 90% of the seniors who complete AACI's English and citizenship courses are now registered voters.

Lunar New Year Brings Good Wishes and Support for Asian Women's Home

A group of local Vietnamese-Americans known as "Warm Heart in the Winter," or "Tinh Am Mua Dong," celebrated Tet, as the Vietnamese New Year is called, by collecting donations for the Asian Women's Home, AACI's shelter for victims of domestic violence. AACI staff was overwhelmed by the generous donations of blankets, infant formula, pots and pans, Vietnamese entertainment videos, phone cards, and red envelopes of cash donations.



"More than the gift," said newspaper publisher Nam Nguyen, who was with the group, "We would like to raise awareness in the community." About 30 percent of the approximately 150 women the Asian Women's Home sees each year are Vietnamese, the largest ethnic population among the domestic violence clients.

For more on the Asian Women's Home, see pages 5-6.

Message from the Board Chairperson



Andrew A. Vu
Chairperson,
AACI
Board of Directors

Dear Friends,

For over three decades, AACI has worked to improve the quality of life for Asian Americans in Santa Clara County. AACI provides a broad range of health and social services: Adolescent Substance Abuse Services, CalWorks Program, Center for Survivors of Torture, Domestic Violence Program, Senior Wellness, Primary Health Care Services, Health Education, and Mental Health Counseling Services. Through advocacy and services, AACI strives to empower the Asian Pacific American community. AACI's commitment to advocacy on behalf of Asian/Pacific Americans has included areas of employment, civil rights, immigrant rights, and political representation. To make AACI's vision a reality, AACI has an extraordinary and committed team of 100+ staff members, a dedicated board of community leaders, and the assistance of countless volunteers, supporters, and donors.

I am particularly excited to commence this year with Michele Lew as AACI's new President and CEO. Michele joined the AACI staff in August of 2005

and brings a great commitment to the mission of the organization. Michele previously served from 2001-2005 as the district director for former California State Assemblymember and current State Senator Joe Simitian, advising the legislator on education, health care, social services, nonprofit, and Asian Pacific American issues. She has also worked with the Carnegie Foundation, Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network, and UCLA on education issues. A native of Santa Clara County, Michele has served on a number of local nonprofit boards. Michele holds a degree in economics from Yale University and a master's degree in public policy from Harvard University.

As the Board Chairperson, I am proud of the many accomplishments AACI has made and deeply appreciative of the community support AACI enjoys. As AACI embarks on its next phase of strategic planning and growth, I hope you will continue to support AACI through your time, interest, and financial resources. We look forward to seeing you at AACI or an AACI event !

Sincerely,

Andrew A. Vu
Chairperson, AACI Board of Directors

A Fond Farewell



Dr. Chui Tsang

AACI Board and staff offer congratulations to Dr. Chui Tsang, immediate past AACI board chairperson, and San Jose City College President; Dr. Tsang has been appointed President of Santa Monica College. Dr. Tsang has been an outstanding board member and chair. While we are sad to see him leave AACI and the San Jose community, we are very excited for him in his new role.

Dr. Tsang, whose parents immigrated to the United States from Hong Kong, started his higher education at a community college and went on to earn a doctorate in linguistics from Stanford University. His new role makes him the highest ranking Asian American in California's community college system.

Greetings from the President



Michele Lew
President and CEO

Dear Friends,

One of the things I like best about AACI is that I get to walk by our senior center on my way into the office each morning. The senior center is a bustle of activity in the mornings, with Asian American seniors playing ping pong, chatting over coffee and tea, and catching up on the news. It's a great reminder of the community AACI builds and the clients we serve.

As a relative newcomer to the AACI staff, I'm humbled and honored to work with a talented group of over 100 colleagues. AACI's incredible staff, who collectively speak over a dozen languages and dialects, are focused on the immediate needs of our clients and the broader needs of the Asian Pacific American community in Santa Clara County.

In the coming months, the AACI board and staff will be engaging in a strategic planning process to clarify what we want to be doing, what we don't want to

do, and how we can achieve our goals. Already, there is interest in growing our health clinic, collaborating with the County to expand our mental health services, and rebuilding AACI's after-school programs. We'll continue to advocate on behalf of Asian Pacific Americans, and we look forward to building partnerships with other nonprofit organizations in order to best serve the community.

AACI has a great track record and great potential. We hope you'll join us in our efforts!

Sincerely,

Michele Lew,
President & CEO

AACI's

mission:

*"Working to
improve the*

quality of life for the

community, focusing on

Asian Pacific Americans"



AACI Management Team:

Michele Lew, President and CEO

Roland Acupido, Director of Human Resources & Administration

Kathleen Cordova, Development Director

Scott Fong, Finance Director

Sarita Kohli, M.F.T., M.B.A., Mental Health Programs Director

Lynn Liu, M.D., Medical Director, Health Clinic

David Wallsom, M.S., Director of Alcohol & Other Drug (AOD) Programs

Jorge Wong, Ph.D., Director of Mental Health Services,
Quality Improvement, & Compliance

Annual Senior Luncheon A Success!



Joined by AACI supporter Mrs. Anita Chan, Santa Clara County Supervisor Jim Beall and State Board of Equalization Member Betty Yee present AACI President & CEO Michele Lew with resolutions honoring AACI's commitment to serving seniors.



Senior Show Stoppers!



AACI's 15th Annual Senior Appreciation Luncheon was held September 22nd, 2005 at the Dynasty Seafood Restaurant in Cupertino.

With more than 200 guests attending, the event netted more than \$8,000. These proceeds will go toward continuing AACI's Senior Wellness Program, which centers not only on physical and mental health, but also on social health, to improve the overall wellness of our local Asian Pacific American seniors. Services include counseling, hot meals, ESL classes, computer technology workshops, and day and weekend recreational trips. Participants are empowered with the skills and resources to overcome language barriers, adjust to a new culture, cope with inter-generational changes, establish a social support network, and increase their awareness and knowledge of health and community resources.

Guests enjoyed a delicious banquet and entertainment provide by the very talented seniors!

Thank you to the following supporters of the event: Mrs. Anita Chan, Timothy Chan, Tsai Yun Wang Chan, Jeanne Fong, Man Shu Fong, Sandra Suerh Kuo, Shui-Ying Lam, Sui Sheung Lau, Ti-Wu Lee, Michele Lew, San Jose City Councilman Chuck Reed, Ming Shang Sang, Wylie Tsan, Chi Wah Tsu, Chun Yun Wu, the Raymond Wu Family, Tony Yu, Wan Tsai Yu, Prince of Peace, The Garden City Casino and Restaurant, Khong Guan, Dynasty Seafood Restaurant, Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Winchester Mystery House, and Pacific Gas & Electric Company.

Thanks also to SBC Corporation for its generous support of the Senior Wellness Program.

A Story of Survival

The following story is true, but names have been changed to protect client confidentiality.

When Jing Wen's husband brought her from Taiwan to the U.S., they immediately moved in with her husband's family. Jing Wen's in-laws soon shattered her expectations of a loving extended family. From the beginning, they screened her phone calls and mail, preventing family and friends from contacting her. When she wasn't doing the housework and cooking for the entire household, she was often locked in her room.

They took away her immigration documentation and repeatedly denied her requests to learn how to drive. They didn't let her attend religious services, and they spread false rumors in their small church community that Jing Wen had cheated on her husband. From the moment their second child was born, the baby was put under constant surveillance. The family never left Jing

Wen alone with her children, not even for a moment.

Jing Wen was essentially a servant, trapped in her own home. Acquaintances who might have helped either believed the rumors or feared reprisals from her in-laws. Because she could not speak English, she could not access resources outside her home. She wanted to flee but, as she became more and more isolated, her support network vanished and she feared she and her children would never be able to leave.

Eventually, with the help of an English-speaking neighbor, she was able to contact the police. The officers suspected abuse but, with no physical evidence of the extreme isolation, and emotional and financial abuse she had suffered, they could not press charges. Instead, they referred her to AACI's Asian Women's Home.

During her stay at our shelter, Jing Wen and a Chi-

nese-speaking Family Advocate worked to obtain a restraining order and child custody. Accessing services was complicated as the Family Advocate had to serve as a translator for case managers at other agencies. Eventually they found daycare for her children, so she could have free time to find a job. Once she found a job, she began looking for subsidized housing.

Ten months after she first contacted the Asian Women's Home, Jing Wen is living in an apartment with her children. Jing Wen's husband often tries to stalk her, following her in his car and taking photos of her socializing with friends. Still, Jing Wen has regained much of her old independence. She has obtained a full time job, and she is learning how to drive. Family and friends in Taiwan can tell over the phone that she has regained her confidence, that she is more like "the old Jing Wen." Jing Wen's daughters, having

been isolated as effectively as their mother, at first refused to play with the other children at the shelter. Ten months later, they love their new home and their new friends at daycare.



Domestic violence is usually thought of as physical violence between

spouses. However Jing Wen's story of emotional abuse and extreme control is not unique. Many barriers stand in the way of a battered woman, especially one who is also an immigrant and a non-native English speaker. The comprehensive services provided by the Asian Women's Home support women through the process of overcoming these barriers, as they work toward a safe and ultimately violence-free life for themselves and their children.

Asian Women's Home Offers A Safe Place to Heal

In recent years, Asian Americans in Santa Clara County suffered the highest rate of domestic violence-related deaths among minority groups in the county. Responding to a need for culturally and linguistically competent services for battered Asian and Pacific Islander women, AACI began serving Asian domestic vio-

lence victims in 1989 and opened the Asian Women's Home in 1994.

The Asian Women's Home is one of only a handful of battered women's shelters in the U.S. that specializes in assisting immigrant, monolingual Asian women and their children who are survivors of domestic vio-

lence. AACI also operates a 24 hour hotline for victims and provide comprehensive services for both victims who seek help through the shelter and for victims who come to the community office. AACI provides not only housing, but also services that help survivors live independently of their batterers. Advocates address the

employment, housing, legal, counseling, and immigration needs of their clients.

The Asian Women's Home prides itself on offering a safe, pleasant environment for women and their children recovering from the trauma of domestic violence.

Asian Women's Home Wish List

The following is a wish list of articles that would be warmly appreciated by the women and children we serve through our domestic violence services. They range from simple, necessary household items to gifts that would contribute to the well-being of our clients who stay at our emergency shelter or receive support through our community office. Monetary donations, which are used to support services for domestic violence victims, are also welcome. We are also looking for donors to sponsor kids for after-school programs, sponsor women for cosmetologist training programs, vocational college, driving school lessons, cooking classes, etc. Bilingual volunteers are also welcome.

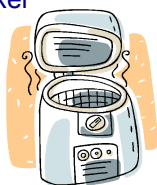
Thank you for considering giving to provide for the needs and comfort of those who are less fortunate in our community!

Sincerely,

The Staff of AACI's Asian Women's Home

Kitchen / Laundry Room:

- Plastic food storage containers
- Reusable tablecloths
- New hand towels
- Paper towels (Max 12 in a pack)
- Unused mop, brooms
- 60 lb. residential trash bin
- Rice cooker for single family
- Utensils and cutting knives



Bathrooms:

- New bath towels (adult and child size)
- Toilet seat covers and attachable container for the wall
- Toilet paper (Max 24 in a pack)

Bedrooms:

- New twin size mattress and box spring (1)
- Twin size fitted bed sheets and flat sheets (10)
- Queen size fitted bed sheets and flat sheets (5)
- New pillows and pillow cases

Living/Dining Room:

- Couch covers (2 sets for 3 seat couch)
- Video shelf attachable to the wall
- TV/VHS combo or TV/DVD combo
- TV antenna
- Female-image supportive pictures/paintings/posters to hang on the walls, or posters/pictures of mother and child that illustrate the power and beauty of love

Children's Playroom:

- Sturdy desk lamp
- Children's story books, Dr. Seuss books
- Computer desk and chair set
- Cartoon videotapes, children's videotapes, DVDs for children
- Foldable one-person study desk

Women:

- Body lotion, hand/face cream and sunscreen
- Feminine pads
- Hair care products (hairspray, color dye, gel)
- ESL books, tapes, or CDs in Mandarin/English, Vietnamese/English, Cantonese/English, Cambodian/English, Japanese/English, Spanish/English, Korean/English
- Bilingual dictionaries in Vietnamese/English, Chinese/English, Cambodian/English, Japanese/English, Spanish/English, Korean/English
- Socks (fits all size) and winter slippers (size 5-9)

Children:

- Diapers (size 3,4,5,6)
- Diaper wipes
- Warm jackets for ages 3-10
- School supplies: backpacks, crayons, etc.
- Stroller
- Gift certificates to movie theaters
- Tickets to children's places: museum, zoo, Harry Hollow, etc.

Client Support:

- Asian décor: paintings, posters, calligraphy, etc. to make office more comfortable for clients
- Polaroid film (Spectra brand name) to document client injuries
- Voice recorder for trainings and recording multilingual messages for clients

- Camcorder for recording training sessions for volunteers and staff
- Color printer for developing client injury photos and for community education materials
- Laptop computer for college and community group education on domestic violence
- Industrial photocopier (capable of printing 2-sides)
- File cabinets (4-tier at most, 2-tier welcome)
- 5-level ceiling-high sturdy book shelf
- Cell phones in good condition with active plans and paid monthly balance for safety of families in emergency need
- Computers (new or less than 3 years old)

Most Valued Items for Women and Children:

Gift certificates for:

- Target
- Wal-Mart
- Payless Shoes
- Walgreen or Longs Drugstores
- Safeway or Albertsons

These gift certificates, regardless of amount, meet different individual needs of women and children best at times of emergency, and are extremely appreciated. Please note that all items should be new or in good condition in order to be useful for women and children in the long-term. Receipt for your tax-deductible donations will be provided upon request. If you are interested in donating, please contact the Domestic Violence Program of AACI at (408) 975-2730.

AACI Board of Directors 2006

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Sony Computer Entertainment
America, Inc.*

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Community Foundation Silicon Valley*

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Cohn*

Cecilia Bateman *Patient Advocate*

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*Ophthalmologist
The Eye Institute of Silicon Valley*

Paul Fong
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Evergreen Valley College*

Kiet Ha
*Director of Physician Services and Business Development
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Dentist

Crystal Lin *Attorney*

Jeremy Nishihara
*Communications Manager
Cupertino Union School District*

Ernesto Orduna
Patient Advocate

Sally Wu
Certified Public Accountant

HIV/AIDS Programs Benefit from Walking & Rocking

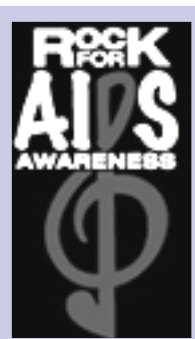
The 16th annual Silicon Valley AIDS Walk took place on Sunday, October 16, 2005. Each year, walkers raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to help local organizations that provide AIDS care and prevention education.

AACI's team, comprised of agency staff, family, and friends laced up their walking shoes and joined in the 10K walk. Those who couldn't make it to the walk showed their support by making a pledge. For the first time, AACI was one of the nine benefiting agencies for the walk.

The amount raised through the walk for AACI's HIV Outreach program was \$7,760.



AACI staff and AIDS Walk Participants



There were also two Rock for AIDS Awareness concerts in San Jose, around World AIDS Day on Dec. 1. The first concert was Nov. 30 at the Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center. The second was on Dec. 2 at Angels Ultra Lounge & Cabaret. The final amounts raised are still being determined; AACI, the DeFrank Center and the Neil A. Christie Living Center benefited from both concerts.

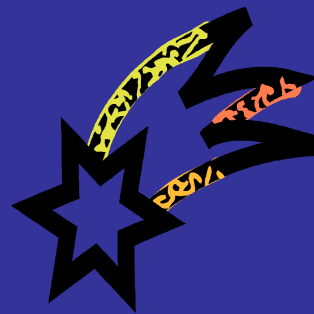


Plan now to attend
AACI's 33rd Annual Banquet
and

Community Star Awards

Friday, May 19th, 2006

Fairmont Hotel, San Jose



Details to Follow!

Asian Americans for Community Involvement
Gordon N. Chan Community Services Center
2400 Moorpark Ave., Suite 300
San Jose, CA 95128

Non-Profit
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