

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Friends of Asha-Ray of Hope,

Thank you all who have renewed your memberships for 2011. Without your friendship and financial support, we would not be able to work toward a violence-free society.

Ahimsa or non-violence is an important tenet of major religions of the world. It means kindness and non-violence towards all living things; it respects living beings as a unity and strongly underlines the fact that all living things are connected.

***By not harming any living being,  
one becomes fit for salvation.  
Manu-Smriti 6.60***

Asha-Ray of Hope strongly believes that all individuals have the right to live with dignity and respect, and under no circumstances is domestic violence in any of its forms (verbal, physical, emotional, sexual, or financial) acceptable in a civilized society.

Our activities are two-fold--progressive and responsive. The progressive "indirect services" coordinate and arrange activities and events that create awareness and provide education to the community regarding domestic violence. The responsive "direct services" work directly with brave women who are courageous enough to stand up against domestic violence and seek our help. These two branches work independently but complement each other's strengths very efficiently.

If you wish to be a part of either the "direct services" or the "indirect services" please feel free to get in touch with our office. Sujatha Reddy's article "Letter to Members" highlights the benefits of being a member of Asha-Ray of Hope.



Left to Right: Debarati Bardhan, President, Asha-Ray of Hope; Samia Al-Zier, President, Arab Americans of Central Ohio; Guadalupe Velasquez, New Americans Coordinator, Community Relations Commission, City of Columbus; and Maria Wolever, Vice President, Columbus Council of World Affairs.

Asha volunteers have been very active socially, participating in local festivals and events, setting up booths, distributing brochures and resource cards, and spreading the word about Asha-Ray of Hope. The community has also embraced us with open arms, inviting us to set up our booths for free at local events (TACO, Ugadi celebrations), providing free-advertisements for Asha in their program brochures (FIA, India Festival), or donating money collected at local functions (COBCA, Sports Day), as a token of appreciation for our service to the community. We are so grateful to you and appreciate your support.

We are also actively forming working partnerships with existing organizations. Our latest tie-in has been with the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio (SARNCO), a part of Ohio Health. SARNCO is a storehouse of resources

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## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

As a part of "International Women's Day" celebrations, the Community Relations Commission for the City of Columbus hosted a panel discussion celebrating professional and dynamic women of Central Ohio.

The show was hosted by Guadalupe Velasquez, New Americans Coordinator, Columbus Community Relations Commission, and included Debarati (Debi) Bardhan, President, Asha-Ray of Hope; Samia Al-Zier, an independent business owner and President of Arab Americans of Central Ohio; and Maria Wolever, Vice President and Director of Community Programs, Columbus Council of World Affairs.

The show aired live on CTV on Wednesday, March 2, 2011, at 7:30 PM and focused on the women speaking about their personal journeys, their professional lives, and their calling for advocacy. ❖

and information, and we are so glad that our clients will now have access to the resources available at SARNCO.

In addition to organizations, Asha-Ray of Hope continues to foster a working relationship with Verizon Wireless. They are our corporate partners and we are very grateful for their support.

Last year, in October, Asha-Ray of Hope began forming liaisons with existing domestic violence (DV) organizations in Cincinnati. This year, we are looking forward to providing services in Cleveland and Dayton. ***Asha-Ray of Hope is growing!*** With our expansion and growth, we are able to provide services to a greater population.

We will continue to keep the fires burning; with YOUR support and with this group of selfless Board members and dedicated volunteers that we are so lucky to have, anything is possible.

We are currently working on a few more events for the rest of the year, so please stay tuned, and THANK YOU for being a true friend of Asha-Ray of Hope.

Sincerely,  
Debarati (Debi) Bardhan

**So far this year, Asha's counselors and volunteers have worked with 7 clients for a total of 118 hours, amounting to a total of \$ 6716.00 in free services. Counselors spent 57 hours (equivalent to \$ 5130.00) and volunteers 61 hours (equivalent to \$ 1586.00).**

**Asha-Ray of Hope thanks the counselors and volunteers for their caring attention to our clients' welfare.**

Do you want to become a Board Member? Please contact our office and get a copy of the By-Laws and Job Descriptions. See what qualifications and experience you already possess and what additional credentialing or training you need to be a part of this rapidly growing "one-of-a-kind" organization.

## LETTER TO MEMBERS

*By Sujatha Reddy*

Dear Members,

I would like to thank you all for your dedicated support. It means a lot to us. This year we want to increase our membership and are seeking your help in doing so. Please become a spokesperson and tell all your friends to become active members of Asha-Ray of Hope. As a member, you will receive newsletters and current information on what we are doing. You will also have a right to vote, besides attending our general meetings. You can choose to volunteer at our events or spread the word about Asha-Ray of Hope. With your membership and active involvement, you can also serve as an elected board member.

We are constantly looking for volunteers from our community to help with our events and promote awareness. Some of the areas volunteers can help:

- Community Resources and Networking
- Knowledge-sharing and awareness
- Fundraising and financial support
- Domestic crisis assistance and support
- Community fairs and festivals

**NOTE: We are looking to hire a part-time licensed Social Worker** for direct client services, an LISW with a knowledge of South Asian culture. We have so far depended on the volunteer assistance of licensed professionals and have trained domestic-violence-prevention advocates/volunteers who put in endless effort and time.

Please let us know if you or any of your friends are willing to help us in our efforts to take this organization to the next level of standardized care. We will be happy to answer any questions or concerns you might have. We would also love to get feedback from you. Please write to us or call us: our website and contact information is in the *Newsletter*. ❖

Asha-Ray of Hope is grateful to **Verizon Wireless** for donating fifteen (15) cell phones to its clients. These phones will be used exclusively by clients to communicate with counselors, case workers, and any other individuals who directly contribute to their well-being and safety.

## HOPELINE: DON'T BE SILENT, TAKE A STAND TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

*By Laura Merritt*

One in four women will experience domestic violence at some point in her life. On average, three women are killed every day at the hands of a current or former intimate partner.

With these astounding numbers, domestic violence is still a subject that's often pushed aside or talked about in whispers. We may know a survivor, or even be one. Regardless, domestic violence is an issue that affects all too many of us.

Thankfully, a great partnership assisting those impacted by domestic violence exists right here in Central Ohio: Verizon Wireless' HopeLine® and Asha-Ray of Hope, which, as you know, helps clients through advocacy, collaboration, and education. By partnering together, Asha-Ray of Hope and Verizon are making a difference, helping combat the domestic violence epidemic here and nationwide.

HopeLine® from Verizon puts the nation's most reliable network to work in the community by turning no-longer-used cell phones into support for domestic-violence victims and survivors. Thanks to the continued generosity of Central Ohioans in donating devices, Verizon is able to support organizations such as Asha-Ray of Hope. Last year alone, consumers and businesses donated more than 41,000 phones to HopeLine, enabling Verizon to award more than \$110,000 in cash grants to agencies including Asha-Ray of Hope.

Victims of domestic violence need to know that they are not alone. They can depend on organizations, resources, and individuals across the country and right here in Central Ohio to support them. There is hope, and we can all help. Together, we can all be the change needed to create a world where domestic violence does not exist.

*Laura Merritt is public relations manager for Verizon Wireless' Ohio/Pennsylvania/West Virginia region. For over 15 years, Verizon Wireless has devoted its community service efforts to domestic violence awareness and prevention through the company's HopeLine® program. To learn more about how to donate to HopeLine, visit [www.verizonwireless.com/hopeline](http://www.verizonwireless.com/hopeline). ❖*

## IT'S OUR PROBLEM TOO!

### Domestic Matters: Role of Physicians

By Ujwala Dixit, MD\*

A young, pretty female came to the ER with a nose bleed. An intelligent conversationalist, she chatted with us. When we ruled out "fractured nasal bones" she let on that she had "accidentally hit my face on a door last night." An X-ray revealed a hairline fracture. She was discharged with symptomatic treatment. Domestic abuse was not screened for, nor suspected. A first-generation Indian immigrant, she later disclosed to her therapist that chaos at home caused the "bleed."

This is a true story. It's challenging to consider domestic abuse / violence as an issue for us Indians. Why? The cherished image is of ourselves as high achievers, a holistic and "model minority." Domestic matters are scary, unacceptable deflations with fears of being ostracized, buried in shame. Denial is comforting. Accepting the problem creates demands for necessary change.

The role of healthcare providers is pivotal in the journey of transformation. While even men can be victims of intimate-partner violence (IPV), 85% percent are women. One in every 4 women has been a victim, with only 3% of intimate-partner crimes against men (Bureau of Justice, 2003). Each year, 1.3 million women and 835,000 men are physically assaulted by an intimate partner. Stats for Indians are sparse. One such study in Boston revealed that 41% women disclosed domestic violence.

Overt aggression (DV) may be visible. The difficulty is in recognizing covert abuse with extensive effects. Routine dealings may include name calling, yelling, put downs, threats to send her away or kill her. Other settings may center on the wife being deprived of her freedom in various ways: from phoning, having friends of her own, or holding critical documents; being forced to be a homemaker with zero money; being prevented from driving or any independent activity, including shopping. Are these abuses too? Public opinions vary widely.

The U. S. Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) defines domestic abuse and violence as a "pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner." The definition adds

that it "can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender" and can take many forms, "including physical abuse, sexual, emotional, economic, and psychological abuse." It is an ongoing cycle of coercive behaviors and tactics exercised on anyone. It is a habitual relationship system.

The physician's role in such complex yet delicate situations begins with being aware that domestic abuse and violence can happen to anyone, acknowledging painful reality, and moving beyond personal discomfort, if any.

A simple, effective screen for DV recommended for healthcare providers is summarized in the established acronym, **RADAR**, developed by Mass Medical Society in 1992:

**R=Routinely** screen all female patients. Chances of a silent sufferer disclosing to the doctor are high--if questions are **Raised**. Interview alone in privacy. According to a study, 92% women of IPV did not disclose to their physicians; 57% did not discuss with anyone. Additionally, four different studies of survivors of abuse showed that 70% to 81% reported a preference for screening.

**A=Ask** direct questions in an empathic, non-judgmental manner. Culture sensitivity and specificity are imperative. Assure that it's a routine. **Articulate awareness** about complete well-being.

**D=Document** all findings. A body map is invaluable. **Document** critical **discrepancy** between history and findings. Obtain **Details**. **Demarcate** quotes in HPI. **Discuss** taking pictures after an appropriate written consent.

**A=Assess** safety; fear; suicide or homicide risk; the safety of children, if any; weapons history; guns at home.

**R=Respond, Review options, Refer.** If in imminent danger--**Recommend** shelters and/or friends. Otherwise, provide information, hotlines, access to essential resources. **REMEMBER** it may be unsafe for her to possess such information. Render a follow-up appointment.

Why should we care? *Because we are the "radars."* Acknowledgement and education of healthcare professionals is a major step. The health policy implications are widespread for a condition that is four times more common than breast cancer, spills over to the family, affects children, and

incurs healthcare utilization costs twice the norm. Every pregnant woman is screened for diabetes, although the incidence is 3-8%. On the other hand, an estimated incidence of IPV during pregnancy is 4-17%. The overall risk for abuse during pregnancy is higher than HTN, DM, and PRM.

A doctor's office can make it easy for people who need assistance in this area. Some suggestions to reach out:

- Show comfort with difficult conversations
- Recognize this as a health-care problem
- Be aware of intergenerational impact of violence of any form
- Identify with doctor's power to empower the patient
- Make it a value-added feature of your practice
- Seek CME on this subject which meets most states' Patient Safety licensure requirements
- Gain familiarity with community resources
- Educate staff, public, youth
- Invest in strong relationships with health-care seekers
- Adopt open communication strategies
- Display posters relating to positive, healthy relationships
- Have information pamphlets about strengthening families
- Show audio-visuals on respectful relationships
- Communicate consistent commitment to nonviolence in every form
- Convey that nonviolence begins at home

Let's partner to build bridges by advocating for peace at home. FAQ range from "why doesn't she just do whatever is asked of her" to "why doesn't she do her duties." Usually the inference is that "she is doing something to make it happen as she upsets him." Let's question why doesn't he understand; why does he hit or why doesn't he stop?

(Please note that only the 1st words of RADAR are original; the rest are formulated by Dr. Dixit.)

\*Dr. Dixit, a board-certified psychiatrist, is Founder-Director of Integrative Mental Health in Media, PA. She is the President of SEWAA and can be reached at UDixitmd@gmail.com.

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## ANJU'S STORY

By Maliba Raazi

"Anju" was a sweet young bride who had recently arrived in the U.S., excited and eager to begin a new life. Her husband was an educated man who worked for a well-established company. A very active member of his community, he appeared to be truly kind in nature and was charming to all of his friends and co-workers.

Holding a Master's degree, Anju was also well educated and had worked in an IT department before coming to the U.S. The thought of working in the U.S. was awesome to her.

Her husband seemed happy to have her and began to show her around. She was awed by his modern and orderly home.

He wanted to help her get comfortable with her new life, so he said, and began acclimating her to the house. The house was always to be kept immaculate; it became clear to Anju that this cleanliness was very important to her husband. He would tell her helpful tips on how to keep the house in top condition, demonstrating how the carpet looked much nicer when vacuumed from right to left, etc.

The flat-screen television in the family room needed special handling. She was not to bother with it during the day; if she wanted, she could watch her shows on the smaller television in the bedroom. When he came home, they could both watch his program of choice.

He gave her permission to pick up the laundry and put it in washing machine, but only he was allowed to run it. Those appliances were top of the line and he did not want to ruin them by allowing his wife to handle them.

He would even take on the responsibility of getting the groceries or whatever he deemed necessary for the house. Since they were financially stable, she did not need to work outside the house. He did not like his wife to work anyway. Her job was to cook, clean, and obey.

At first, this all seemed unsettling to Anju. Everything was new to her, but she kept quiet and accepted it, thinking that this was how Indian newlyweds must live in America. With no spending money and nowhere to go, she lived her life the way he wanted her to live it.

Matters escalated; little annoyances made him violently upset. Name calling, pushing, and hitting became normal behavior for him. Unfortunately Anju became a victim of serious physical, emotional, and economic abuse.

Slowly she began to realize that the way she was living was not right.

A friend gave her the number for Asha-Ray of Hope. After hanging on to the number for some time, she finally mustered up the courage to call the Asha-Ray of Hope office.

Our dedicated counselor helped her to take small steps towards self-reliance and self-empowerment. Besides free counseling, Anju received constant support every step of the way. Asha-Ray of Hope helped her find an attorney who was willing to take her case pro bono, which is an incredible challenge in itself.

We provided her with transportation for consultations with her attorney and to court visits. The volunteers at Asha Ray of Hope also prepared and accompanied Anju to her first job interview at a local grocery store. Our counselors and case workers helped to find her a new place to live, even assisting her in finding affordable driving lessons. With our help, she was finally able to acquire a driver's license.

With job experience under her belt and self-reliance in transportation, she is currently on her feet, looking for a better job. Today, Anju is a confident and independent woman, full of hope and optimism. She is one of many Asha-Ray of Hope clients who have overcome abusive relationships and become empowered as strong and able women. ❖

Asha Board member Dr. J. S. Jindal was the proud recipient of the 2011 **Service above Self** award, an honor bestowed by the Columbus Rotary to acknowledge and appreciate selfless service in the community.

As an honoree, Dr. Jindal had the opportunity to designate a charity of his choice to receive a one-thousand dollar (\$ 1000) donation from the Columbus Rotary. Dr. Jindal selected **Asha-Ray of Hope**. Thank you!

## SPEAK. ACT. SUPPORT.

### A Forum for Bringing Domestic Violence Issues in the Asian Community to the Forefront



By Sujatha Reddy

I was invited to and was accompanied by Kavitha Chandupatla, a volunteer at Asha-Ray of Hope, in a panel discussion organized by the Asian Community Alliance, Inc., in collaboration with the Hindu Society of Greater Cincinnati.

The organizers held a forum to bring the issue of Domestic Violence in Asian Communities to the forefront. The forum was well attended and represented by various groups including the YWCA of Cincinnati, the YWCA battered women's shelter, the Legal Aid Society of greater Cincinnati, Women helping Women, and members of the Asian community of Cincinnati.

The aim of the forum was to educate and raise awareness in the community on this extremely sensitive topic. The forum engaged participants in a discussion to identify concerns and challenges in the community and discuss what resources need to be in place to assist and support individuals who seek help. The forum also educated members on available local resources.

Asha-Ray of Hope was recognized as a well-established and reputable organization working to eliminate domestic violence in the South Asian population. Asha's efforts to curb this social evil were acknowledged, and we were asked to provide guidance and organize trainings and workshops for the community in the Cincinnati area, in future.

I was given an opportunity to speak about our organization and how we function. We distributed our brochures and met up with our clients in Cincinnati later that afternoon.

It was a great experience and brought our organization to the forefront of fighting domestic violence in Ohio. ❖

**Serving on the Asha Board is a privilege and should not be taken for granted.** The Asha-Ray of Hope Board is incorporating more accountability in the leadership by introducing yearly evaluations of the President, the Board, the Office Coordinator, and the Case Worker. The leadership evaluations will be performed by a Committee comprising of Past Presidents of Asha-Ray of Hope.

## SARNCO

*By Payel Gupta*

On Wednesday, March 16, 2011, Asha-Ray of Hope had an extraordinary opportunity to address board members of the Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio (SARNCO) at the State Library of Ohio.

SARNCO is the local sexual assault intervention and prevention program that works with local law enforcement and social services agencies to provide medical and social support and services to victims of sexual assault. Services provided by SARNCO include evaluation and treatment in local emergency departments, emotional support from volunteer advocates, a 24-hour rape helpline, referrals to aftercare counseling, and community outreach and prevention education.

It was a perfect opportunity for President Debarati (Debi) Bardhan to introduce Asha-Ray of Hope to the attendees and speak about

the services it provides to victims of Domestic Violence in South Asian communities. She stressed the importance of forming a long-term partnership with a powerful consortium like SARNCO and talked about connecting SARNCO's resources with members of the South Asian community who need it the most.

She was joined by board member Maliha Raazi, who presented a typical case study that successfully brought out salient features of culturally sensitive counseling that Asha-Ray of Hope provides to all its clients. Board member Dr. J. S. Jindal attended the presentation as well.

Other attendees included members of Community Refugee and Immigration Services (CRIS), Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN), OhioHealth, City of Columbus Police officials, Franklin County Office of Homeland Security & Justice Programs among others.

For more information please log onto: <http://www.ohiohealth.com> ❖

## COMMUNITY SHARES OF MID OHIO

*By Dr. Bhagwandas Satiani*

Community Shares of Mid Ohio (COSMO) was established in 1993 as a coalition of locally based, non-profit organizations collaboratively participating in workplace giving campaigns. These campaigns provide vital and stable financial support for non-profit, social-advocacy member organizations.

The sixty members are community-based, volunteer-led charities and agencies that address a wide range of social and environmental services and issues, and focus on long-term, prevention-oriented solutions that emphasize social change and justice.

One of the goals is to collaboratively raise funds for the benefit of member 501 (c) (3) non-profit organizations actively engaged in programs directed toward community improvement, social change, and citizen education and empowerment.

Asha-Ray of Hope joined COSMO in 2009; we are hoping to leverage our following in the South Asian community, and friends and supporters in general, to use payroll deduction to benefit victims of domestic violence.

COSMO campaigns are conducted at many public and private workplaces:

Public: COTA Central Ohio Transit Authority; City of Columbus; City of Dublin; Columbus Metropolitan Libraries; Columbus Public Schools; Columbus State Community College; Franklin County Combined Charitable Campaign; Hilliard Schools; Miami Valley Combined Federal Campaign (Dayton area); The Ohio State University Community Charitable Drive; State of Ohio Combined Charitable Campaign (CCC); 3 Upper Arlington Schools; WCBE 90.5; Westerville Schools

Private: AFSCME; Commerce National Bank; COSI; Dennison University

Open Online Campaigns: AT&T (online and as CS USA); CNA Insurance (online and as CS USA); MEDCO Health Solutions; US Filter; Wells Fargo Financial Services

**If you work at any of these places, you have an opportunity to give to ASHA through payroll deductions. ❖**

**Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter!**

## ASHA-RAY OF HOPE COMMUNITY-PROJECTS CALENDAR

### *Upcoming Events*

#### **July 2011:**

Domestic Violence Workshop and Partnerships in Dayton

#### **August 2011:**

Board & Volunteer Training by Saswati Sarkar, MANAVI, New Jersey

#### **September 2011:**

Domestic Violence Awareness Workshop at the Noor Islamic Cultural Center

Domestic Violence Workshop and Partnerships in Cleveland

Asha-Ray of Hope Walkathon

#### **October 2011:**

Film Festival & Panel Discussion

#### **November 2011:**

Annual Appreciation Dinner

***When Domestic Violence Occurs, Everyone in our Community Gets Hurt***

## ASHA BOARD MEMBERS

### President:

*Debarati Bardhan*

### Vice President:

*Sujatha Reddy*

### Secretary:

*Dr. Bhagwan Satiani*

### Treasurer:

*Dr. Suwankar Sengupta*

*Hollie Hinton*

*Dr. J. S. Jindal*

*Kirit Kapadia (Interim)*

*Prabha Narayan*

*Maliha Raazi*

*Newsletter Editor:*

*Dr. Veena Kasbekar*

## Domestic Violence Resource List

### EMERGENCY: 911

Action Ohio Coalition for Battered Women  
.....614-825-0551

Asian American Community Service  
.....614-220-4023

Bravo (LGBT Services) .....866-862-7286

CHOICES; 24 hours, Crisis/Shelter  
.....614-224-4663

Office of Criminal Justice Services,  
Family Violence Prevention Center  
.....888-448-4842

Ohio Attorney General Crime Victim Services  
.....800-582-2877

Ohio Domestic Violence Network  
.....800-934-9840

National Domestic Violence Hotline  
.....800-799-SAFE or 800-799-7233

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network  
(RAINN): .....800-656-HOPE

Sexual Assault Response Network of Central  
Ohio SARNCO .....614-267-7020

Suicide Prevention Hotline..614-221-5445

### LEGAL RESOURCES

Capital University Family Advocacy Clinic  
.....614-236-6779

Columbus Police Department  
.....614-645-4545

City Prosecutor's Office  
.....614-645 7483

Franklin County Prosecutor's Office  
.....614-462-3555

Franklin County Job and Family Services  
.....614-462-4000

Franklin County Sheriff's Department  
.....614-462-3333

Immigration & Refugee Services  
.....614-235-5747

Legal Aid Society of Columbus  
.....614-224-8374

Ohio State Legal Services Association  
.....866-LAW-OHIO

**Contact Us at:**  
**Office Phone: (614) 326-2121**  
**Crisis Line: (614) 565-2918**  
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