

“THE BEST WAY TO FIND YOURSELF IS TO LOSE YOURSELF IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS.”

Mahatma Gandhi

Dear Friends of ASHA,

Greetings! This year has gone by too fast. It has been a whirlwind of activities and a flurry of events. It started with the Film Series in April and ended with the play, *Interrogations*, in November, with speaker events, conferences, trainings and festivals in between.

How do we do all this? Over fifty of you volunteered to help ASHA behind the scenes in numerous capacities. Volunteers provide the momentum that pushes this cause along. One example of this is our recent

Interrogations play. The play participants, the ticket seller and ushers were all volunteers. We have several volunteers, including OSU students, who work in the office. Our volunteer case managers work tirelessly with our clients. They provide transportation to take our clients for groceries and to doctor's offices, legal firms, immigration centers and financial aid appointments. They are wonderful advocates and never leave our clients' sides, no matter what. They have endless patience and great listening skills.

I was very touched when some of our volunteers cooked for one of our clients staying in a shelter so she could have foods familiar to her during her stay. They bought her Indian groceries and phone cards so she could call her family. They took her for outings and even welcomed her into their homes.

These are the unsung heroes who stand behind the few faces whose pictures you see in the newsletters and out front during ASHA events.

I am so proud of our family of volunteers. Their dedication inspires me and gives me courage to continue to carry out ASHA's mission.

Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,

Mira Satiani, LPCC

President, ASHA-RAY OF HOPE



Asha Joshi & Uma Bhatt at ASHA's Columbus International Festival Booth

Dr. Janak Wadwa shares ASHA's mission with India Festival participants





Ms. Anjali Mani

by Deepa Govindaswamy, ASHA volunteer

On July 13, 2006, ASHA-Ray of Hope organized a speaker event with Anjali Mani on “Domestic Violence in the South Asian Communities.”

Ms. Anjali S. Mani, LMSW has worked in the field of domestic violence since 1997, serving the South Asian community and other diverse populations in the New York area. Since 2004, she has served as a Domestic Violence Consultant for the New York City Administration for Children’s Services’ Clinical Consultation Program. She has been working in vast capacities and giving extensive trainings on domestic violence and other disciplines, such as mental health and substance abuse to Child Protective staff. Ms. Mani has also worked with Manavi, a South Asian domestic violence organization; acted as director of a family court program at Safe Horizon; and provided therapy and crisis intervention to domestic violence survivors at Westchester Jewish Community Services.

In this capacity, Ms. Mani presented her vast understanding of domestic violence witnessed and experienced by women in the South Asian Communities. She started the event “defining domestic violence.” She also spoke about the various cultural barriers that South Asian women face. Interestingly, about 60% of the battered women are either silenced or do not report incidents due to various barriers like culture or communication. It is of value to note that individuals rather than culture cause domestic violence and that lack of cultural

knowledge perpetuates stereotypes and biases. Ms. Mani also spoke about how the barrier to communicate often leads victims of domestic violence to remain silent. Isolation, lack of support from the community, language barriers, fear of law-enforcing authorities or deportation, overall biases and prejudice are some of the barriers victims often face. Various incidents of domestic violence were shared that have been witnessed in different states, which was indeed an eye opener.

Lastly Ms. Mani presented some solutions on making domestic violence more visible. These included grassroots-based women’s organizations, providing training and education and involving men in addressing domestic violence. Ms. Mani stressed the important role of many grassroots-based women’s organizations and how they can help mobilize communities through education, training, visibility and awareness. She also spoke about the various challenges faced by these organizations.

The time ended with many questions from attendees. This event provided helpful information about fighting domestic violence and real examples of the problems faced by many South Asian women.



Dr. Usha Tummala-Narra

by Deepa Saratchandran, ASHA member

ASHA presented a Speaker Event on “Effects of Immigration and Cultural Beliefs on Relationships” as part of the Women Health Month Activities on September 27, 2006. This event was co-sponsored by The Ohio State University’s Multi-Cultural Center, Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Prevention Program, Ohio

Department of Health, Bureau of Health, Prevention and Risk Reduction. Dr. Usha Tummala-Narra was invited from Michigan to speak to an interested group on The Ohio State University campus.

Dr. Usha Tummala-Narra came to ASHA with a great deal of previous experience and knowledge. She completed her Doctoral thesis in Psychiatry on “Violence, Immigration, Gender and Race in the Context of Psychotherapy.” She is currently a visiting scholar in the Department of Psychiatry, University of Michigan. She is also a Teaching Assistant at Cambridge Hospital at Harvard Medical School and has a private practice at Farmington Hills.

Dr. Tummala-Narra focused her speech on two types of relationships: the mother-child relationship and the intimate partner relationship. Dr. Tummala-Narra elaborated on the socio-cultural dynamics of both of these relationships in the immigrant communities and presented some very enlightening real life examples from her clinical studies. She distinguished the differences between healthy relationships and those of an abusive or destructive nature.

She stated that “motherhood defines identity formation/transition in most women.” Immigration, changing gender role definitions and intra-psychic and social changes create immense dilemmas in immigrant mothers. This new identity formation brings forth a sense of mourning for loss of country of origin and social support. Separation from one’s own maternal figure makes it more difficult for motherhood development.

Women are perceived as carriers of cultural values. Immigrant mothers struggle to retain their values of attachment and interdependence on family while adapting to the Western ideals of personal independence. Their pre-immigration status (social, education and financial), the status of their country of origin (wars, oppression) and the availability

of opportunities to refuel their cultural identity and reconnect to their mother country are all contributing factors to a mother's ability to identify herself within the two cultures and accept her child's mixed loyalties. Dr. Tummala-Narra quoted one of her clinical cases to illustrate this struggle:

"An Indian mother who had immigrated twenty-five years ago, and holds a professional job was experiencing an escalated tension in the relationship with her American-born teenaged daughter. The mother expressed her frustration with the daughter's dating behavior. Though she encouraged her daughter's independence in academic activities, she disapproved of her immodesty in social activity. The daughter, on the other hand, wanted to be both an Indian and American. Eventually it came out that the mother wanted to be independent like her daughter and the daughter wanted to balance her cultural values with western independence like her mother."

Immigrants face an extremely high risk of racism and prejudice in the host country. Immigrant parents try to protect their children from racism by curtailing their social interactions in the host society, encouraging relationships within their ethnic groups, modifying their names, etc. Immigrant women from financially disadvantaged and culturally conflicted minority groups are at high risk for developing social and psychological problems such as depression and psychosomatic disorders.

Intimate partner relationships are affected by multiple factors: changing gender definitions, family, technology and prejudices within the ethnic community. Dr. Tummala-Narra illustrated the ambivalent expectations of immigrants (mainly South Asians) in the context of choosing their partners. For example, a South Asian woman may want her partner to perceive her as career-driven but also traditional. In another instance, a South Asian man may be confused by the financial expectations of the women in his ethnic community. Despite the

changing gender role expectations and loosening of arranged-marriage values, immigrants may face devaluing of their self-esteem due to discriminations within their communities. Dr. Tummala-Narra elaborated on skin-color fixations (preferences of lighter skin color) prevalent in many South Asian cultures and the negative impacts this has on a number of people in these communities.

A 1995 study by World Mental Health Organization states an increase in violence against women in the past 20 years. Due to the intimate and liberal nature of partner relationships, it is difficult to detect abuse. In recent years, mental health studies have shifted focus from analysis of the perpetrator's psychology to the study of quality/quantity of social support to violence survivors.

In South Asian communities, the innate values on family privacy and male supremacy make it

difficult for abused women to seek help. Other factors that deter immigrant victims from seeking help are: language barriers, immigration status, social stigma, fear of loss of privacy and risk of life. Immigrants affected by domestic violence may also question the cultural sensitivity of mainstream agencies providing support for domestic violence victims. Dr. Tummala-Narra illustrated this by speaking about a client who moved to a shelter serving Asian-American women. Due to her religious beliefs, she could not adapt to the food served at the shelter. This client ended up returning to the abusive relationship due to lack of support for her religious and cultural beliefs.

This event ended by having a question and answer time with Dr. Tummala-Narra. The event, as a whole, gave a great deal of helpful information that social service workers, domestic violence survivors, students and other community members could take with them. ❖

ASHA-Ray of Hope's Mission

ASHA-Ray of Hope exists to support and counsel individuals and families affected by domestic violence, especially those of the South Asian community. Through advocacy, collaboration and awareness activities, ASHA will help to educate the greater community and connect individuals and families with the resources they need to achieve self-reliance.

ASHA HAPPENINGS

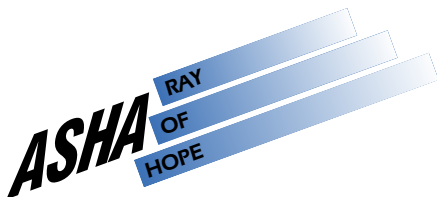
This has been a busy time of year for ASHA. In addition to our two Speaker Events and our annual Fundraiser (which you can read about on other pages of the newsletter), we also participated in programs and events held in the community. These are other ways we are trying to spread the word about the issue of domestic violence in the South Asian community:

❖ ASHA at the India Festival

by Veena Kasbekar, ASHA member

ASHA-Ray of Hope's volunteers and board members staffed a booth at the India Festival held on September 23rd at Veterans Memorial. Through a poster, brochures and our presence, ASHA's work for domestic harmony in the South Asian community was showcased. A steady stream of visitors came for information regarding our work; and yes, a few wondered at the existence of domestic violence in our community but listened attentively to our explanations. The overall communication was positive and productive, with many supportive comments being made by bystanders regarding our efforts.

A White Elephant Sale was also held at the ASHA booth to raise money for our organization. Deepa Saratchandra and I worked on collecting, labeling, and displaying items for the sale: new and gently used outfits, books and deshi knickknacks. ASHA collected a modest amount from the sale. More importantly, our presence among the tantalizing food and clothing booths and the spiritual and the political booths seemed natural. I felt that we belonged and were accepted as such by the diverse attendees enjoying the festival.



❖ ASHA at the Columbus

International Festival

by Farheen Mirza, ASHA volunteer

We all enjoy festivities as humans because we are social creatures. Any social activity or event brings us closer and gives us a chance to know each other better. Events like the Columbus International Festival on November 4th and 5th play an important role in bringing people together to learn more about different cultures.

I had a great time at the Columbus International Festival, not just because of all the festivity, but also because I was there for a good cause. Representing ASHA-Ray of Hope as a volunteer at their booth, I had a chance to sit and help Dr. Janak Wadwa, who taught me a lot through her supportive attitude. Together, we educated people there about ASHA-Ray of Hope. We also arranged and sold a few items from the White Elephant Sale, which consisted of items donated to raise money for ASHA.

It was an amazing experience to explain to others how ASHA works and helps those who are in real immediate need. We received compliments on our efforts, and I was surprised to see how people appreciated it. We encouraged everyone who stopped by to create further awareness by spreading the word about domestic violence issues in our community.

It was my pleasure to represent ASHA-Ray of Hope as a volunteer at the Columbus International Festival this year. I am glad to be part of this organization because it is giving me a chance to learn and to meet with others interested in the same cause.

❖ Presentations by Dr. Janak Wadwa & Mira Satiani

by Mira Satiani, ASHA Board President

Dr. Janak Wadwa and Mira Satiani participated in the Capacity Building Initiative

Peer-to-Peer Convening, a full-day seminar on September 18, 2006, at The Grange Insurance Building. Dr. Janak Wadwa gave a welcoming speech, and Mira Satiani was a panelist on the Immigrant and Refugee Women's Support panel. Other panelists were Fatima Bihi from Somali Women and Children's Alliance and Cecilia Formensky from African Women Empowerment Network. The facilitator was Julia Arbini Carbonell from Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services. Mira shared information about ASHA-Ray of Hope's services and answered many questions. The information from this panel was well received by the audience. Other panels also included in the day's schedule of events were on topics of health, education and culture. Over lunch, participants enjoyed a speech by Deborah Myers from Migration Policy Institute, who spoke about immigration policy: pending legislation and community impact. Dale Asis, Executive Director of Coalition of African, Asian, European and Latino Immigrants of Illinois also spoke on the issue of building coalitions between different communities.

Another conference in which ASHA participated was on September 20 at Motorists Mutual Insurance Company. The topic was "Pregnant Teens & Teen Moms: On the Endangered List." This conference was organized by Action Ohio Coalition For Battered Women and was part of Women's Health Month. Mira shared ASHA-Ray of Hope's services and awareness activities and Dr. Wadwa shared her experiences with teens and their parents as a pediatrician. Other speakers included Paula Renker, PhD, RNC, who talked about her research with pregnant teens who were abused, and Beverly Roseman-Shapiro MSW, LISW, who spoke about assessing violence in pregnant teens. ❖

CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

by Eve Quine Slosser

As many of you know, ASHA is a volunteer-based organization. This means that almost all organizational activities are executed due to the generosity of a number of people who volunteer their time because they believe the mission of ASHA is important. In this issue, we would like to acknowledge just a few of the people who have graciously assisted ASHA in various ways.



Sujatha Reddy volunteers and is a counselor for ASHA-Ray of Hope,

meeting with and taking crisis calls from persons affected by domestic violence. She has also served as a board member for and is a founding member of ASHA.

Sujatha is a 1988 graduate of Govt. College of Indian Medicine in Bangalore, India. She also trained under Dr. Vasant Lad, renowned Ayurvedic practitioner and teacher for Pulse Diagnosis at the Ayurvedic Institute, in 2002. Sujatha then went on to received her Master's degree in Community Counseling from the University of Dayton in 2005 and is now licensed as a mental health counselor. She recently opened a private practice in Gahanna for mental health counseling and Ayurvedic consultations. Sujatha's expertise in mental health counseling includes: individual, couples and group counseling, alcohol and substance abuse, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, eating disorders, sleep disorders, Post Partum Depression, cardiac counseling, domestic violence, anger management, grief and loss, pain and illness, rehabilitation counseling and lifestyle and holistic counseling. She is also trained as a Mediator. Sujatha's Ayurvedic expertise

includes: pulse diagnosis, dietetics and Ayurvedic cooking, nutritional herbs and spices, women's health concerns, general illnesses, musculoskeletal problems, skin diseases, allergies, and Ayurvedic mental and physical health.

Sujatha moved to the United States in 1989. She is married to Dr. Guru Reddy, a cardiologist, and is the mother of three children. Sujatha has been involved in the Indian community services since she came to the United States, including serving as a vice president for the Telugu Association of Central Ohio.



Kirti Barry is a student intern with ASHA-Ray of Hope. She is currently a senior at The

Ohio State University, majoring in Psychology. She is hoping to continue with her education next year by pursuing a master's degree in Social Psychology.

Kirti is originally from India and came to the United States with her family three years ago in order to pursue a college education. She loves working with people and strives to take every opportunity to increase her knowledge and understanding of social issues like domestic violence. Examples of this are spending her spring break assisting families affected by domestic violence at a shelter in Chicago and spending her summer traveling around India with a group of OSU students to promote education for children. She is also planning to spend her winter break this month assisting at a domestic violence shelter near Los Angeles, California. In her free time, Kirti likes reading books, listening to music and volunteering at OSU Medical Center. Kirti is also enjoying her internship with ASHA as it gives her an opportunity to help people who are affected by domestic

violence and educate people about ways to eliminate this problem.



Shalvi Desai came to ASHA as a student intern during the summer, 2006. She began by lending her skills in the

ASHA office; then became involved in *Interrogations*, ASHA's fundraiser play. Shalvi shared her acting talents by playing the supporting role of Pushpa in the play.

Shalvi is originally from Cincinnati but came to Columbus to pursue a degree. She is currently a senior at The Ohio State University and will soon earn her bachelor's of science in Political Science and Business. After graduating, Shalvi plans to attend graduate school to earn her master's of Business Administration.

In her free time, Shalvi enjoys movies, going out with friends, driving her Honda Civic, playing the piano and playing online games. ❖

ASHA-Ray of Hope's Vision

Prevention of domestic violence by building healthier relationships through education, awareness and counseling.



INTERROGATIONS

by Kirti Barry, ASHA Intern

After the great success of *Interrogations* in 2004, ASHA-Ray of Hope once again decided to host this production as its annual fundraiser this year. Ms. Nancy Kephart of Columbus State Community College was willing to come back and direct the play again, and the lead roles were played by Rajesh Karnani and Mala Chandrasekaran.

The play, *Interrogations*, is based on a true story of abuse in a South Asian family living in Connecticut, in which a man constantly abuses his wife physically and verbally and eventually murders his wife, daughter and father-in-law.

This play was an attempt to spread the awareness of domestic violence in our community. Many people are still not aware that domestic violence is a big problem, which is being faced in all communities. Even though there is growing awareness of the problem, many people tend to remain silent because of shame or fear. Many people continue to remain victims of domestic violence and do not seek help. Domestic violence, however, does not affect the victim alone; it also affects the victim's family and friends.

The play was very successful in sending its message across to people, and making them aware that domestic violence is a very serious problem that needs to be addressed and prevented. ASHA is very thankful to all the actors, crew members and director, Nancy Kephart, for the great deal of effort and hard work they put into this play. ASHA would also like to extend a big thanks to all those who provided sponsorship for this event. ❖

INTERROGATIONS: A PERFORMER'S PERSPECTIVE

by Shalvi Desai, ASHA Intern

The play *Interrogations* performed on November 17, 2006, was a total success in the aspects of theatrical performance and raising awareness. Playing the role of Pushpa, the best friend of a victim of domestic violence, I became more aware than ever of the problems and cultural stereotypes surrounding Asian Americans and domestic abuse. The play, based on a true story, entered into the lives of the Reddy's, an Indian family living in America. Pushpa is the typical nosy Indian friend of Usha, the victim of abuse. She pushes for information but slowly backs off when Usha is reluctant to talk about her marriage. When Usha's husband forbids her to attend a birthday party, instead of showing concern and being worried about their friend, Pushpa and Ranjana (another friend of Usha) simply gossip, calling her rude for not attending. The dialogue and situations in the play represent aspects of Indian culture in which people are quick to judge, yet so reluctant to acknowledge that something is wrong.

The play helped us portray a different outlook of the conflicts concerning stereotypes and traditions within the Indian community. Issues of violence and abuse are often overlooked or ignored because of lack of knowledge and urgency. *Interrogations* helped to unmask some of the hidden truths about Indian culture and society. After the play, a question and answer session was successful in addressing some of the audience's concerns about domestic violence within the Asian community. The play, a triumph and an excellent experience for all involved, was a powerful success in terms of educating many and provoking thought concerning domestic violence and abuse. ❖



Volunteer, Sunir Patel, checks tickets and hands out playbills at *Interrogations*.

A scene from *Interrogations*.



Domestic Violence Resource List

Columbus Police Department.....911 or
(614) 645-4545

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

CHOICES..... (614) 224-4663

Batterer's Treatment

Lutheran Social Services..... (614) 261-5580

Mt. Carmel..... (614) 234-2939

Southeast..... (614) 225-0980

Crossroads..... (614) 445-0352

Africentric Personal
Development..... (614) 253-4448

Legal Information

Capital University Family
Advocacy Center..... (614) 236-6779 or
(614) 236-6245

Domestic Violence Unit –
Prosecutors (protection
orders, filing charges) (614) 645-6232

Victims of Crime
Compensation 1-800-582-2877

VINE (notification of which
correctional facility defendant
is housed)..... 1-800-770-0192

Legal Aid Society (614) 241-2001

CRIS (Community Refugee &
Immigration Services) (614) 235-5747

Other

Adult Protective Services (614) 462-4356

Center for New Direction (614) 849-0028

Columbus Literacy
Council (614) 221-5013

Franklin County
Children Services..... (614) 229-7000

Franklin County Dept. of Job
& Family Services (614) 462-4000

Dr. Yung Chen-Lu
(free medical clinic) (614) 451-3550

National Domestic Violence
Hotline (24 hours) 1-800-799-7233

Ohio Domestic Violence
Network (614) 781-9651

HELPFUL RESOURCE TO CHECK OUT

The following is an interesting website about violence against women in India. Check it out:

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/specialcoverage/168047.cms>



Cast members from Interrogations.

*Rajesh Karnani & Mala Chandrasekaran
played the lead roles in Interrogations.*



Thank You!!!!

ASHA would like to thank all those who have helped in some way over the past months to play a part in eliminating domestic violence:

Deepa Saratchandran
Mira Satiani
Bhagwan Satiani
Anmol Satiani
Nidhi Satiani
Anand Satiani
Veena Kasbekar
Nita Chabria
Janak Wadwa
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Uma Bhatt
Shobhana Davda
Jagdish Davda
Subha Lembach
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Mala Chandrasekaran
Deepti Johar
Mercy Thomas
Gladdis Thomas
Amar Pandey
Shalvi Desai
Kiran Chitkara
Kenny Hathaway
Martin Tomas
Lindsay DeCaire
Nancy Kephart
Dwight Snyder
Kirit Kapadia
Purnima Kapadia

Suresh Kekane
Sujatha Reddy
Diane Patel
Sunir Patel
Kirti Barry
Uma Venkataraman
Gowri Rammohan
Zile Huma Mushtaq
Tina Dutta
Tahira Aziz
Mona Advani
Maliha Raazi
Asha Patel
Meena Patel
Uttam Lall
Shobha Lall
Priya Bathija
Debarati Bardhan
Dhriti Pandhi
Andrea Kauffman

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ASHA-*RAY* OF HOPE
Contact Us At:
Office Phone: 614.722.5988
Crisis Line: 614.565.2918
asharayofhope@yahoo.com
www.asharayofhope.org

ASHA-*RAY* OF HOPE
Center for Child & Family Advocacy
655 E. Livingston Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43205-2618

