

IN THIS ISSUE:

Update: HIV and STI Among A&PIs.....2

Client Navigation Project ...3

Keeping the Youth 'Street Smart' and Healthy.....3

Community PROMISE in the Making.....3

Editorial: Navigating through an Economic Crisis 4

Miss Universe 2007 Takes a Public HIV Test4

If You Build It, Will They [Continue to] Come? 5

Skills Building: Phlebotomy.....5

Grants and Gifts Make Our Programs Go 'Round.....6

Grants and Contracts.....7

Helping Clients to Make Wiser Food Choices.....8

In and Around Our Communities 10

Seen On Site..... 12

Published by the Asian & Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Inc. (APICHA), a non-profit organization providing HIV/AIDS related services, including primary care, counseling and testing, prevention education, food and nutrition, and other support services for the Asian and Pacific Islander communities, especially people living with HIV/AIDS in New York City.

APICHA Turns 20

2009 marks APICHA's 20th anniversary! Highlighting the commemorative activities will be our gala benefit, "A Thousand and One Champions", to be held on June 4, 2009 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel.

You won't want to miss this special dinner that will honor some of the many people who have been good friends of APICHA, so SAVE THE DATE!

Executive Director Therese R. Rodriguez calls on APICHA's friends to join the effort to make this gala a success. "In view of the increasing number of people who are getting infected, APICHA must remain strong. Our challenge now is to ensure that APICHA will be here for the long haul in this pandemic that portends no end. APICHA's benefit galas have traditionally been part of our strategy to raise the funds to fill the gaps that are not met by contracts."

The event is part of the Gift of Caring Campaign that was established to address the significant increases in operating costs incurred, including rent, when APICHA lost its lease at 150 Lafayette Street and after much searching, moved to 400 Broadway. New York City's real estate trends for building

condominiums have put many community-based organizations in great difficulty. APICHA had the misfortune of being in a building that became part of the gentrification of communities as a result of the conversion boom.

The benefit committee is now in formation. For information about becoming a committee member, an event sponsor, or other information about the event, you may call Vicki Shu Smolin at (646) 263-6044, or e-mail her at shu@yahoo.com.

"We have come a long way since a small group of volunteers launched APICHA in 1989," notes Suki Terada Ports, a founder and Chair of the Development Committee. "It is amazing how APICHA has turned our mid-1980 hopes and dreams of being able to help our community into what we now know as our one-stop shop of HIV services from prevention to a comprehensive HIV/AIDS health clinic, the only one of its kind in the U.S. There are so many people and organizations we have to thank for their significant contributions which have helped us to get this far."



Riyo Mori, Miss Universe 2007, Takes a Public HIV Test

Miss Universe 2007 Riyo Mori taking a public HIV test administered by APICHA Testing Counselor Sunny Shiroma

Story on page 4

Update: HIV and STI among A&PIs

By Melissa S. Nibungco, Development Associate/Grants Writer

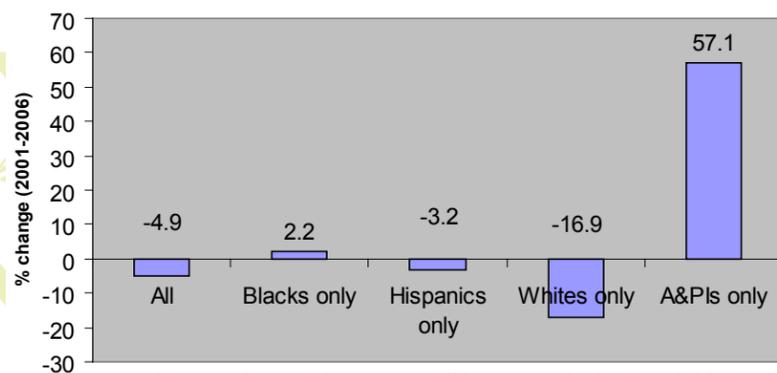
Recent epidemiological data from both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYCDOHMH) highlight the need for HIV primary prevention services - especially among A&PI men who have sex with men (MSM). Among A&PIs, the vast majority of existing and new HIV cases is among males and the most common transmission route is MSM. CDC recently reported that from 2001 to 2006, the largest proportionate increase (255.6% [EAPC = 30.8]) was among Asian/Pacific Islander MSM aged 13-24 years.¹

In NYC, A&PI MSM experienced a 57.1% change during the same time period (see chart below).² It is important to note

that among MSM who are 30 years and older, only A&PIs experienced an increase (115.4%). In addition, only 31% of A&PIs have ever been tested for HIV³ and over 40% of those newly diagnosed are not in care within 3 months of diagnosis.⁴

When we examine rates of sexually transmitted infections, the picture is not quite as clear. Analysis of data from the NYCDOHMH, Bureau of Sexually Transmitted Diseases is made difficult by limitations within the data set.⁵ Approximately 50% of gonorrhea and Chlamydia cases, and 33-50% of syphilis cases are missing race/ethnicity data. What is important to point out is that A&PI syphilis case rates are on the increase.

New HIV Diagnoses among Men who have Sex with Men (MSM)



¹Please note that due to the small numbers of Asian/Pacific Islander MSM and the resultant wide confidence intervals (95% CI: 5.0-19.6) around point estimates, the rate of increase in this subpopulation should be interpreted with caution. CDC, "Trends in HIV/AIDS Diagnoses Among Men who Have Sex with Men, 33 States, 2001-2006," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) 57(25), 2008, pp.681-686. Available online at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5725a2.htm>

²Data from NYCDOHMH, Press Release: New HIV Diagnoses Rising in New York City Among Young Men who Have Sex with Men, (New York: NYCDOHMH, 2007). Available online at <http://home2.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/pr2007/pr079-07.shtml>.

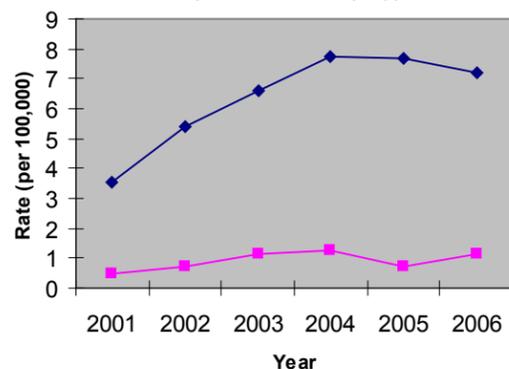
³Pleis JR, Lethbridge-Çejku M. "Summary Health Statistics for U.S. Adults: National Health Interview Survey, 2005" Vital Health Statistics 10, 2006. Available online at http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_10/sr10_232.pdf

⁴NYCDOHMH, HIV Epidemiology Field Services, SemiAnnual Report Covering January 1, 2006 - December 31, 2006, (New York: NYCDOHMH, 2007).

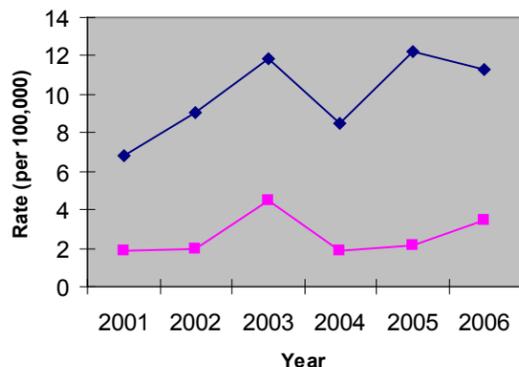
⁵Data from customized report received on January 30, 2008. Limitations indicated by Julia Schillinger, MD of the NYCDOHMH Bureau of STD Control

A&PI syphilis case rates are on the increase

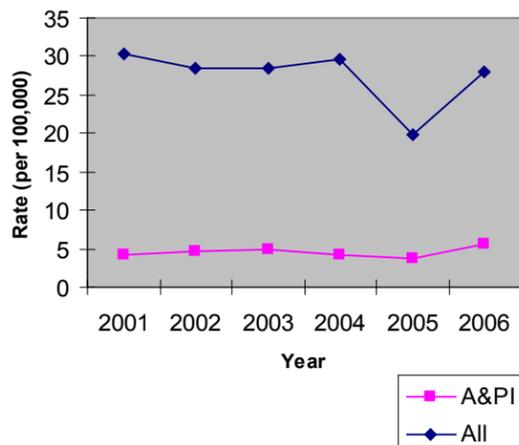
NYC Primary and Secondary Syphilis Cases



NYC Early Latent Syphilis Cases



NYC Late Latent Syphilis Cases



Client Navigation Project

By Joey Akima, CTR Program Manager, and Jarron Magallanes, MSW, MSM Project Coordinator

In March this year funding for APICHA's Client Navigation Project was renewed by DOHMH/ Public Health Solutions as part of the New York City Council Communities of Color (NYCCOCHA) Initiative. The purpose of the grant is to enhance APICHA's existing HIV prevention programs. The program was first implemented in 2007 with a grant of \$109,163. This year the award was reduced to \$54,417 because of the number of grantees.

As a result of the enhancement monies, APICHA staff was able to increase the frequency of outreach sessions conducted at various venues where MSM convene from once a week to three or four times a week. Condoms and HIV prevention materials were provided to over 2,776 individuals in two months. At the end of the grant period on June 30, 2008, this number is expected to go up an additional 4,000. Although this funding is for a very short time period, it provided much needed support for our outreach services that are no longer funded by the city's Health Department.

APICHA's Counseling, Testing & Referrals and Prevention Units collaborate to implement the project. Due to the funding cutback, for the current grant period, the NYCCO-CHAC funds are dedicated to hiring of additional peers who are instrumental in recruiting clients to access services at APICHA's off-site events. HIV testing, syphilis screening, gonorrhea and Chlamydia tests, Hepatitis A and B vaccinations as well as smoking cessation patches are provided at those events. APICHA thus far has participated in the Asian Pacific American Heritage Festival, Philippine Independence Day Parade, and the Pride events in Brooklyn and Queens. At each event, a mobile van is provided to ensure client confidentiality and increase the comfort level of both clients and staff. Rental expenses for the van were funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In addition to testing events, staff and peers outreach during the Manhattan Pride March.

Client Navigation is based on the successful patient navigation model developed by Dr. Harold P. Freeman at Harlem Hospital. APICHA adapted the model to help clients overcome barriers to health care services.

Keeping the Youth 'Street Smart' and Healthy

By Larry Tantay, Community Health Education Coordinator

The smell of food and the sound of raucous laughter fill the room. About ten young Asians sit around a table discussing the images of Asians in the magazines they are reading. There aren't many to discuss. In one magazine - queer and based in New Jersey - the only photo of Asian people are three workers in rice fields in traditional garb, wearing large round hats that obscure their faces. In some of the Asian fashion magazines, there are more White faces than Asian. "For queer Asian youth who read these magazines, what is this doing for their self-esteem and their feelings about their own bodies?" one of the Youth Leaders asks. This is just one topic among many that are covered every Friday during EquAsian.

EquAsian is a social support group for queer Asian youth - aged 22 and younger - in NYC. Many other youth groups in NYC seem to focus on either being gay or being Asian but not both. The end result is that queer A&PIs are being alienated from both sides. It's necessary to give queer A&PI youth a space to meet and discuss issues pertain-

ing to their sexual and ethnic identities. At EquAsian meetings, on average, ten youths attend. The group is also opened to friends of participants who are either not queer or not A&PI. We've found from previous EquAsian meetings and in speaking with youth during outreach that many queer A&PI youth have friends who are not queer A&PI but are quite supportive of them. Based on the comfort of the group, we allow up to two friends to attend the meeting. The focus, however, is always on the needs of the queer A&PI youth.

This is part of the larger YMSM Project. YMSM stands for Young Men who Have Sex with Men. We use "YMSM" instead of "gay" to be inclusive of those who may be involved in the same sexual behaviors and risks as young gay men but who don't identify that way. The main intervention provided by the YMSM Project is Street SMART - a multi-session program which enhances the participants' knowledge in preventing HIV infection. It is one of the evidence-based behavioral intervention models approved for

Continued on page 8

Community PROMISE in the Making

By Diana Roygulchareon, Women and Youth Program Manager

In 2005, the Young Peoples Project (YPP) embarked on a new way of tackling HIV prevention among young people living in New York City. This approach is known as Community PROMISE, which stands for Peers Reaching Out and Modeling Intervention Strategies. A part of the CDC-approved compendium, Diffusion of Effective Behavioral Interventions (DEBI), Community PROMISE uses role model stories to disseminate HIV and STD prevention messages. The stories illustrate stages of change that individuals go through as they become familiar with the nature of risky behavior and the different ways of reducing their risk for HIV and STD. Two role model stories (see "It's a Start") have been produced since the program began three years ago; over 600 young people have been reached. It has also motivated young people to get tested and become even more involved in APICHA's activities, including being part of APICHA's contingent in AIDS WALK.

This intervention has been tested for other racial groups but not A&PIs. It takes stories and voices from the community and uses the stories to educate on positive and healthy choices as alternatives to risky behavior. We adapted the intervention to target specifically A&PI youth who engage in unprotected sex.

Implementing Community PROMISE typically involves at least 3 full time staff members. However, with limited funding available to APICHA, we are making do with less: one intern, one part time peer educator, and I as the full time staff responsible for coordinating the implementation activities of the intervention.

The tasks we have to do include a process called community identification (CID) through which we find out where young people are located geographically and where they are at in terms of HIV/STD risk behaviors: Are they keeping themselves safe? What risky

Continued on page 9

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Editorial: Navigating through an Economic Crisis

Recent economic forecasts have dashed hopes the country's economic woes will go away soon. This climate has already set off new rounds of budget cuts from the White House to City Hall.

APICHA has already received notices of 2% cuts for all its federal contracts. These contracts fund our HIV primary care services, counseling and testing, and the prevention program for young men who have sex with men. These cuts come on top of flat funding that has been imposed over the years. The New York State AIDS Institute has implemented across-the-board cuts for Fiscal Year 2009; we received a 6% decrease in our Multi-Service Agencies/Community Development Initiative contract.

As we go to press, we find that the outlook for New York City is even worse. Severe cuts have been proposed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, including a 19.4% cut in HIV funding. Although the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene does not currently fund any of our prevention programs, we were hopeful there would be new opportunities for funding for such programs in the coming fiscal year. The Mayor's budget seems to have closed off any chance of getting new funding for prevention. Unless the Mayor and the City

Council manage to find the resources to fund HIV/AIDS work adequately, a bleak future is ahead for community-based organizations like APICHA, which often does not have an endowment that could provide cushion from economic downturns.

Our challenge is to weather the economic crisis without permanently damaging our fragile infrastructure. Like it or not HIV/AIDS services are needed especially during difficult times. In light of the disappointing news that no vaccine for AIDS is in sight we have no choice but to persevere.

In this issue of APICHA News, we bring you up to speed with what's going on in our primary care clinic as well as our progress in delivering evidence-based prevention interventions. We also introduce relevant epidemiological data to help put in perspective our determination to sustain our programs. Finally, we share news about our new LGBT program and an update on our Gift of Caring Campaign. During this challenging time, the Gift of Caring Campaign must play a larger role in sustaining our programs and services.

We also hope our policy makers will be judicious when considering budget cuts and look beyond the immediate situation. We call on all our supporters, and friends to help make sure this happens.

Riyo Mori, Miss Universe 2007, Takes a Public HIV Test

By Aleli Alvarez, Community and Media Relations Manager

"HIV testing is the only way to find out whether you have HIV or not. I hope that my public testing can influence people who have not had HIV testing before." With these words, Miss Universe 2007 Riyo Mori brought HIV/AIDS awareness to the Asian and Pacific Islander communities in New York during World AIDS Day, December 1, 2007. The public testing event took place at APICHA's Hall of Honor. Special guests were Andrea Minkow, senior adviser to New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, LGBT Community Liaison Jeremy Wilson also of New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn's Office, Monsignor Oscar Aquino of Saint Lucy's Church, Venerable Ben Kong of For-En Temple and Venerable Zhi Kong Yuan Ton Zen Temple. Over fifty guests joined APICHA staff to mark the day.

Miss Mori acknowledged that this is the first time she took the test and added: "We need to work together and encourage people to reduce the taboo. Be proactive to learn more about HIV, and take the test in order to control the illness."

As Miss Universe 2007, Miss Mori chose to advocate for HIV/AIDS awareness especially among young people. She said she has always been interested in this area of work but needed to get proper information. The Miss Universe Organization partnered with APICHA to get mentoring for Miss Mori. The mentorship provided her with an overview of HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Asian communities of New York. To gain first hand experience, Miss Mori joined in street outreach activities conducted by APICHA peer educators in New York neighborhoods with large Asian populations. She also joined a session of the support group for Japanese HIV+ clients. Kazuko Ko, case manager and facilitator of the support group, reported that the session felt like Miss Mori was part of the group: "The clients shared how they felt when they first got diagnosed, how they are presently dealing with the challenges of HIV and surrounding health issues, and their current concerns relating to their jobs, other non-HIV medical issues, and relation-

Continued on page 9

If You Build It, Will They [Continue to] Come?

Victor Inada, M.D., AAHIVS, Medical Director, APICHA HIV Primary Care Clinic

One of the challenges facing our clinic early in its history at our former site, 150 Lafayette Street, was to build it to meet the standards of the New York State Department of Health. Now, after a year at our new site, 400 Broadway, we meet the same challenges while continuing care to our 100+ patients. One of many concerns during the planning of our move to 400 Broadway was how this move might affect our patients and clients. In fact, we worried that the stress of this move would cause us to lose patients. After a year at 400 Broadway, we are glad to report that not only were we able to provide uninterrupted care for our existing patients, but through the concerted efforts of APICHA staff including HIV testing counselors, case managers and clinic staff we were also able to bring HIV primary care to new patients in need of our care.

The challenges facing us now that we have settled into our new space include ensuring that our client-centered care is accessible to patients in need of primary care. According to NYC DOHMH, 40% of A&PIs newly diagnosed with HIV or AIDS are not in care within 3 months of diagnoses. Getting more A&PIs to know their status is also very important. While our HIV Counseling and Testing program continues to provide free HIV testing for our community to be aware of their HIV status, APICHA's Primary Care Clinic looks for ways to make our services accessible to more people in need of them. In 2008, APICHA teamed up with the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (the municipal hospital

and health care system of NYC) to provide more HIV testing through an innovative effort to reach out to medical providers serving A&PIs to make HIV testing more a part of routine healthcare. Often, these providers do not have the capacity to provide HIV tests or have adequate referral information regarding HIV care.

To help out with the project, APICHA created a multi-disciplinary team composed of staff from the Prevention Unit, Client Services, and the Primary Care Clinic to reach out to providers caring for our community to increase their patients' access to

According to NYC DOHMH, 40% of A&PIs newly diagnosed with HIV or AIDS are not in care within 3 months of diagnoses.

HIV testing, and if needed, expedited referral into HIV primary care. As many of you already know, from the results

of APICHA's 2006 Community Mapping Project, many in our community seek out HIV testing from their general medical providers (e.g., Internists, Family Practitioners, and Gynecologists). Hopefully, by reaching out directly to medical providers, we can make a breakthrough in making more people aware of their HIV status and getting those who are infected into care as soon as possible.

We are also looking into other serious gaps in or barriers to care and into how APICHA can be in step with the healthcare reforms being implemented by New York State. A top priority for us is to find the resources to provide primary care services to our current pool of high risk, non-HIV infected clients. Among our more than fifteen hundred clients, a large number have no ongoing primary care provider. An informal survey showed that two-thirds of respondents stated they want to access primary care with us. Other programs being considered are expanded sexually transmitted infection (STI) and outpatient mental health services.

Stay tuned for APICHA's efforts toward improving health outcomes for our communities.



< Do you know your HIV status?

Skills Building: Phlebotomy

By Yoshiaki Otake, HIV Testing Counselor



APICHA's new certified phlebotomists - CTR Project Manager Joey Akima, Community Health Education Coordinator Larry Tantay, and HIV Testing Counselor Yoshiaki Otake

Can you draw blood? Yes, we can!

APICHA is happy to announce that three counselors from the HIV Counseling, Testing and Referral (CTR) Unit became certified phlebotomists last fall. Joey Akima, Larry Tantay, and I completed a very intense training with MEDEXX which covered vascular anatomy, universal precautions, and different phlebotomy techniques. We actually practiced on one another. Because of the newly acquired skill in phlebotomy, the CTR staff is now providing free syphilis testing by blood drawing to complement the agency's rapid HIV testing. This is part of APICHA's response to the current syphilis epidemic in New York City. More people have been diagnosed with syphilis since 2000 (see "HIV and STI among A&PIs" on page 2).

Syphilis is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases (STD), especially among men who have sex with men (MSM). Although syphilis is curable with proper treatment, it is highly infectious and the symptoms are not pretty. Syphilis is known as a bacterial infection that is transmitted through sexual intercourse and gives body rashes and, in many cases, chancres or lesions on the genital area. Although some people do not get immediate symptoms, red dot-like rashes on your hands and feet are signs of syphilis.

After the training, our confidence in phlebotomy was strengthened by Medical Director Dr. Victor Inada and Medical Assistant Hadja Dolley of APICHA's HIV Primary Care Clinic. We each completed all 10 supervised observations in phlebotomy under Dr. Inada. He was able to guide us to be better phlebotomists. We are now providing tests for HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea and Chlamydia Mondays through Fridays. Call our toll-free multilingual APICHA InfoLine at 1.866.APICHA.9 (1.866.274.2429) to make an appointment.

Grants and Gifts Make Our Programs Go 'Round

New Program: Project Connect

Since its founding, APICHA has been a safe space for A&PI lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and intersex (LGBTQI) individuals, their families and communities. Over the years, we recognized the need for services specifically addressing the unique needs, beyond HIV, of the A&PI LGBTQI community. In May 2008, we received great news that APICHA's proposal to the NYS Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Center for Community Health, Bureau of Child and Adolescent Health was awarded a 5-year grant. Project Connect consists of a skills building workshop, mentorship program, community awareness campaign, and service provider trainings.

APICHA Website Gets a Makeover

On January 15, 2008 APICHA's website, www.apicha.org, took on a new look, the first makeover since it was launched in 2001. The redesign was done to capture the organization's growth and improve how information on HIV/AIDS is communicated to the general public. We streamlined the look and structure of the website, so that viewers can find the information they are looking for as quickly as possible. APICHA staff can also easily update pages to provide new information to clients as well as reflect the expanding services APICHA offers.

Executive Director Therese R. Rodriguez stressed the importance of immediate access to information: "HIV infection is destroying communities of color, including our own A&PI communities. We need to lead the way in getting information on how to prevent the spread of this infectious disease and where to receive the best possible care and treatment if they are HIV positive."

Director of Programs Yumiko Fukuda pointed to the need for a website that is "easy to navigate by both clients and people in the community." The highlight of the new structure is APICHA's integrated model of services.

Those who log on will find warm and soothing floral images and tabs for the following basic information: "I want to learn how to protect myself from HIV/AIDS", "How can I get HIV counseling and testing", and "I am HIV+,

what kind of care does APICHA provide". Also featured is a link to APICHA's secure online donation page.

APICHA engaged AT BEAM, Inc. a cutting edge web design firm operated by Akimitsu Sadoi and Troy Phillips. AT BEAM has worked on a variety of websites ranging from a fast food franchise to an international airline. The project was funded by grants from Verizon Foundation and the New York State Legislature.

NYC Council Capital Grant at Work

In March this year, a new IT system began to hum at APICHA, thanks to Council Member Alan Gerson and his colleagues in the New York City Council who pushed through a capital grant for APICHA in 2005. The agency needed to replace all servers and staff computers as these had become outmoded. It took more than 15 minutes for the computers to boot up and the servers were overloaded. The loss to the organization was enormous when the server crashed in May 2006. After two years of navigating the city's procurement process, approval was finally given in December 2007. We purchased new desktop computers for all staff and 2 new servers were installed in March 2008. In addition, we also added software programs. Overall, the new IT system has increased our productivity and ability to secure our data.



Gift of Caring Update

With lead grants from an **anonymous** private foundation and from the **New York State AIDS Institute**, APICHA's Gift of Caring Campaign has received over \$400,000 in cash and pledges. The campaign was established in September 2006 to raise \$1.6 million toward operating costs associated with APICHA's move to 400

Broadway and additional outfitting costs. The campaign has raised \$172,000 since our kick-off report in APICHA News last summer.

Gifts came from various sources, including Board and staff initiated events. In October 2007 a benefit was held at Grand Harmony which raised over \$30,000 and a farewell party for former CTR Project Manager Bric Bernas raised close to \$3,000. Staff, peers and their friends dedicated the 2007 AIDS Walk proceeds of \$5,230 to the campaign.

The last two years have been quite challenging for APICHA. Aside from managing program changes, we had to deal with the unanticipated move. After a frantic search for a new space and construction we managed to move our operations into 400 Broadway. Although it took awhile to settle into our new space, we have been providing services, keeping in mind that our move should not become a barrier to clients needing care. In fact we have made major progress in integrating our services that will make our client-centered care a reality. There are a number of people who helped us through the last two difficult years. We want to take this opportunity to acknowledge their support.



New York City Council Member John Liu (back, far left) posed for APICHA News with some of the guests at the 18th Anniversary event.



APICHA's Board of Directors led the organizing effort of the 18th Anniversary event.

Grants and Contracts

September 1, 2006 to June 30, 2008

GOVERNMENT

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Health Resources and Services Administration
New York State Department of Health, AIDS Institute
New York State Department of Health, Center for Community Health
New York State Legislature
New York City Council
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene/
Public Health Solutions
New York City Health and Hospital Corporation

PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS

\$100,000 and up
Anonymous
\$50,000 and up
H. van Ameringen Foundation

\$10,000 and up

Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS
C. J. Huang Foundation
Public Welfare Foundation
The Paul Rapoport Foundation
Tiger Baron Foundation
Verizon Foundation

\$1,000 and up

Asian American Community Fund of the Asian American Federation/United Way
Alvarez Educational and Charitable Foundation
Coalition for Children and Families/Project Charge Funding Exchange
Giant Steps Fund of Tides Foundation
The Ong Family Foundation
The Orisha Foundation

Matching Grant

AXA Foundation
American Express Foundation

CONTRIBUTIONS

\$5,000 and up

AIDS Walk/Gay Men's Health Crisis
Louis A. Madigan
David W. Husch
Therese R. Rodriguez and Lourdes Marzan

\$2,000 and up

Dr. Mars and Cora Custodio
H.E.L.P./Project Samaritan, Inc.
Paul D.C. Huang
James M. Jaeger
N. Cheng & Co. P.C.

\$1,000 and up

Abbott Laboratories
Bank of Indonesia
Patrizia Barone
Mars and Cora Custodio
Yumiko Fukuda
Gay Men's Health Crisis/AIDS Walk
Kristy L. Illuzzi
Jean R. Lobell
John-John C. Manlutac

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Francisca M. Tayag
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Bonnie Um
Steve Villano
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Anonymous (6)
Ariel Baraquiel
Ayah Entertainment Ltd.
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William A. Cook, M.D.
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Helping Clients to Make Wiser Food Choices

By Cheng Wei (Mike) Yu, Food and Nutrition Project Coordinator



MIKE YU
Cooking workshops with Jian-Min Li teach clients how to prepare nutritious and affordable dishes.

food products by providing fresh fruits and vegetables in each pantry distribution. Fruits and vegetables are handpicked by our Project Liaison, Mr. Jian-Min Li, who is certified in food protection by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. In addition, to help ensure our clients receive the freshest groceries in each food pantry bag they receive from us, we purchase the food within 3 hours prior to distribution.

Clients also learn how to prepare mouthwatering cuisines by using nutritious groceries from various Asian cultures during our cooking seminars and nutritional workshops.

Because we want to educate our clients on the importance of a balanced diet and its relationship to their medication, we ask our clients to choose their pantry items from our grocery selections. In the process, our project staff may intervene to discuss with clients the nutrients contained in the pantry items they choose. This process creates an environment that simulates shopping for groceries from an actual food vendor and familiarizes clients with better choices. Our food pantry bags and food vouchers are available to eligible HIV+ clients and their children who are under the age of 21. Clients go through an eligibility screening conducted by me as the Project Coordinator and Nutritionist Allan Lee. The initial screening involves nutritional counseling and assessment. We also examine our clients' financial status and monitor their health progress periodically to ensure our project provides

the necessary referrals to care and other services.

Clients may also choose to purchase food on their own using food vouchers after a 15-month minimum successful participation in the food pantry program. Before they apply for food vouchers, they must pass a nutritional quiz administered by Mr. Lee.

Although we focus on nutritional education, we often find that many of our clients depend on our food pantry as their primary source of nutritious food due to their limited income. But because of funding limitations clients are required to graduate from the program after 18 months. During that period they would have gone through the training curriculum and a 3-month nutritional monitoring that test clients' abilities to utilize skills learned from the program. Clients who have difficulty accessing an alternative source of nutritious meals during the monitoring period are referred to other organizations that also provide meals and food services. At graduation clients are expected to make wiser decisions about grocery purchase and how to balance a nutritional diet following the principle of "eating well, living well" and within a budget.



MIKE YU
Handpicked produce helps ensure freshness

Keeping the Youth 'Street Smart' and Healthy

continued from page 3

use by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-funded programs.

The sessions – open for YMSM under the age of 25 – provide not only practical and technical skills and information regarding HIV risk reduction, but they also include activities meant to build the self-efficacy of the participants and empower them in the realization of

how they can begin to make their own decisions. The program also includes an individual counseling session with the program coordinator to personalize the lessons of Street SMART for each participant. Although the program was originally tailored for homeless and runaway youth, APICHA saw how the program could be adapted to successfully reach the YMSM Project's target population through its highly empowering approach to behavior change.

The first adaptation addressed an issue

within the original structure of Street SMART which had participants graduate from the program, leaving them without any other program to go to if they needed extra support. Instead of having young people leave our agency prematurely, we allow them to stay on as Youth Leaders. The creation of the Youth Leader position allowed for youth who went through the program to receive further support while improving their leadership skills through facilitating workshops. We also created the roles of

Advanced Youth Leaders to mentor the incoming cycle of Youth Leaders.

We also felt that HIV testing was an important facet in keeping A&PI youth healthy. During the testing sessions, we counsel clients to reduce their risk and harm for HIV. The testing component to our program has been even more successful in hitting our target because we offer an incentive – an AMC Loews Gift Card for \$20. The youth have responded well to that – making up about 15% of those tested at APICHA – and in turn refer their friends and partners, who may also be part of that high risk population. Because this program focuses on A&PI queer youth, we are better prepared

One participant also noted how a workshop exercise really helped him understand the chain of HIV infection....

for their issues (i.e. gender and sexual identity and stress from various environmental factors, such as family and school). They can ask questions and access HIV testing counseling services.

Recruiting possible participants for the workshops has been difficult. Conflicting schedules – with school and work – make it challenging for them to set aside time to attend. However, we've tried to mitigate this by offering three separate cycles of workshops throughout the year so if a participant has to miss a session, he can make it up later on.

Street SMART participants have been greatly affected by the program. One participant has now become a regular member of EquAsian, and many of the participants have been tested for HIV because of our discussions. One participant also noted how a workshop exercise really helped him understand the chain of HIV infection, and how easily infection can be prevented by using a condom and knowing one's serostatus. He said he would think more carefully before having unprotected intercourse again. We've also introduced participants to other providers for mental health care and free primary care for HIV-negative youth, services that are not available in-house at this time. Through all our efforts, we hope to make a greater impact on queer Asian youth and their perception of their own risk and change the course of the HIV epidemic within our community.

Community PROMISE in the Making

continued from page 3

behaviors are they engaging in? How are they speaking? What language(s) or slang are they using when they speak? Once we have defined our community, we interview individuals from that community who have made positive change(s). The personal stories from the interviews are then developed into role model stories. Peer advocates are recruited and trained

It's A Start - A Role Model Story

Note: From our initial pool of interviews the story of a young woman (we call her Amy to protect her identity) was chosen. The name was changed, but the story is real.

I'm Amy, and I'm a junior at a high school in Brooklyn. I've been with my boyfriend for a while now. My parents don't even know I have a boyfriend, and all they say is "no dating" or "don't go have sex cause you might get pregnant," you know, the typical Asian parents lecture.

Last month, we started Sex Ed in school. I thought it was irrelevant and corny at first, but then the teacher showed us these horrifying pictures of STD's. It started to make me question whether I'm having protected sex or not. I'm not a virgin anymore, but most of my friends are, so I don't feel right talking to them about it. I can't ask anyone in my family or they'd kill me.

After the pictures and statistics from Sex Ed, I decided that I wanted more information. I went online and looked up facts on STDs. Just learning new things about them and seeing those pictures, it freaks me out. I became scared of getting STDs or catching HIV or AIDS. I realized that I was putting myself at risk by not using a condom. Even though the thought of talking to my boyfriend about sex was weird, I did it anyways. He said he doesn't want to use a condom and he was like, "Fine" for next time...

It's a start.

to distribute the stories. There is also a need to summarize behavior change through continuous evaluation.

In the course of implementing Community PROMISE, our team has learned a number of valuable lessons, most importantly of the importance of following the steps defined in

the intervention. Our experience in this year's session is illustrative. One of the locations we have been working out of recently is a college dormitory. Ly Tran, a peer educator assigned to the program and a student of Hunter College, suggested the venue. "It [the dormitory] was convenient, and it provided us with just the right age group, roughly 18 to 24. I started out-reaching right away by slipping the role model stories underneath each dorm room, and engaging many of the residents in discussion. I even translated the role model story into internet lingo in the form of an AIM chat," Ly said.

Ly teamed up with our intern Tsering Choden to hold focus groups through which potential candidates for role model stories were chosen. After two focus groups, they came away empty handed. "Initially, we hoped we can identify several individuals from the focus group to be interviewed so that we can create a much better tool and something suitable for college dorm residents," Tsering explained. "After running two focus groups, we realized that it wasn't easy to identify someone who might have made a positive behavior change." We learned later from an expert on Community PROMISE that the unsuccessful identification of a role model story was the result of skipping certain steps such as the staging surveys and recruitment of a peer who would help distribute the role model stories. Skipping steps was the team's attempt to continue the project after students left for summer vacation. With guidance from experts from the CDC, we learned how to rework our plans.

"Indeed, the Community PROMISE project is, at times, a bit overwhelming," exclaims Ly. But our team is upbeat. The program offers a lot of valuable experiences interacting with the community and peers on matters concerning HIV/STD prevention. We retraced our steps and now eighteen staging surveys have been completed and are into the interview process from which we expect to develop 2 role model stories per interview.

Riyo Mori, Miss Universe 2007, Takes a Public HIV Test

continued from page 4

ships with their partners or spouses."

Miss Mori has conducted awareness campaign in Japan, Vietnam, China (Macau) and France, where she traveled immediately following her participation in the World AIDS Day event.

Seen On Site

continued from page 12

5-week training at the Columbia University School of Social Work (CUSSW) by touring APICHA. The delegation from Kazakhstan was made up of Medical Officers Dr. Dina Baitleuosa and Dr. Alma Tokayeva from the Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Virology, and the Department of Infectious Diseases, respectively, of the Semei State Medical Academy, and Dr. Olga Popora, Chief of the Clinical Laboratory of the Medical Private Clinic for Diagnostic and Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Astana, Kazakhstan.

In Kazakhstan, Dr. Nabila El-Bassel, Ph.D. of CUSSW created a research facility, the Global Health Research Center, to develop and test social interventions impacting health and social development. Dr. Dina Baitleuosa from the Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Virology of the Semei State Medical Academy led the delegation.

Ms. Rodriguez, Dr. Inada, and APICHA staff greeted the guests and answered their questions regarding APICHA's "one-stop shop" model of community-based HIV/AIDS care. Dr. Dina Baitleuosa was particularly interested in APICHA's peer-led outreach to young persons at risk for HIV infection stating, "Our youth don't feel that they're at risk for HIV. They often don't understand the difference between HIV infection and AIDS and think HIV is a death sentence. Outside of the hospitals, they may have little access to information."

APICHA has hosted international leaders and health professionals visiting from the Centers for Disease Control of Taiwan, the Centers for Disease Control of the Shan Dong, Xian Jiang, Henan, Guan Dong, Sechuan, and Hei Long Jiang Provinces of China, and the Ministry of Health Singapore.

In and Around Our Communities

May: Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Executive Director Therese R. Rodriguez was a panelist at a discussion on Asian Pacific American women and leadership held on May 13, 2008 marking the 2008 Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. The other speakers were: Dr. Leena Doshi, President and Founder of Doshi Diagnostics Imaging Services; Kumbok Kaye Min, President of YWCA of Queens and Vice President of Capital One Bank; and Michelle Yu, Sports Reporter with NY 1 Time-Warner Cable Television. Six Leadership Awards were also presented to students following the discussion. The event was sponsored by New York City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn with Council Member John Liu, Vincent J. Gentile, Alan J. Gerson, Sara M. Gonzalez, Robert Jackson, and the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus.



Ms. Rodriguez traced her involvement in community activism during the 1970s through the 1990s when she was a volunteer organizer in the Filipino-American community. Discrimination and political and human rights were dominant issues of the time, particularly around the struggle for the restoration of democracy in the Philippines. The country was under military rule from 1972 to 1986. "Living, working and organizing in the U.S. for close to two decades had an impact on my decision on whether to return to the Philippines or to stay in the United States," she said. The decision to stay led her to explore the not-for-profit world and eventually taking the leadership in APICHA. She gave the audience a taste of the responsibilities of running an organization, from adhering to the mission and vision to keeping the programs running. "There are obligations that must take precedent over our individual agenda. By accepting non-profit status, those of us who manage non-profit organizations become responsible to the government as trustees or stewards of people's money," she concluded.

Testimony Before NYC City Council

The New York City Council Health Committee held a hearing on May 1, 2008 to address the crisis in the MSM of color communities. Larry Tantay, Community Health Education Coordinator, responded to the request for comments from the Council on behalf of APICHA.

On behalf of my East Asian, South Asian, South East Asian, and Pacific Islander brothers and sisters, I am here to testify to the fact that our government is neglecting us. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene currently does not fund any prevention services for Asian and Pacific Islander Men Who Have Sex with Men. In fact there is no funding through the Department for HIV prevention services for Asians and Pacific Islanders at all. In the face of a 115% increase in HIV infection for Asian and Pacific Islander Men who Have Sex with Men (A&PI MSM), this neglect is unacceptable. To the Honorable Joel Rivera and Council Members, and members of the Emergency Response for MSM of Color Coalition, thank you for this opportunity to be heard.

My name is Larry Tantay, and I work for the Asian and Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS, APICHA. Our mission is to end stigma on HIV/AIDS and those affected by it, to prevent the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the Asian and Pacific Islander communities, and to provide care and treatment for A&PIs living with HIV/AIDS and their families. APICHA is one of the 15 members of the Emergency Response for MSM of Color Coalition. I work with four young A&PI gay men to reach out to the thousands of gay, bisexual, queer, and questioning Asian and Pacific Islander teens in New York City. But I first started my tenure at APICHA as a client and peer educator. Growing up in a strict Filipino Catholic household, it was hard for me to express myself at all, let alone my sexuality. I always felt like an outsider, constantly on the fringes of whichever school group or organization I joined. And it was this fear and rejection – this fringe mentality – that put me at risk. The longing for an intimate connection, for some understanding, led me to have unprotected sex – so I could feel the acceptance of my partners, feel close to someone. The need for that connection became more important than anything else – including my health – and that fact is not relegated to me. Since coming to APICHA—and being surrounded by people with whom I could identify, who could see

Continued on page 11

In and Around Our Communities

continued from page 10

my face and hear my story—I've witnessed the same fear and rejection I felt in the faces of young gay men we help.

Young gay and bisexual Asian and Pacific Islander men all over New York City are being infected – from Chinatown to Little Manila, Flushing and Jackson Heights. We are all affected. Within this past week, one 21 year-old Chinese gay male tested HIV-positive at our agency. Thankfully, we can still help him with medical care, alternative therapy, counseling, and case management. But how can we prevent the multitude of others from succumbing to this disease which is still rapidly engulfing the Asian and Pacific Islander community?

We need to revive HIV education and prevention services for adult men who have sex with men. We need a safe space where people can discuss these issues with their communities in Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Hindi, Bengali and more! We must restore outreach services and educational materials and add more peer educators to reach into the community and show those standing by the wayside that there is a place where people will truly accept them for their entire self – where they won't have to choose which identity is more important to them. I call on the City Council to allocate funding, to repair the neglect the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has already wrought upon my people. Honorable Joel Rivera and Council Members, I urge you to end this injustice and support this proposal made by the Emergency Response Coalition. Thank you for hearing us. May our efforts not be in vain.

June: Pride Month

On a bright and sunny day, APICHA staff were out in Jackson Heights, Queens to celebrate Pride. We offered HIV and syphilis testing in a mobile health van, free nicotine patches, and safer sex kits. The HEP Team provided free hepatitis vaccines. It was a very successful event due to the great teamwork shown by staff and peers from CTR, Development, the HIV Primary Care Clinic, and Prevention. Approximately 150 people were registered for services – 72 of whom were tested for HIV, 52 screened for syphilis and 101 vaccinated for Hepatitis.



Two mobile health vans picked up staff and supplies at 8:30 in the morning on June 14 and headed to Park Slope, Brooklyn. Therese R. Rodriguez, Executive Director, was there to greet clients, staff, peers and volunteers.



AI officials Clemens Steinbock, MBA, AI Director for Quality Initiatives (far left), Bruce D. Agins, MD, MPH, Medical Director (second, right) and Ira Feldman, Deputy Director, (far right). APICHA staffers shown (2nd from left to right) are Development Director Ding Pajaron, former Associate Director of Client Services Shu-Hui Wu, Executive Director Therese R. Rodriguez, and Medical Director Victor Inada, MD, AAHIVS.

APICHA offered HIV testing, comprehensive STI screening (Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis), free nicotine patches and safer sex kits. Our peer educators enthusiastically outreached all day while staff provided 78 HIV tests, 55 Chlamydia and gonorrhea, and over 50 syphilis screenings.

At the NYC Pride march, staff, peers, clients, and volunteers will be joining the march and will distribute safe sex kits.

Honor from NYSDOH AIDS Institute

APICHA was presented the 2007 Quality of Care Award for Achievement in Quality Improvement Activities, for developing an innovative quality improvement program and participation in the Part C Learning Network. The ceremony was held on December 13, 2007 at St. John's University in New York City. Dr. Victor Inada, head of the quality improvement team received the award on APICHA's behalf.

Seen On Site

Renewal of Old Friendship

Dr. David Ho, Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center visited APICHA on March 18. The visit in a sense was a renewal of an old friendship. Dr. Ho has been acquainted with APICHA. He was an honoree at APICHA's 1998 "Other No More" gala, a tribute to his genius in scientific achievement. APICHA's staff led by Executive Director Therese R. Rodriguez and Medical Director Dr. Victor Inada, and APICHA Board



Dr. Ho (left) looking at a poster about APICHA's community mapping project. Medical Director Dr. Victor Inada (right) presented the findings at the 135th American Public Health Association Annual Meeting.



members Suki Terada Ports, Dr. Mars Custodio, Dr. John Chin, and Sherida David hosted the visit. Dr. Ho learned for the first time the different aspects of our "one-stop shop" model of community-based HIV/AIDS care which now include free, rapid HIV testing and HIV Primary Medical Care to the community. He was particularly interested in APICHA's peer-led outreach to young persons at risk for HIV infection.

Speaker Quinn's Reps Visit APICHA

Jeremy M. Wilson, LGBT and HIV/AIDS Community Liaison; Megan Annitto, Counsel to the Committee Youth; and Jennifer Cult, Policy



(Seated left to right) APICHA Executive Director Therese R. Rodriguez, Megan Annitto, Jennifer Cult, and Jeremy Wilson with youth leaders and volunteers

Analyst, on May 30, represented NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn at a roundtable discussion with staff, peers, and volunteers of APICHA's Young People's Project and Young MSM Project. Our young people described how they do outreach and peer-to-peer net-



Consul General Madame Trie Mulyani (seated front row center) is flanked by Mrs. Luky Hadibrata (left) and Therese R. Rodriguez (right).

working. They also pointed to the lack of comprehensive sexual health education in schools. When asked by the guests what they thought about fear and the notion of HIV prevention fatigue, a few spoke eloquently that these are not relevant to A&PI youth since lack of information is their greatest problem. Most if not all present in the room nodded in agreement.

Word-of-Mouth

Indonesian Consul General Madame Trie Mulyani came to visit APICHA on December 12 to

commemorate World AIDS Day. She brought along Mrs. Luky Hadibrata, who came on behalf of the General Manager of Bank of Indonesia, and their respective staff members. The visit was inspired by an APICHA client who had spoken to her about APICHA's services. Madame Mulyani wanted to see the space, and to get to know our programs and services. The 18-member visiting group was hosted by Ms. Rodriguez and several APICHA staff members who made presentations about their respective programs and gave a tour of the facility.

"I appreciate all you have done," Madame Mulyani opened her remarks. She said that people who are infected with HIV are part of us. "One thing they really need is attention." The conversation with staff was dynamic as the guests asked questions about HIV prevention in NYC's high schools, approaches to

sex education and the use of condoms. During the tour, Madame Mulyani noted that the facility is so clean. The visit was capped by a presentation of gifts (in cash, painting, and gift bags) from both the government of Indonesia and the Bank of Indonesia as well as from Madame Mulyani personally.

Visitors from Kazakstan

Medical Officers from the Kazakh Ministry of Health on December 3, 2007 spent part of their

Continued on page 10