



Mai Family Services
Support when you need it most

WE SUPPORT...

BUILDING A STRONGER AND A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

www.maifs.org

Free Helpline (888)664-8624

President's Note

Year 2014 has been unique in several ways for all of us in Michigan. The winter has been brutal. But we managed to stay warm. We at MaiFS were fortunate to start the New Year on a positive note. We added several dedicated board members and volunteers to our family.

The Fundraising team has been working hard to put together our annual fundraiser Asmi – I Prevail. Mandar Kulkarni, Usha Ram and Preeti Venkatraman have worked tirelessly to bring to you this entertaining presentation by our local talented artists. What a great idea to appreciate our own talent and help a worthy cause!

The Marketing committee led by Anu Gopalakrishnan and Dharani Ravichandran has made colossal progress by launching a MaiFS Facebook page, several branding initiatives and more efforts are in progress. The team has worked on enabling recurring payments for the convenience of our donors.

The Outreach team under the leadership of Asha Reddy and Kiran Ingle along with Clinical consultants Usha Ari and Latika Mangrulkar were instrumental in creating a partnership with the SEVA team of Bharatiya temple. We at MaiFS look forward to working together with the SEVA team's Domestic Abuse focus group to help the community.

Shanti Menon has been working on exploring the various Federal and community foundation grants that MaiFS can qualify for and is putting together a list of processes that need to be in place to qualify.

Thanks to our Volunteer Coordinator team, Smita Kapoor and Maria Siddiqui, who have vitalized the volunteer program and attracted many new volunteers including many youngsters from the community.

This year, we have started a new initiative to help our clients gain economic independence and get back their self-esteem. We are lucky to have Mousumi Sarkar and Preeti Tyagi to help us as career counselors. Their main responsibility is to assess the client's skills and recommend re-tooling or training to make them marketable in the job market.

Suneel Hingwe, Nutan Oak and Kusum Rashid, comprising the Executive committee, are working very hard to bring many more exciting initiatives and services.

Last, but not the least, our caseworkers Mona Belsare, Vani Gururajan and Sailaja Dronamraju along with intake person Phalguna Siddapureddy are working hard on the forefront helping with the crisis intervention while our volunteer Pam Raj is helping spread awareness about MaiFS.

Stay tuned to read the details on our website, our Facebook page or through our next newsletter.

Our community needs MaiFS and MaiFS needs your support!

Mona Sashital

President, Mai Family Services



2014 Clients to Date: 33
Hours Spent: 204 Direct
Client Hours

DV: 14
Counseling: 4
Mental Health: 5
Substance Abuse: 1

Medical Assistance: 2
Legal Assistance: 13
Financial Assistance: 8
Job Assistance: 8

Asmi - I Prevail - 04/13

Mark your Calendar! - Walkathon 06/22

Mai Family Services proudly presents

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Asmi – I Prevail...
(with Hindi/English Narration)

An Evening of Music and Dance

Artists:
Amit Deshpande, Minadani Arakkar, Anagha Huprikar and Group,
Sudha Chandrasekhar and Group

Anchors:
Jyotsna Divadkar, Swati Karve

Date: Sunday, April 13, 2014
Time: 3:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Location: Ford Community & Performing Art Center
15801 Michigan Ave, Dearborn, MI 48126

Ticket prices: \$100, \$50, \$25
Light refreshments included

For tickets, call

Mandar Kulkarni: 248-396-8959
Mana Sashital: 248-767-4542
Amit Deshpande: 248-227-5682
Anagha Huprikar: 248-701-5275

Purchase tickets on line at www.maifs.org

Mai Family Services is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to supporting South Asians in need. Visit www.maifs.org to learn more. FREE Helpline (888)664-8624.



WALK-TO-STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Sunday June 22, 2014

Farmington Heritage Park
24725 Farmington Road,
Farmington Hills, MI 48336



Kick-Off @ 11 am

Registration @ 10 am
includes refreshments and activities

Adults: \$15 (ages 18+)
Youth: \$10 (ages 10-17)
Children: No Fee (ages 0-9)
On-site registration: \$20



To be a sponsor, please email us at info@maifs.org.
All proceeds from the event will assist survivors of Domestic abuse.
100% of your donations are tax deductible.

Visit our walkathon website for additional details, and to register:
www.maifs.org

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Asmi—A Sanskrit word that says “I am” “I prevail” is the theme of MaiFS annual fundraiser.

The generous community support for our yearly gathering sows the seeds that sprout into various resources for our clients, making it possible for them to fend off the horrendous winters of their lives to move into a warmer season. The two hope inspiring tales are what often give us the energy to further our services. Anisha, a young woman has written about her loss of dreams in “Power to Break Free.” The website www.Power2BreakFree.com as well as educational programs she conducts show what she has learned could help others.

The second narrative is from Veera, who endured the harsh seasons for decades before she found the courage to seek help. As a film-maker, writer not only has she moved to a phase from where she has mended many of the broken bridges but her example shows it is never too late to proclaim “Asmi: I prevail.” These interviews were conducted through emails and over the telephone and we at MaiFS are very grateful to Anisha and Veera for sharing their stories.

Courage to Break Through:

After Seven Long Years It took seven years for her to break through. Finally she brought the struggle to an end on her own terms. This is not always possible for all who are caught up in the vicious cycle of DV. Anisha escaped from the dark tunnel. An Indian-American brought up in the Midwestern suburbs of United States, Anisha is an example from the model minority that continues to live under the façade that such things do not happen in our families.

Not that her own family would not have been supportive if Anisha had talked to them. An independent minded professional woman she never dreamed that she could be dealt such a hand. She wanted to end the game on her own. When Anisha reached the marriageable stage her parents introduced her to a young physician with the help of a family friend who acted as a mediator. A partner from the same linguistic background, from the same town as her parents he was an appropriate proposal as she points out “I accepted it all on my own, no one forced me but I wish I had taken longer than three weeks to get to know him.” He met Anisha’s primary criteria, a shared interest in things spiritual. Not a religious person in the traditional sense she wanted to marry someone who shared this goal, her intended husband spoke the right talk. But the verbal abuse started before the honeymoon was over. Things escalated to the physical level in a few months but it took three or more years before Anisha recognized a pattern.

When she realized what was happening it took another two years before she could believe it was real. For some reasons six year was the mark for her she said when she earnestly began to address what was going on. Calling the hotline to get help, seeking refuge at shelters is what Anisha resorted to in Florida, where the couple lived. There was no family close by. It was easy to keep her parents who were in Ohio out of the loop. Anisha chose to do that mainly to spare them the pain. In the meanwhile she herself was dealing with the loss of her own dreams. Not a person who shares her story readily Anisha has had to find ways to cope with the trauma. Much of her energy has been diverted to writing and providing support and assistance to others caught up in a cycle of violence.

Check out her website www.Power2BreakFree.com.- as well as her book and learn how she is using an experience that nearly destroyed her "What is your message?" I asked "I wanted to do everything on my own" Anisha said as we conclude our conversation but it need not be that way. Groups like mine www.Power2BreakFree.com--- or yours like MaiFS are there for a good reason, use them."

An Unexpected Awakening:

At times it is an unexpected event, an unpredictable moment that brings about a life change. For Veera the epiphany came as she watched "Life without Fear" an educational video for new volunteers. It was a rude awakening. In the everyday events depicted on the screen Veera saw her life reflected. There were so many parallels. Suddenly all the turmoil she had been experiencing for years had a name. It had not occurred to her that she herself was experiencing domestic violence. A business woman and a mom who had spent two decades raising her sons, focusing on the software business she ran with her husband trying to create a stable family. But behind this public persona there was an acute anxiety, everyday living filled with fear and uncertainty that she could not admit even to herself. The boys were nearing adulthood. Household responsibilities had lightened a little.

Veera had time to volunteer at a community agency. As she trained for her new responsibilities she found that there could be life without fear. A computer science engineer and a competent business person, from a well to do family of educators hers was a marriage that looked perfect from the outside, yet over the years holes had been tearing into this gossamer lace. Veera acknowledges "I was not even aware that my own situation was abusive" so desperate she was to maintain the homeostasis. It is a woman's job to keep the balance centuries of tradition had reinforced in her. At MaiFS, for the first time, she was surrounded by people willing to help her but to admit about her own situation would mean shame and stigma. When she raised her voice, much to the horror the comments she got from her family of origin as well as the in-law family and most Indian friends were, "this is how men are and you will not do better than this", "It is your job, you have to make it work". Worst of all, you will always be his main queen even if he wants other queens". How could she even think of it as abuse? They asked. "This happens to all women, it is normal. Girls from good families must learn to accept it" she was advised. Even though she never accepted it, she had learned to put up with it for a long time. But not anymore, with the help of the empathic team around her she gained courage. "I knew what I was doing," she told me "I did not feel guilty because I had done everything I could to make things work. After twenty three years it was time to be free and live my dreams."

Veera waited till her kids were raised, she had been warned, "I will make sure your life will be hell," she held on for fourteen more long years. Year and a half was spent in a messy divorce with little or no support from both sides of the family. They were an affluent, educated Punjabi family where such behavior is impossible they said. That unexpected watching of the video gave Veera the push, her wings found the strength as she soared and continues to soar in her life, in her career again. She is the owner and publisher of a mainstream magazine in California. She is an author and a film producer. Her parents and brothers have grown from being afraid for her, to being proud of her. She has not burnt any bridges even with her former in-law family. She is a welcome guest at her former mother-in-law's home and maintains a civil communication with her ex-husband. As Veera moves forward, she is thankful for everything that she lived and learned from because she believes she lived that life for a purpose. She is an advocate for knowing that you deserve better and getting what you deserve by letting go of the victim syndrome and living an empowered life. Veera is first and foremost a mom of two grown sons. She feels blessed and is forever grateful for their love and support.

Latika Mangrulkar

Film on Indian Immigrants - Dr. Arifa Javed

The film focuses on the important contributions that the Indian immigrant community has made to American society and on the truly American value of pluralism, which allows immigrant minorities to survive, thrive and give back to the richness of American society as a whole. I hope this film will provide a unique ethnic enrichment opportunity to American audiences, depicting Indians as people and as a culture.

Read more at <http://www.gofundme.com/5rixnc>





MaiFS is always looking for committed individuals as volunteers. Interested? Please visit www.maifs.org

bhandari
Photography & Cinematography

MaiFS Outreach Efforts from Jan- March 2014

MaiFS members had a display booth at a conference hosted by **South Asian Awareness Network (SAAN)**, a student run social justice organization at the University of Michigan that seeks to raise awareness surrounding social and political issues among the South Asian community.

Bimonthly Volunteer Outreach events provide an opportunity to bond and discuss various MaiFS volunteering opportunities and areas for improvement to make our volunteers more involved and engaged. The March event had a Yoga session – ‘Yoga is the Way to Freedom’. Existing and upcoming new opportunities are discussed and reviewed.

MaiFS continues its efforts with **SEVA Committee at Bharatiya Temple, Troy** to help serve clients who may approach SEVA committee at the temple for assistance in distress/difficult situations. Good progress has been made along these lines.

MaiFS reached out to the Youth wing at the **Bharatiya temple, Troy (Bal Bharati)** and offered support to the 13-17 year old youngsters. MaiFS board member Latika Mangrulkar was the host/speaker for the event where children gathered and slowly lead to ripples of communication. Similar sessions are being planned.

MaiFS has begun its collaboration efforts with **West Bloomfield Balaji Temple**. MaiFS members Kusum Rashid, usha Ram and Preeti Tyagi met with the executive members of Balaji Temple Mr. Sampath, President and Mr. Venkatchari, secretary who pledged their support.

Mai Family Services was well represented at the “**Partner Violence Workshop**” for 1st – 4th year medical students at University of Michigan on Thursday, February 13, 2014. The workshop was led by Dr. Vijay Singh MD, MPH, MS (Department of Family Medicine and Department of Emergency Medicine). Pam Raj from MaiFS represented and presented topics that were timely and crucial. The topic of the workshop was health care identification and response to partner violence (PV). MaiFS explained the importance of screening for domestic violence at medical settings by explaining the psychological symptoms and the long-term nature and complexity of this social problem. Members of the University of Michigan South Asian Medical Student Association (SAMoSA) were present at the workshop. Other workshop members included LaTresa Wiley (University of Michigan Health System Abuse Consultation Team lead social worker).

Plymouth Gurudwara in March: At the Women’s Conference, MaiFS representatives- Kiran Ingle and Pam Raj had an opportunity to do a presentation on MaiFS and DV and wellness. The presentation was well received and commended.

MAPI-CME Event in March: MaiFS members increased awareness about the organization and the annual fundraiser program information was distributed. The MAPI Outreach event was a great success. MaiFS received a check of \$1500 from MAPI Auxillary showing their support for 2013. Tickets to the annual fundraiser were sold. Special thanks to Bhuvnesh Khosla and Volunteer Co-ordinator Smita Khosla for their energetic participation and support.

Chai with Mai in Ann Arbor: The event is on March 23rd from 4-5:30pm: Location: 3659 Deer Ridge Court, Ann Arbor, MI (Very close to the Ford Rd exit off of M14).

MaiFS is a non-profit, tax exempt organization under section 501(c)(3), completely driven by volunteers. We seek your help in keeping this community healthy.

Please support MaiFS! Donate Now. Visit www.maifs.org

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