



Shanti News

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www.shantiproject.org

Who We Are.

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The Shanti Project of the University of Michigan School of Social Work, works to strengthen family relationships in the Gujarati community.

As a part of this work, we are pleased to present films, events and discussion groups that may help to strengthen family communications and relationships.

For more information about The Shanti Project and future events, contact us at **1-888-4SHANTI** or visit www.shantiproject.org.

What Is The Shanti Project?

The Shanti Project is a community-based program through the University of Michigan School of Social Work. The aim of the project is to prevent domestic violence and to strengthen family relationships in the Gujarati community of Southeast Michigan (Macomb, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne Counties).

As part of this work, The Shanti Project promotes non-violence and strengthening family communication through posters and public service announcements, and hosts interactive activities to promote conversations in the community using films, small plays/skits, events, trainings and discussion groups.

Together with a Community Action Team, made up of diverse community members and motivated volunteers, The Shanti Project is building upon the strengths of the Gujarati community to prevent domestic violence by promoting 1) open communications, and 2) mutual respect.

What Is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of beliefs and behaviors used by a person in a marriage or intimate relationship to control the other. It has many faces and can be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, and verbal.

Examples include, but not limited to: hitting, threatening, isolating, insulting, humiliating, and controlling money. Some people think domestic violence is caused by alcohol, anger, and stress, but it is **not**. It is actually caused by the way people learn to act by watching how men and women treat one another, inside and outside the family.

Domestic violence happens in all communities and the Gujarati community is no exception. The impact is huge and affects the whole family as well as the whole community.

In a recent survey, **two out of three** Indian community members in Southeast Michigan said they were aware that domestic violence happens in their community and **over half** said they knew someone who has experienced domestic violence.

Many people in the community are aware of the problem, but do not know what to do.

Addressing This Important Need:

The Shanti Project was created to address this important need. The project hopes to address this need by:

- Increasing the awareness of domestic violence within the Gujarati community.
- Encouraging community members to start conversations on how to prevent domestic violence.
- Supporting families and the community in understanding how to use open communications and mutual respect in everyday situations.

Meet The Community Action Team (CAT):

CAT members have been working hard for the past year and a half to develop a plan for a campaign to promote nonviolence and ensure the safety of everyone in our community. Now that we have a plan it's time to put it into action.

CAT members work collaboratively with the project team on various aspects of the campaign, which aims to strengthen families in the Gujarati community through open communications and mutual respect.

CAT members are paid a monthly stipend, work 10–12 hours a month, and participate in various activities including:

- Creating and distributing educational and outreach materials (i.e. brochures, posters)
- Designing and putting on program activities
- Representing the project at various events, such as health fairs and cultural events

And, much, much more.

If you are interested in joining our CAT, please visit our website and download an application www.shantiproject.org or call 1.800.4SHANTI to request an application in the mail.

Current CAT Members:**Nisha Dalal**

"Participating in CAT provides us with the chance to truly make a difference in how our communities' past generations, present, and future think towards domestic violence and ways to prevent it from occurring."

Sheila Krishnan

"I joined CAT because...I was interested in the way the project engages the community to bring about domestic violence awareness and prevention and wanted to learn more about changing social and cultural norms."

Kavita Patel

"I believe that domestic violence has such a big facade in the community and it is my goal to bring the issue out."

Nikita Patel

"Domestic violence is a problem in our community, even though it is rarely spoken of. I believe the first step to prevention is education."

Suketu Patel

"Many of you probably feel that you don't have time to join the CAT, or even volunteer. But domestic violence is a real issue in our community. And if we don't get involved ourselves, who will?"

Piyush Shah

"Now I am retired and have time. I decided to learn more about domestic violence and join The Shanti Project...families need support, respect, and education. Gossiping and taboos will not help us. Working together will benefit the community as a whole"

Past CAT Members:

Gita Shah, May '06 – April '07

Snehal Shah, May '06 – April '07

**"Shanti Che?" The Shanti Project's Kick-Off Event:
By Staff**

On June 3rd, members of the The Shanti Project hosted its kick-off event at the Costick Center in Farmington Hills. At the event, which was attended by over 50 people, the Gujarati community learned about the goals and activities of the project, and met the staff and community members working on the project. Mr. Narendra Sheth, popular, local radio personality, served as the Emcee for the event and said, "This is a unique project which has adopted a preventive approach to domestic problems before it is too late rather than the corrective one." The event featured various performances, including: MAYA Dance Troupe, based at the University of Michigan, Yoni Ki Baat, also based at the University of Michigan, and Nartan Dance Academy, led by Ms. Raksha Dave. The event also presented many posters, pamphlets, and photographs, and included information booths by such organizations as Asian Indian Women's Association (AIWA) and Michigan Asian Indian Family Services (MAIFS). The event was a great way to let the Gujarati community know the work we're doing, and involve them in making the community stronger.



"Hollywood, Bollywood, Shantiwood":

By Ankita Mohanty, Intern

Shantiwood is The Shanti Project's take on "Bollywood." At this free film series, community members are invited to see a movie, eat samosa, and participate in a lively discussion afterwards. On October 20th, 2007, The Shanti Project hosted their first Shantiwood at the Jon Grant Community Center, in Farmington Hills. The hit film "Chalte Chalte" was shown and enjoyed by members of the Gujarati community. An open environment encouraged attendees to share their thoughts about the film in relation to communications and relationships. Please come and enjoy a popular film, delicious refreshments, and good conversation at our next Shantiwood event on February 16, 2008.



MOHANDAS K. GANDHI: "I first learned the concepts of non-violence in my marriage."

Act Now! Act Up! Act!:

The Shanti Project is looking for new members to join their theater group, who are interested in using theater to help strengthen family relationships and improve communication skills.

Join us, it's going to be fun. It's going to be interesting. It's going to help the community.

Call or Email for more information: 1-888-4SHANTI or shantiproject@umich.edu.

Interested In Hosting a Small Gathering?:

Take the time to relax with family and friends at your home. Share and hear stories from one another and learn about ways to work together to improve family communication and relationships. Build a gathering around a book, article, movie or guest speaker. You provide the lively conversation and we will provide the refreshments and materials.

Mark Your Calendar:

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| February 16, 2008: | Shantiwood |
| February 23, 2008: | Gujarati Family Communications Workshop |
| March 8, 2008: | International Women's Day |
| March 15, 2008: | Shantiwood |