

Our Voice

A Publication of the Pennsylvania Immigrant and Refugee Women's Network

Women Showed Great Interest in our Annual Women's Health Conference

Senel Poyrazli and Katy Mahraj

Our 7th Annual Women's Health conference was held on Saturday, October 17, 2009 as an all-day event at the Harrisburg Area Community College in Harrisburg, PA. The conference was organized by PAIRWN board members Senel Poyrazli, Ho-Thanh Nguyen, and Katy Mahraj. Several other members and volunteers provided help during the conference.

A panel of speakers presented information about breast cancer, diabetes, heart health, and mental health. Presenters were Dr. Jennifer Kogan, Dr. Angela Soto-Hamlin, Dr. Beth Bates, and Marie Weil. Conference attendees also wrote questions that were answered by the panelists after the conference. These questions and answers are now on our website (<http://www.pairwn.org>).

A multicultural lunch, inspired by recipes from PAIRWN's International Cookbook, was provided to the attendees. Distribution of door prizes, including materials promoting the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer program, was one of the colorful moments of the lunch. Dr. Asresu Misikir who presented information on the Pennsylvania Department of Health's Refugee Health Program was our lunch speaker.

PAIRWN Partners with US Census 2010

This year, PAIRWN is partnering with the US Census 2010 to share the voices and needs of immigrants and refugees in Pennsylvania. Taking part in the census is an important way to make sure the needs of you and your family are heard and included. Census data helps to decide how over \$400 billion in funding is spent on resources including hospitals, job training centers, schools, roads, and emergency services. PAIRWN is here to help connect you with census information and materials. If you have questions about the census, please contact PAIRWN. Participation in the census is mandatory. We look forward to helping you! You can reach us by calling, emailing, or writing:



PAIRWN
P.O. Box 238
Enola, PA 17025
Phone: 717-433-0900
Email: pairwn@pairwn.org
Website: www.pairwn.org

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Mail: P.O. Box 238, Enola, PA 17025
Email: pairwn@pairwn.org
Website: www.pairwn.org
Phone: 717-433-0900

Board Members: Ho-Thanh Nguyen,
Senel Poyrazli, Sokunvery Var, Katy
Mahraj, Beatrice Adera, Mai Carrera,
Monica Teles Carr, Amy Skillman,
Tiffany Strickler

Mission Statement: The Pennsylvania
Immigrant and Refugee Women's
Network (PAIRWN) was created to
honor and enhance the lives of
immigrant women in Pennsylvania. Our
mission is to help refer, advo-cate,
network and empower these women to
live to their fullest potential.

We also strive to educate others about
our cultures and our contributions to
American society.

To carry out its mission, PAIRWN:
1) provides help and support for
immigrant and refugee women and
children; 2) promotes understanding,
respect, and friendship among the
diverse ethnic and cultural groups in our
neighborhoods; and 3) provides
leadership training and mentoring for
immigrant and refugee women.

This issue was produced by Beatrice
Adera.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

If you would like to connect with other women;
learn about services that address our community's
needs; develop leadership skills; enjoy good
company; share knowledge about other cultures;
foster our contributions to society; enhance the
bridges that connect all communities; preserve
important traditions; nurture the well-being of
family and community; make your voice heard ...
consider membership with PAIRWN!

Make the membership contribution you can afford:
\$10, \$15, \$20, \$25, or above. Institutional
memberships are \$100. Send your contribution
with the application below to: PAIRWN P.O. Box
238, Enola PA 17025. Keep this half as your
receipt.

Thank you! We look forward to seeing you at a
future PAIRWN event!

Cut Here ► -----

PAIRWN MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Send to: PAIRWN, P.O. Box 238, Enola, PA 17025.
Make checks payable to PAIRWN.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Primary Language: _____

Nationality: _____

Contribution Amount: _____

Thank you!

The premier performance of PAIRWN's second original theater piece, *Magnificent Healing: A Story Circle Play*, and a discussion about the play was the highlight of the afternoon. Five immigrant and refugee women shared their personal stories about diabetes, polio, language barriers, and female circumcision. The play was developed by Lori Myers and directed by Anne Alsedek. A lively discussion among the women and a panel that consisted of Dr. Alawia Suliman, Dr. Ly-Le Tran, and Diem Nguyen followed.

The conference was concluded by a fascinating presentation from Dr. Ly-Le Tran who highlighted the varying responses of patients and families to cancer based on their cultural background. PAIRWN board member, Mai Nguyen, closed the conference with additional door prizes. Based on the evaluation forms collected from participants at the end of the conference, the events and information shared were a great success!

Emails received from the conference speakers and health fair vendors following the conference attest to the importance of this event. One speaker wrote, "What a terrific organization and people! It was an honor to be included." Another wrote about PAIRWN, "You and your friends/colleagues have embraced and advanced the goal of serving the underserved immigrants." We thank the American Cancer Society, Open Meadow Foundation, Highmark, and HACC for funding this initiative.

by Sokunvery Var

PAIRWN's Ninth Annual "Celebrate the Holidays with Diversity" Potluck Luncheon took place at the Pennsylvania State Museum in mid-December and had nearly 200 attendees mesmerized by the many songs and dances of its vibrant performers.

At the start of the program, a charming young violinist took the stage captivating the audience as she played "Joy to the World." PAIRWN's annual diversity luncheon has been a great success over the past eight years, attracting young and old to come enjoy delectable foods from around the world as well as to come see a variety of incredibly unique cultural performances. At this year's luncheon, PAIRWN was particularly proud to introduce two new cultural dance performances from Nepal and Thailand. Anju Ghimirey's colorful costume and graceful movements captured everyone's attention as she performed a loved Nepalese folk dance.

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Diversity Luncheon continued

Payom Srilabute is a talented Thai artist who not only can dance Classical Thai dance, but she can also play the amazing Thai violin. Moreover, PAIRWN was very fortunate to have Zulema and Troupe Hayati come perform Middle Eastern dances; Troupe Hayati took first place for best dance troupe at the Northeastern Belly Dance Competition and also won the People's Choice award at the competition. And of the course, the two groups of performers who have been "regulars" at PAIRWN's annual cultural celebration—the Chinese Cultural Arts Institute and the Capital Youth Chorale—were as delightful as ever to see perform! As if these performances were not enough, members of PAIRWN and the Girls Scouts handed out presents to all the children who attended the celebration. A big thank you to Mai Nguyen and to everyone who donated presents to help make this event merrier for the children. Following the program, everyone enjoyed tasting the many delicious cultural foods; vegetable pakora, chicken curry, and eggrolls were a huge hit!



Spring/Summer 2010

Global Health Night
by Katy Mahraj

A little nervous, but very hopeful that their words and experiences would impact the audience before them, five women from PAIRWN took the stage to perform a reading of *Magnificent Healing: A Story Circle Play*.

On Thursday, January 28th, PAIRWN participated in the Penn State Hershey Medical Center's Global Health Night. This year, the event focused on the need for medical students and residents from the United States to learn about and work to improve health issues abroad. The event, organized by the Hershey Medical Center's Global Health Interest Group, was sponsored by Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center's Doctors Kienle Center for Humanistic Medicine, Office of the Vice Dean for Educational Affairs, Global Health Interest Group, and the American Medical Student Association. Riva Das, president of Global Health Interest Group, wrote to thank PAIRWN for the performance. "We have been getting a lot of positive feedback about the event," she shared.

Reading that night were Belgica Jones, Zohreh Akhtar, Beatrice Adera, Katy Mahraj, and Ho-Thanh Nguyen, introduced and directed by Amy Skillman. They read from the script prepared by Lori Myers, drawn from interviews she conducted with PAIRWN members. *Magnificent Healing* debuted during our 2009 Women's Health Conference.

The play explores healthy issues that immigrant and refugee women have been able to overcome, what it's like to go to a doctor in America, overcoming language and cultural barriers, and other key health concerns. As we travel, we bring health experiences from our home country that doctors and health care providers need to be aware of and how they continue to impact us in a new country. As Lori Myers describes, "It's an American story, but it's also a global story."

This second performance confirmed the strength of the play's message. We hope to find funding to enable us to develop the staged reading into a full theatrical production to be shared with many more audiences.





*Zohreh Akhtar
telling her story*

*I'm not mute
anymore....*



Listen Doctor.....

Flair and Flavor at the Library

By Katy Mahraj

Sharing the stories of immigrant and refugee women with the broader community in Central Pennsylvania is a central part of PAIRWN's mission. This winter, PAIRWN was proud to feature these stories in an exhibit at the Hershey Public Library at 701 Cocoa Avenue in Hershey. During the month of January, PAIRWN displayed photographs, interviews, information, and objects from our member's personal collections and from our museum exhibit, Our Voices.

Patrons wrote many positive comments in our visitors log during the month. One woman described the exhibit as "informative, and beautiful," and several viewers said that the exhibit made them want to learn more and should be expanded! Another patron wrote, "Wonderful to see people keeping ties to their heritage while taking part in this new and very different society... and sharing their culture with all of us."

From January 16th-23rd, the library showcased its own expanded World Language and Literacy Collection with a series of events including Children's Day, International Stories and Anime Festival, and two Foreign Film Festivals. PAIRWN tabled on the 20th to share more information and field questions about our programs and services.

PAIRWN's cookbook was also for sale at the library during January to raise funds for our 2010 events. You can still purchase your own PAIRWN cookbook for just \$10 by contacting pairwn@pairwn.org or 717-433-0900. It makes a great gift for birthdays, Mother's Day, and Father's Day for a family member who loves to cook or is just learning! Recipes are easy to follow and use ingredients available locally.

Due to its ongoing success, PAIRWN hopes to develop Our Voices as a travelling exhibit and is currently looking for funding sources to purchase a travelling case. If you or an organization you know is interested in sponsoring this project, please let us know! These stories are too important to keep in storage much longer.





***PAIRWN'S DISPLAY AT THE HERSHEY PUBLIC LIBRARY
JANUARY 2010***



Announcing the upcoming

UNITY IN DIVERSITY GALA

a PAIRWN fundraiser

with international flair
featuring silent auction,
dance performance,
and the announcement of
Compass Award Recipients



March 4, 2010

5 - 8PM

Appalachian Brewing
Company, 50 N. Cameron
Street, Harrisburg

Contact PAIRWN at
717-433-0900 or
pairwn@pairwn.org

for tickets, ads, sponsorship,
and donations!

Teniola Osundeko

PAIRWN's Newest Board Member

My name is Teni Osundeko and I am happy to join the PAIRWN board. I was born and raised Nigerian Yoruba. I feel blessed to be rooted in such an ancient and intricate culture. I currently reside in Pennsylvania and have my own counseling agency. In my spare time, I love to write, travel, and conduct ethnographic research. I also do a bit of gardening.

I can identify with challenges and opportunities faced by immigrant women because I have lived, attended school, and worked in both the UK and the USA. As a mother and wife, I also share the joys and frustrations unique only to women. As an agent for social change, I have served on the boards of several community organizations, i.e. PTA, Church, charities, etc. I strongly believe that a small group of determined individuals can make significant impact on society. I look forward to working closely with other PAIRWN members to actualize our organization's goals.

Save the Date!!! Women's Retreat

What: PAIRWN Sixth Annual Women's Retreat

When: Saturday May 1, 2010

*Do you want to intern with
PAIRWN?*

Contact us for more information!

Email: pairwn@pairwn.org
Phone: 717-433-0900

At Your Local Library

Your local public library has a wealth of resources just waiting for you! From books and movies to Internet access, your public library can help you find the information you need at little to no cost.

Libraries have...

Multilingual books and DVDs
ESL resources
Citizenship information
Drivers license information
Employment information
Free/low cost computer classes
Free/low cost Internet, computer, and printer access
Free/low cost Adult, Teen, and Children's programs
General reference resources and staff help
Tax information

Dauphin County Library System
Main branch: 717-234-4961; 101 Walnut St, Hbg

Hershey Public Library
717-566-0433; 701 Cocoa Ave, Hershey

More public libraries listed at
<http://www.publiclibraries.com/pennsylvania.htm>.

Connect with PAIRWN Online

Email

If you want to ask PAIRWN a non-urgent question, drop us a line at pairwn@pairwn.org. Ideal if you require personalized information regarding resources in the community or want to follow-up with us about getting involved with a PAIRWN program or event. For urgent questions, as always, please call us at 717-433-0900.

Facebook

Become a fan of PAIRWN by searching for the Pennsylvania Immigrant and Refugee Women's Network on Facebook. Connecting with us on Facebook is a perfect way to receive updates on our latest programs and events, including registration details, and to tap into related news and resources. Also a great place to engage in discussion with other fans about key issues and concerns for immigrant and refugee women.

Website

Point your browser to <http://www.pairwn.org> to get in-depth information on PAIRWN's history, board members, and programs, including applications for membership and our Student Intern Program! A great reference point for all things PAIRWN.

Thanks!

Health Conference and Diversity Luncheon Donations

PAIRWN thanks the following people and organizations for their generous dedication of support and expertise to immigrant and refugee women and their families.

Chinese Cultural Arts Institute

Capital Youth Chorale

GIANT Foods Store

Napalese Folk Dance

Thai Classical Dance

The Hershey Company

The Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs

Penn State Hershey Medical Center's Doctors Kienle Center for Humanistic Medicine

Penn State Hershey, Office of the Vice Dean for Educational Affairs

The Global Health Interest Group

The American Medical Student Association

US Census Bureau

Lori Myers for her work on *Magnificent Healing*

And our marvelous PAIRWN Board, Members, Interns and Volunteers!



PA Immigrant & Refugee Women's Network



Bringing Women Together for Leadership and Fellowship

PENNSYLVANIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE
WOMEN'S NETWORK

PAIRWN
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Our Voice
Spring/Summer
2010

We hope you will join us at these upcoming events!

2010 PAIRWN Activities

- 03/04 Thursday - Unity in Diversity Gala and Compass Awards, 5-8 pm, Appalachian Brewing Company, 50 N. Cameron Street, Harrisburg
- 05/01 Saturday - 6th Annual Women's Retreat, 9-5 pm, GIANT Community Center, Camp Hill
- 08/15 Sunday - Member Meeting, 2-5 pm, Contact PAIRWN for Location
- 09/25 Saturday - Health Conference, 9-4 pm, HACC Wildwood Conference Center
- 11/14 Sunday - Member Meeting, 2-5 pm, Contact PAIRWN for Location
- 12/11 Saturday - Diversity Lunch, 10-2 pm, PA State Museum, Harrisburg