



Inside ACCESS

Newsletter of Asian Christian Counseling & Educational Seminar Services, Inc. (ACCESS)

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No Man is an Island

— By Lydia Teh, LAPC

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.”

These words were written by English clergyman and poet John Donne in 1624. Another way to say it is: we need each other to be whole.

Human beings were created to live in groups, not in isolation. Even though the cities all over the world have become more crowded than ever, more people today suffer from loneliness. Ask any recent immigrant who just moved to a big city like Atlanta, Georgia, and he or she can tell you all about it. Proximity alone does not create true closeness. Meaningful connectiveness requires a lot more.

In the mental health field, one important aspect of assessment is to inquire about a person’s primary support group—how are one’s relationships with spouse, family members, friends, colleagues, etc. A strong primary support group often facilitates faster recovery and adjustment to a crisis or problem. People are one of the best resources a person can have. Without meaningful connections with other human beings, we

are less likely to be motivated and move on in life, especially when crises arise.

Many of us belong to some types of group, for example, a base ball team, breast-feeding moms, Christian businessmen, a Bible study fellowship, or a photography club. People with common interests, facing common challenges, or pursuing a common goal, we gather to share the fun, to encourage, support, and cheer each other on. Groups facilitate growth.

According to Yalom (1995), famous psychiatrist and group counseling guru, a group presents a complex interplay of various therapeutic factors that promotes change. Here are some of the important aspects: (1) **Universality**—knowing that others share similar issues, problems, concerns, or feelings. (2) **Instillation of hope**—knowing that people in situations similar to yours do improve and get better. (3) **Altruism**—giving to others unselfishly with no expectation of return or gratitude. (4) **Development of socializing techniques**—learning how one is perceived by others and practicing new ways of relating and communicating.

(5) **Information impartation**—learning new and unfamiliar material related to oneself. (6) **Catharsis**—venting of emotions, expressing

deeply held, intense feelings that have been pent up, repressed or denied.



Discussion groups at parenting workshop

One of the services ACCESS provides is group counseling. It can be conducted in many different formats, including: *psycho-educational groups, self-help groups, and counseling groups.* Psycho-educational groups focus on teaching factual information and skill-building through exercises and group processing. Self-help groups aim to be mutually-supportive groups to empower the group members. Counseling groups are tailored to address the specific needs of the group members, by focusing on interpersonal problem-solving, interactive feedback and support within a here-and-now framework.

Decades of research have shown that groups are one of the most cost-effective and successful interventions. We are excited to announce that ACCESS has just received a mini-grant to conduct a short-term, Chinese-speaking, depression counseling group starting next February. This is another important step we take to serve our first generation Asian and Asian American immigrants. Please see p. 4



Marriage communication workshop participants engage in group discussion

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Message From the Executive Director

As we approach another holiday season and year end, I am amazed that another year is rapidly going by. We had hoped to get a newsletter out earlier in the year, but as many of you know, the summer was extremely busy with a couple special fundraising events for *Asian Christian Counseling & Educational Seminar Services, Inc.* (ACCESS) (see article on page 3), and this fall has been filled with speaking engagements (see list below), outreach and grant applications.

Because of the unique opportunities that came up during the summer for the special fundraising events we had, we decided to postpone our annual fall fundraising dinner to next

February or March, so please stay tuned for more details on that in the future. In the meantime, during this Thanksgiving season, it is especially appropriate to give thanks to God, and express appreciation to all of you for your interest in ACCESS and/or your support in various ways!

For those of you who attended our special fundraising dinner with Miss China 2007 or our benefit performance by the Yunnan Music and Folk Dance Troupe, thank you so much for your support! We hope you enjoyed these unique events.

In August, ACCESS celebrated its third anniversary! We are thankful for this milestone, and look forward to seeing what

God has in store for us in the new year to come! As we look to the future, we are excited about starting some counseling groups. Please read our front page and p.4 articles for more information.

If you would like to get more involved in supporting ACCESS, consider giving a year-end donation or volunteering with us. Whether you want to make a long-term commitment, or just volunteer for one time, you can help make a difference!

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff at ACCESS, thank you and have a blessed Christmas!

Rebekah Wang, LMFT
Executive & Clinical Director



From Left, Lydia Teh, Miss China 2007, & Rebekah Wang

Events and Presentations by ACCESS

February 3, 2007 — “Effective Communication in Marriage”

Atlanta Chinese Christian Church (ACCC)
Speakers: Rebekah Wang, Lydia Teh

March 3, 2007 — “Helping Friends in Need”

ACCC Women’s Fellowship
Speaker: Rebekah Wang

April 21, 2007 — Center for Pan Asian Community Services (CPACS) Youth event outreach (Doraville, GA)

April 28, 2007 — “Conflict Resolution in Marriage”

Atlanta Chinese Christian Church North (ACCCN)
Speakers: Dr. Edward Lai, Lydia Teh

June 1, 2007 — “An Evening With Miss China 2007” Special Fundraising Dinner (In Chinese only)

Canton House Chinese Restaurant (Chamblee, GA)

July 14, 2007 — “A Night of Yunnan, China” Special Benefit Performance for ACCESS

Ferst Center for the Arts, Georgia Tech

August 11, 2007 — “Understanding Anxiety Disorders” and “Dealing with Anxiety” (in Chinese only)

Atlanta Chinese Christian Church
Speakers: Lydia Teh, Dr. Huey-Jen Chen

August 27, 2007 — “Dealing With Stress”

Pro Brand International, Inc. (Marietta, GA)
Speaker: Rebekah Wang

September 8, 2007 — Dragon Boat Festival community outreach with Georgia Asian Pacific Islander Community Coalition (GAAPICC) (Lake Lanier — Gainesville, GA)

September 29, 2007 — “Parenting Young Children: From Playing to Growing” and “Growing With Your Teenagers” (In Chinese only)

Atlanta Chinese Christian Church North
Speakers: Dr. Edward Lai, Lydia Teh

October 13, 2007 — “Enjoying Your Best Years”

Tzu Chi Foundation Seniors Group
Speaker: Lydia Teh

October 28, 2007 — “Understanding Your American-Born Child”

ACCA Chinese School (Emory Campus)
Speaker: Lydia Teh

November 21, 2007 — “Stress Management” National Association of Chinese Americans (NACA) Lunch and Learn Seminar

Georgia Institute of Technology
Speaker: Rebekah Wang

Special Fundraising Events in 2007

— By Lydia Teh, APC

When rare opportunities knock on your door, how would you respond? When we were informed that Miss China 2007 would be visiting Atlanta right after the 2007 Miss Universe Pageant held in Mexico City, and the *Yunnan Ethnic Music and Dance Ensemble* from China was touring in the Southeastern US, and both parties were willing to help ACCESS raise awareness of the mental health needs among the Asian and Asian American population in Atlanta, ACCESS took advantage of the unique opportunities. The next thing we knew, we were in for hectic preparations for both events on very short notice.

On Friday, June 1, 2007 at the Canton House Restaurant from 7:00 - 9:30pm, ACCESS held a special fundraising dinner for the local Chinese-speaking community in honor of Miss China 2007, Ning-Ning Zhang, with Mr. Scott Song as Master of Ceremonies. Dinner included a ten-course gourmet Chinese banquet and singing performances by both Miss China and Mr. Song along with a time of informal interview of Miss Zhang, a question and answer time, and a door prize drawing.

At the 2007 Miss Universe Pageant on Memorial Day, Miss Zhang won the award for Miss Congeniality. Her caring spirit was evident, not only in her support for the counseling work ACCESS is providing in Atlanta, but also in her answers during the evening and her willingness to sing despite nursing a slight cold. Miss Zhang stated that it is important to support organiza-

tions such as ACCESS who help people and families lead healthier lives and relationships.

The *Yunnan Ethnic Music and Dance Ensemble*, invited by the *Smithsonian Institute* to perform at the 41st Annual Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C., presented a special benefit performance for ACCESS during their US tour on Saturday, July 14th, at the Georgia Tech Ferst Center for the Arts. Sponsored by Pro Brand International, Inc., PBI Foundation, Moore Colson, and Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice, the performance featured 25 dancers and musicians, showcasing different acts from various Chinese ethnic minority groups across China.

Mr. Joe Kelly, former Atlanta Ballet manager, and Mrs. Cecilia Shou, Chairperson of ACCESS Board of Directors emceed the program in both English and Chinese. Beautiful songs were sung in different Chinese ethnic dialects, unique traditional instruments were played, (including using leaves to present pleasant melodies), the performers interacted with the audience with enthusiasm, and the audience responded with rounds of applause. About 550 people attended the show and many gave positive feedback.

ACCESS gives sincere thanks to our supporters. Your contributions have enabled us to continue carrying out our mission to fill the void of culturally-sensitive and appropriate counseling services to those in the Atlanta Asian and Asian American population.



Miss China 2007 Ning-Ning Zhang being interviewed by emcee Scott Song



Approximately 80 guests attended the Miss China Fundraising Dinner



Beautiful performance on July 14th, 2007, A Night of Yunnan



Having a broad base of supporters is vital to a healthy non-profit organization. There are an endless number of excellent projects and programs, however, when manpower is lacking, only so much can be done. While financial support is essential, a network of advocates who can raise the morale of the ones on the frontline is equally crucial. Raising the awareness of mental health issues among Asian and Asian Americans in Metro Atlanta area is like a huge mountain to be moved. With our two-member staff at ACCESS, we know that in the past 3 years, we have barely touched the tip of the iceberg. Whether mental health problems or relationship difficulties, we are confident that the services we provide can give hope and new direction to many in the midst of the challenges they are facing. We need more people to help us grow.

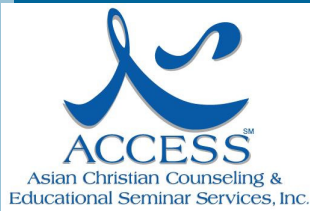
One of our goals in 2008 is to expand our current support base in the following areas:

Volunteers — We need help with grant writing, accounting, webmaster, special events, ongoing outreach, etc. You may also wish to support us with your special skills/talents. Please contact us if you are interested in becoming an ACCESS volunteer or for more information.

Prayer Partners — Christian supporters may consider becoming our prayer partners, to whom we send out our prayer requests regularly. Your prayer helps us to follow God's heart more closely in this ministry, and to uplift our Board and Staff to press on.

ACCESS Partner's Program — Besides occasional giving, you may consider supporting us regularly by joining ACCESS Partner's Program. Donating to The Barnabas Fund also help us to provide affordable services to those with limited resources, such as

You Can Help Us Grow



2000 Clearview Avenue
Suite 205
Doraville, GA 30340
Phone: 770-986-0800
Fax: 770-980-0811

Visit our website:
www.asianchristiancounseling.org

Asian Christian Counseling & Educational Seminar Services, Inc.



ACCESS Receives Mini-Grant from *Morehouse School of Medicine* for Group Counseling!

Rejoice with us for this meaningful Christmas gift to ACCESS from Morehouse School of Medicine!

To help eliminate mental health disparities in underserved communities, ACCESS has been awarded a \$2,000 mini-grant by the *Center of Excellence on Health Disparities at Morehouse School of Medicine* to help subsidize an eight-week counseling group related to depression conducted for Chinese-speaking participants. As one of the many underserved minority groups in Metro Atlanta, this program targets those whose primary language is Chinese and/or those Asians with limited English proficiency who speak Chinese, and are therefore unable to benefit from individual or group treatments offered in English available throughout Atlanta.

The overall goal of the **Counseling Group for Overcoming Depression** program is to increase access to education and treatment for

depression amongst the Chinese-speaking population in Atlanta. The program is designed to help participants increase their ability to cope with depression as a cost-effective treatment approach.

The group setting also allows the participants to find support and comfort amongst others facing depression, a rare opportunity in the Atlanta Chinese community. The interpersonal element of a group will also provide the participants with opportunities to learn from each other's experiences and to be encouraged to take charge over their emotions.

Preparations for this program will start right away. We anticipate starting this eight-week program next February and to complete it by the end of March. Call us to find out more, especially if you or your loved one maybe interested in the program.

Have a Blessed & Merry Christmas!