

NATIONAL  
LATINO  
ALLIANCE  
FOR THE ELIMINATION  
OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



ALIANZA  
LATINA  
NACIONAL  
PARA ERRADICAR LA  
VIOLENCIA DOMÉSTICA

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## NYC Holds 6th Annual Brides' March Against Domestic Violence

by Adelita M. Medina

More than 200 women, men, and youth marched through the streets of Washington Heights, the South Bronx and East Harlem, on September 26, 2006, to remember Gladys Ricart and the many other women who have been killed or injured in domestic violence incidents and to raise awareness about the devastating effects of domestic violence on Latinas/os and other families and communities. Many of the women wore wedding gowns (in memory of Gladys Ricart who had been killed on her wedding day) and the men dressed in black as a symbol of mourning. They were joined by members of the Ricart family and families of other women who have been murdered, and by elected officials, clergy, advocates and many supporters from the community.



From l to r: Maria Lizardo, Grace Perez (NYLADV); Josie Ashton who inspired the first March; State Sen. David Paterson; Rosita Romero, NYLADV; Commissioner Yolanda Jimenez, Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence

The six-mile march culminated at the Julia de Burgos Cultural Center in East Harlem where the participants heard from several speakers, including Josie Ashton, from Florida, who inspired the idea for the first Brides' March back in 2001. Other prominent figures included: Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer, Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion, NYS State Senators Erik T. Schneiderman and David Paterson; Assembly Member Adriano

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## Spanish Language Multimedia Campaign Reaches Latino Communities Across the Country

Alianza is pleased to have partnered with the Hispanic Communication Media and Self-Reliance Foundation in the very successful **¡No Más Silencio!** to raise awareness in Latino communities about the need to prevent and end domestic violence. The multimedia Spanish-language campaign, conducted in six cities with large Latino populations during the month of October, was sponsored by the Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation.

The ¡No Más Silencio! Campaign distributed prevention and intervention messages aimed at women, men, and youth through a series of radio programs and newspaper columns, and operated an "information and referral service" to connect people directly to resources in their community.

The messages, developed with help from Alianza, provided information about the signs and dangers of domestic violence, about services and resources available to survivors, and about the need for women and men to work together to end this epidemic. More than 200 radio stations all over the country aired these Public Service Announcements (PSA) tailored specifically for Latino audiences. In addition, a special one-hour live show was broadcast in Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York

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## Executive Director's Message

During this holiday season, and as we enter a New Year, it is good to be grateful for the many blessings we have received for ourselves and our loved ones. But it is also an important time to renew our efforts and commitment to help people—family members, friends, neighbors, clients and co-workers—who may be confronting very difficult challenges.

While for many the holidays are a time for celebration and sharing with family and friends, they can be an especially difficult time for those who are struggling with unemployment, hunger, depression, substance abuse, and violence in their homes or relationships. The holidays can bring up some very difficult emotions for people in these situations.

With the big emphasis on consumerism in our society, we are urged to go out and buy for the holidays, many times beyond our means. Those who can't buy fancy toys, clothing, or new electronic gadgets for themselves or their children tend to get depressed or feel added pressure and frustration.

In addition, alcohol, street drugs and prescription drugs are widely used for dealing with personal, social and environmental stresses. Studies indicate that depression, drinking and drug abuse tend to escalate during the holidays. And while specific statistics are not available, domestic violence organizations and police stations report a rise in calls and referrals right after the holidays.

During this new year, let's do what we can to help others. We can give generously of ourselves—of our time, encouragement, friendship, and resources.

No doubt many charities will be soliciting your donations. Please make an extra effort in your organizations and homes to help families experiencing domestic violence. Consider taking up a collection among your co-workers, placing an ad in your local newspaper soliciting food or clothing for your local DV shelter. Make giving to a DV program a priority.

This newsletter highlights some of Alianza's activities during the past year and summarizes some of the initiatives we have planned for the year ahead.

We want to thank our extended Alianza *familia*—our funders, partners, and allies for making our work possible. As Cesar Chavez and his co-workers used to say: *En la Unión esta la Fuerza/Strength lies in Unity.* We look forward to our continued partnerships with individuals and organizations across the U.S. and across our borders—to the East, West, North and South.

***Alianza wishes you and yours a New Year filled with health, peace, happiness, and prosperity in all areas of your life.***

—Adelita M. Medina

## Alianza Welcomes New Board and Staff Members

Alianza welcomes Zulema "Ruby" White as the newest Board member and Rosie Hidalgo who has rejoined our staff as Director of Policy and Research. Ruby and Rosie bring a wealth of experience, skills, and a deep commitment to ending domestic violence.

Ruby is the Children's Program Manager in the Family Violence Department of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ). She serves as a national advisory committee member for the Women of Color Network, and volunteers for the Committee to Aid Abused Women (CAAW), facilitating the Teen Speaker's Bureau and conducting women's groups in the emergency shelter.

Rosie returned to the States and to Alianza in 2006, after living and working in the Dominican Republic since January of 2002. While there, she

helped to coordinate the *Departamento de Justicia y Paz* (Department of Justice & Peace) at the OSCUS community center in a barrio outside of Santo Domingo and served as the Coordinator for the *Red de Apoyo y Coordinación por una Cultura de Paz*, which she helped to establish. She is based in the Washington, DC area.

Alianza also welcomes Grace Perez as the new Board Co-Chair and Treasurer. She succeeds Rosario Navarrette who served as Co-Chair for two years. Grace has been the Executive Director of the Violence Intervention Program since 1991, where she started as a hotline/outreach worker in 1986 and came up through the ranks.

Congratulations to Etiony Aldarondo for his promotion to Associate Dean of Research, School of Education at the University of Miami.

## Yo Soy el Poder del Cambio/I Am the Power of Change: Family Violence Prevention and Beyond Alianza National Conference Provides a Different Forum to Create Change

by Antonieta Gimeno

This quote summarizes a general sentiment Alianza staff and board members heard from participants during our 5th National Conference: "**Yo Soy el Poder del Cambio/I Am the Power of Change: Family Violence Prevention and Beyond**," which took place in beautiful San Antonio, Texas on November 18 and 19, 2005. The event was co-hosted by the P.E.A.C.E. Initiative, a local anti-violence organization, and was attended by approximately 135 survivors, healers, youth, and service providers from all over the country.

One of the goals of the conference was to create *conciencia* about the importance of developing new approaches for creating peace in our homes and communities. The passion and commitment from the conference planning committee to organize a different event that would challenge "formulas" from the past became evident throughout the conference. While much remains to be done in terms of family violence prevention, the achievement of this objective resulted in a successful conference that will hopefully be a springboard for improved prevention initiatives.

By proposing a different format and content, Alianza challenged itself and hoped to raise the bar to look more deeply at the complex root causes of family violence and the challenges of exploring new prevention strategies and approaches.

Plenary speakers included Gabriela Lemus, Director of Policy and Legislation for the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), who spoke of the importance of collaborations and alliances; Christine Ortega, Regional Manager of Southwest Airlines Multi-Cultural & Community Affairs, one of the conference sponsors, spoke of her role as a Latina in the company, providing support for community based organizations and Latina/o college students; and Virginia Ortega, from Líderes Campesinas, who shared some of the important work her organization does with women farm workers.

Ruby White Starr, from the National Council on Juvenile and Family Court Judges, shared her personal account of the consequences of family violence and the work she carries out to end it.

*I loved the care and thoughtfulness that went into the conference. We are a brilliant conglomeration of people from different places, speaking many languages, coming with our various histories and colonization. There was room for all of me here.*

*I felt held, I felt cared about.*

*I felt like it mattered what I had to say. Thank you.*

—a quote from a conference attendee

A strong aspect of the conference were the cultural and spiritual components which reaffirmed the use of Latino best practices as vital tools for healing and inspiration. Among the healers were Jerry Tello and members of Sacred Circles who engaged the audience in reflection, using an indigenous traditional ceremony with drums invoking the *Four Directions and all Our Ancestors*. Sacred Circles later conducted a workshop on healing for those who work with DV survivors.

Alianza's welcoming reception struck a deep cord among participants through an art exhibit depicting powerful and moving images of violence and healing. The stirring portraits and other art pieces were created by local San Antonio artists, including

art students. During the *Arts for Healing* cultural event at the San Antonio College the audience enjoyed and were blown away by the works of poets such as Women of Ill Repute, Refute and Genevieve Rodriguez, as well as mural artists José Cosme and Jane Madrigal. All of them rendered powerful testimonials of the importance of the use of art and culture as an instrument to heal the wounds of violence.

A powerful moment during the event was the *Listening Project*. Five women survivors shared the impact of domestic violence on their lives, as well as their journeys of healing and creating new lives free of violence. This activity helped the audience learn what had been effective in the lives of

*Continued on page 10*

## ¿Por Qué? Latino Youth as Researchers of Domestic Violence

By Rosie Hidalgo and Julia Perilla, Ph.D.

Youth researchers from Caminar Latino, a domestic violence intervention program in Atlanta, helped lead two studies regarding domestic violence in Latino families, with assistance from research team members at El Centro. El Centro, Alianza's national research center on domestic violence in Latino communities, is based at Georgia State University and is headed by Dr. Julia Perilla, and staffed in part by students.

The idea for this project emerged from the toddlers' playgroup at Caminar Latino, which provides support groups for women, a batterers' intervention group for men, and developmentally appropriate sharing groups for children ranging from infancy to late adolescence. When the group facilitators were talking with the children about the reason they were there—their parents fighting—a young child wanted to know "¿Por qué?/Why?" It became apparent that children, even very young ones, have important questions that research might help to answer.

El Centro's research team used a participatory action research model to engage a group of 8-12 year olds as researchers. These children, who were victims and witnesses of violence in their homes, were asked to help design the research based on the questions they had about their families, their feelings, and the intervention program their families were involved with. These questions were then used by research team members

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## Hombres con Razón: The Many Faces of Fatherhood

The third annual Hombres Con Razón/Men of Reason conference in San Antonio, Texas brought together about 50 people, mostly men (although several women were in attendance) to talk about how fathers can become more involved in their families' lives. The event which took place at Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU) was co-hosted by the OLLU Center for Service-Learning and Volunteerism, San Antonio Fatherhood Campaign, P.E.A.C.E. Initiative, Southwest Key Program, and the American Indians in Texas. It was organized by OLLU social work and business students as part of a service-learning project that helped them earn credit toward graduation.

Patricia Castillo, who heads the P.E.A.C.E. Initiative, along with Cesar Alvarado from the Texas Council on Family Violence, and Melissa Tijerina from Child Protection Services made several presentations and handed out literature on domestic violence.



Men talked about the need to be more involved with their families.

"Hombres con Razón, is a great title for this event because I believe men of reason would not opt for using violence when faced with conflict," said Castillo. "This event created hope and confirmation that change is possible. It taught us that men DO hunger for a life that affirms commitment, love for their children and that the power of fatherhood is something worth striving for in all communities. The spirit of *familia* was pervasive throughout the whole day."

The conference organizers were successful in designing a safe and comfortable atmosphere where people felt free to share their feelings about love, respect, violence and cultural traditions. Presenters took participants through four stages: *conocimiento* (acknowledgement), *entendamiento* (understanding), *integración* (integration) and *movimiento* (movement). The stages are meant to help participants acknowledge why they attended, to develop an understanding of themselves as part of a group, to recognize that they are part of a family, and to share their individual experiences and wisdom.

## ¡No Más Silencio!

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City, and San Antonio. DV advocates and invited guests were available to answer questions from listeners who called in during the show. Alianza helped identify and locate individuals for the talk shows in each of the cities, including survivors, domestic violence advocates, former batterers, and other guests.

Additionally, a one-minute PSA, describing the work of Alianza and referring listeners to our website, was aired during the radio shows. Information about Alianza was also included in the print messages that were published in newspapers around the country. Four more newspaper columns will be appearing in January 2007.

## Alianza Hosts 2nd Annual Latino Men Speak Out Against Domestic Violence

Alianza celebrated its second annual public awareness luncheon: *Latino Men Speak out Against Domestic Violence*, at Tavern on the Green, in New York City, on April 26, 2006.

"*Latino Men Speak Out Against Domestic Violence* aims to drive home the fact that domestic violence is not just a woman's issue, and that the involvement of men, specifically Latinos, as advocates is indispensable to putting an end to this epidemic and helping to create healthy families and relationships," says Adelita M. Medina, Executive Director. "It is encouraging to see more and more men willing to speak out against and work to end family violence."

Several high profile Latinos spoke at this event, including the Honorable Adolfo Carrión Jr., Bronx Borough President; Cesar Perales, President & General Counsel, Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund; Commissioner Guillermo Linares, Mayor's Office on Immigrant Affairs; Alfredo Pláceres, President, New York State Federation of Hispanic Chambers of Commerce; Assistant Chief James Tuller, NYPD, Patrol Borough Queens North; Gerson Borrero, Columnist, *El Diario La Prensa*; and Commissioner Yolanda Jimenez from the NYC Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence. Fernando Mederos and Grace Perez, Co-chairs of Alianza's Board of Directors served as the emcees.

"We at Alianza know that the voice of distinguished Latino community leaders has an enormous impact on getting other men and women involved in this critical struggle," said Dr. Mederos.

## Brides' March Against Domestic Violence

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Espallat; City Council Members Melissa Mark Viverito and Miguel Martinez; and Rossana Rosado, Publisher and CEO of *El Diario La Prensa*.

According to the NYC Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, 38 family-related homicides were recorded between January 1st and September 1st, 2005. In 2004, there were 67 in total. This includes intimate partner homicides, as well as homicides committed by other family members and includes children who were killed as a result of family violence. In addition, according to the Mayor's Office, last year, the police responded to an average of 600 domestic violence calls a day, for a total of some 220,000 calls. Teen abuse continues to be a problem as well. The City Domestic Violence Hotline received 5,850 calls from teens as of July 31, 2005. In 2004, the total number of calls from teens experiencing violence in their relationships was 18,282.

"These figures indicate that family violence continues to be a matter of great concern," said Grace Perez, Executive Director of the Violence Intervention Program, Inc. "We need everyone in our communities to say no to violence; that is the best way of putting an end to the abuse."

The march was organized by the New York Latinas Against Domestic Violence. The Organizing Committee was composed of representatives from the following organizations: Nuevo Amanecer-Dominican



Rosita Romero, Dominican Womens' Development Center and Commissioner Yolanda Jimenez, from the Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence Speak to the media as Commissioner Guillermo Linares, from the Mayor's Office on Immigrant Affairs looks on.

Women's Development Center, Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence (Alianza), and the Violence Intervention Program, Inc.

The NYC Annual Brides' March Against Domestic Violence, also known as the Gladys Ricart and Victims of Domestic Violence Memorial Walk, is an annual event which was started in New York City on September 2001 to remember Ms. Ricart, a Dominican woman, who was murdered in New Jersey on September 26, 1999, by a former abusive boyfriend on the day she was to wed someone else. Subsequent marches have also memorialized the countless other women who have been killed or injured in domestic violence incidents.

The idea for the first Brides' March was originated by Josie Ashton, a young Dominican woman from Florida, who was very moved by the murder and outraged at the media and community's insensitive response. Josie resigned from her job and sacrificed more than two months of her life away from her family to walk in a wedding gown, down the East Coast, from New Jersey to Miami, in an attempt to draw attention to the horrors of domestic violence.

From a small group of some two dozen marchers the first year, the Brides' March now attracts hundreds of individuals, including government officials, business and community leaders, grass roots activists, renowned artists, clergy, law enforcement officers, and youth. Each year the Brides' March receives the attention of local and national media, helping to spread the word widely about an issue that still continues to be kept quiet.

The March in New York has now inspired organizers in other cities to hold their own marches. This year, marches were held in Lawrence, Massachusetts; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Yonkers, New York.

### Coming Soon

We are working on a "How to Organize a Brides' March Against Domestic Violence" booklet which will be available in hard copy and on our website this spring.

## U.S. Congresswoman Gwen Moore Leads Milwaukee's First Brides' Walk Against Domestic Violence

About a year ago, Congresswoman Gwen Moore met Josie Ashton at the National Organization for Women's (NOW) 2005 Annual Intrepid Awards Dinner in Washington, DC, and was inspired to organize a Brides' March in Milwaukee. Josie inspired the first Brides' March Against Domestic Violence, which took place in New York City on September 26, 2001.

Back home in Wisconsin, Representative Moore's idea took root with the Milwaukee Mujeres Against Domestic Violence and the UMOs Latina Resource Center, and together they organized the first Brides' Walk in Milwaukee, on September 17, 2006. The Walk was part of the city's Mexican Independence Day Parade, which draws thousands of onlookers.

In keeping with the Brides' March tradition, dozens of women paraded through the streets of Milwaukee in wedding gowns to honor the memory of Gladys Ricart, the young Dominican woman

who was killed on her wedding day, in New Jersey in 1999, and the many other victims and survivors of domestic violence.

In the words of Rep. Moore "we are marching to send a message that domestic violence should not be accepted in any culture."

The walk was kicked off with a news conference and Speak Out early in the day, attended by Rep. Moore, Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton, Josie Ashton, and other speakers and supporters. Also in coordination with the Brides' Walk, Rep. Moore introduced H. Resolution 1012, in the U.S. House of Representatives, honoring the objective of the Brides' Marches nationwide to protest domestic violence. The resolution was co-sponsored by more than 38 lawmakers, with many more expected to lend their support.

According to the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Rosalia Sercl owner of the Apollo Bridal shop in Milwaukee helped to make the walk a success by donating 50 wedding dresses.

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## IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN FEDERAL LEGISLATION:

# Improving Efforts to Address Violence Against Women in Communities of Color

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA 2005) was reauthorized and signed into law in January 2006 (Public Law 109-162). VAWA 2005 added some important provisions to help protect the rights of immigrant women, as well as to support the development of more culturally and linguistically specific services for underserved populations. Additionally, VAWA 2005 included a number of new programs specifically focused on preventing violence. For more details about specific provisions of VAWA, visit the policy section of Alianza's website at [www.dvalianza.org](http://www.dvalianza.org).

It is important to note that amendments were made to the STOP Grant programs, emphasizing the need to improve services to Communities of Color. In particular, it established a 10% set-aside of the victim services money in the STOP grant formula in each state to be distributed to Culturally Specific Community-Based Organizations providing services to address violence against women. It also requires the State plans to specifically address the needs of underserved communities and requires that funds to address underserved populations be distributed equitably among those populations. These changes in the VAWA legislation are a recognition of the importance of giving Communities of Color the opportunity and resources to develop culturally appropriate services and work on prevention initiatives in their own language and for their own communities.

The definition of a Community-based Organization in the VAWA legislation presents a significant change by broadening the kinds of entities that are eligible to apply for VAWA funds. As we are aware, many victim services programs and criminal justice agencies have not been able to adequately respond to the needs of victims of domestic violence and sexual assault from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. In addition, there are many community-based, culturally specific organizations interested in reducing domestic violence, dating violence and sexual assault that previously have been unable to access VAWA funding because they could not show that their primary focus was working to end violence against women. This includes immigrants' rights groups and culturally specific agencies that offer services to

diverse communities. This new definition of community-based organizations in VAWA 2005 allows such organizations to apply if they have a culturally specific program addressing violence against women (even if that is not their primary work) or if they are creating a new program to address violence against women and they are able to effectively collaborate with others organizations who are more experienced in addressing violence against women. In addition to the funding available through the STOP grants, the new VAWA legislation includes newly authorized programs to address the unmet needs of Communities of Color. These include:

- a) Grants to Enhance Culturally and Linguistically Specific Services for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking;
- b) Grants to Culturally Specific Programs Addressing Sexual Assault; and
- c) Grants for Outreach to Underserved Populations.

The Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), which will administer these three new grant programs, is still in the process

of developing the RFPs for these programs. Alianza will be posting relevant information about the submission of grant applications when this information becomes available.

It is important to note that culturally specific organizations are not limited to accessing resources through these specific programs, but rather are eligible to apply for any of the funding streams in VAWA. One of the goals of VAWA 2005 is to ensure that services are culturally relevant and provided in the most appropriate language for specific communities in order to help overcome obstacles to accessing services for Communities of Color.

Alianza is working with several ally organizations to ensure that the implementation of VAWA 2005 fulfills these objectives and to join efforts in disseminating information and monitoring implementation. We encourage you to help make this information available to culturally specific community-based organizations in your area and to let Alianza know if the VAWA funds in your state are sufficiently reaching and meeting the needs of Latino families and communities. You can email Alianza's Director of Policy and Research at: [rhidalgo@dvalianza.org](mailto:rhidalgo@dvalianza.org)

## Participate in National Survey for Advocates of Color

The Women of Color Network (WOCN), a national project that provides technical assistance, support, resources, and leadership training to Women of Color, is conducting a national survey to enhance their understanding of the experiences, treatment, and overall status of advocates, activists, and specialists of color working and serving to end violence against women and families.

The primary goal of this survey is to determine the scope of the problems that women of color advocates face in their work and the level of support they receive from their programs to actively discuss and address the unique factors that exist in serving communities of color. Another goal of the survey is to compare the experiences of those working within or under the auspices of mainstream organizations to the experiences of those working within ethnically/racially specific organizations.

This survey will be conducted from December 2006 through January 29, 2007 with a plan of presenting the results in mid-year 2007 and all individual responses will be anonymous and confidential. It is important that the experiences of Latinas/os be reflected in the survey results and we encourage you to participate. To participate in this survey and receive further information, please contact Angela Sutton, Project Coordinator, at: [as@pcadv.org](mailto:as@pcadv.org) or call 800-537-2238, ext. 137.

## ALIANZA'S OVW COLLABORATIVE PROJECT:

# Curriculum Guide and Trainings for Conducting Support and Empowerment Groups with Latina Survivors

Survivors, advocates, social workers, and social work college students, were among the 230 participants who attended a series of Support Group Facilitator trainings conducted by Alianza and its Targeted Technical Assistance Project Partners. The trainings were to teach facilitators how to use Alianza's recently developed Curriculum and Supplemental Guide for Conducting Support and Empowerment Groups with Latina Survivors of Domestic Violence. They were held in December 2006, in five cities: Chicago, IL; Charlotte, NC; Philadelphia, PA; New York, NY; and San Antonio, TX.

The curriculum guide and trainings are the result of an Alianza initiative to develop linguistically and culturally responsive materials and trainings that will assist service providers to better serve Latina survivors of domestic violence. A national survey and a series of focus groups conducted by Alianza between 2001 and 2004 revealed

a need for such a curriculum and training. Further research revealed the existence of only a few bilingual curriculum guides, put together organically by some of the partners now involved in this project, as a response to survivors facing critical issues.

Alianza developed the curriculum and trainings in collaboration with six partner organizations: the Coalition for Family Peace, Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Mujeres Latinas en Acción, New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the P.E.A.C.E Initiative, El Centro/Georgia State University, and the Violence Intervention Program, Inc. In 2005, Alianza's partners held focus groups, in their respective cities, with Latina survivors of domestic violence to assist in identifying their specific needs, topics and suggestions for strategies to be included in the curriculum. Their input and the guidance of the seven partners were a tremendous asset in the development of the curriculum and trainings.

The curriculum and trainings were enthusiastically welcomed by advocates eager to learn how to better serve Latina survivors. The trainings included discussions in small groups and then in larger groups, which created a good structure that facilitated dialogue and an exchange of ideas. The atmosphere in each of the trainings was filled with camaraderie, support, empathy, interest, and knowledge as women, and a few men, shared their experiences as survivors and providers. Some of the trainings included testimonies by survivors who spoke about their personal ordeals and their process of healing and empowerment. They see themselves resolving the violence that dominated their lives and that of their children, and now are engaged in working with other survivors in support groups.

Alianza and its partners feel we have accomplished so much with this training, as confirmed by the many testimonies and positive evaluations.

## GAO Study on Prevalence of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Dating Violence and Stalking

A report issued in November 2006 by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) notes that while the federal government has continued to expand its commitment to grant programs seeking to end violence against women, "the absence of comprehensive nationwide prevalence information somewhat limits the government's ability to make informed policy and resource allocation decisions." The GAO recommends that the Attorney General and the Secretary of Health and Human Services take steps to address existing information gaps.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), first passed in 1994, sought to address the issues of violence against women at the national level and established grant programs within the Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Health and Human Services (HHS) for state, local, and Indian tribal governments and communities to address these issues in a more comprehensive manner. The 2005 reauthorization of VAWA (enacted January 5, 2006) expanded existing grant programs and added new programs as well, including the need to address issues of dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, in addition to domestic violence. The VAWA Reauthorization Act requires the GAO to conduct a study and report on data indicating the prevalence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking among men, women, youth, and children, as well as services available to these victims. This GAO report focused only on data collection since their efforts to assess the services available to the victims of these crimes is still ongoing.

The study notes that the total fiscal year 2006 appropriation level for violence against women programs is approximately \$560

million—around \$382 million for programs administered by DOJ and about \$178 million for programs administered by DHHS. The GAO report observed that current national data collection efforts cover portions of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking among different segments of the population but that they use different definitions and vary in scope and were not intended to be combined to provide comprehensive nationwide estimates. They note that DOJ and DHHS have begun collaborating to obtain more uniformity across research efforts and have initiatives in the early stages that could be used to collect information regarding the prevalence of certain crimes for some segments of the population.

### Need for Better Research With Latina/o Communities

As efforts continue to gather more comprehensive data, it is important to call attention to the need for better research with Latina/o communities. While census information reveals the large growth of the Hispanic/Latino population in the United States, there is insufficient research about the prevalence of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking among Latinas/os. Additionally, it is important that the research be conducted in a culturally competent way and that it account for language barriers and the wide diversity within different Latina/o communities. Better research can help provide a voice for the experiences of Latinas/os and help to better inform policy-making, highlight the need for culturally competent services, and enable advocates to seek a more equitable distribution of resources.

# Powerful “Mujeres” Healing Ourselves and Shaping the World!

By *Cándida A. Bidó, a Survivor*

**O**n December 7-9, 2006 a group of domestic violence survivors attended The Allstate Foundation Domestic Violence Program’s Survivor Leadership Retreat. The Retreat was held at the Rancho Bernardo Inn in San Diego, California. Those attending were nominated by domestic violence organizations from across the country. I was nominated by the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence (ALIANZA).

The Retreat provided a place for domestic violence survivors to join together to

***We were all beautiful, important, and valued!  
We were in the presence of powerful women not  
because of their positions but because of their  
humanity, kindness, and empathy!***

reflect on and share their personal experiences with abuse. It offered trainings on grassroots organizing, media outreach, public speaking, and leadership building for survivors in order to enhance their skills as advocates. The Retreat also served as a platform for survivors to become members of the Program’s National Speakers’ Bureau, which was created to ensure survivors’ voices in the program’s public awareness efforts.

When my nomination was accepted I was happy because I want to be part of the Speakers’ Bureau. I very much want to use my voice, my experience, my knowledge and my energy to *Shape the World* and put an end to domestic violence. Using my voice to put an end to domestic violence is one of my unfulfilled goals in life. I want to help comfort, encourage, inspire, and guide victims out of darkness.

From the moment I reached the Rancho Bernardo Inn I felt at ease, as if I was among people that really care and value me. The Inn is a premier resort with lovely outdoor courtyards accentuated by numerous antique fountains, beautiful Christmas decorations and peaceful surroundings. It was the perfect setting for us to start our journey of using our voices to shape the world.

After checking in, taking a look at my warm room—tastefully decorated in fine country style—and unpacking, I went downstairs to our first meeting. The organizing committee wasted no time; they really worked hard and made sure that the attendees had an agenda for the next three days packed with meetings and activities.

As soon as I reached the conference room, I met two exemplary women, Pamela Murphy and Shawndell Dawson of the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEVDV) Fund. The way they addressed each one of us, with respect, with care,

with compassion and with knowledge set the groundwork for fellowship, friendship, and tolerance demonstrated by all of the participants during the entire retreat.

Both of these women raised the bar for all the other women in the retreat. Another group of *mujeres poderosas* I met from The Allstate Foundation were Angela Cobb, Jennifer Duda, and Jenny Matya. With each decision they made they continually showed us that our looks, our past and our horrendous experiences as domestic violence victims did not matter.

As the afternoon progressed, we were introduced to Alicia M. Rodriguez, President

of Sophia Associates. Alicia facilitated many workshops to help each survivor build confidence and assertiveness, to enhance leadership skills. She helped us raise our self-awareness, and competence level while listening and offering a safe place to learn and evolve maximizing our unique qualities to self-care and to live heroically in this world. We felt a strong sense of connection after doing the first exercise. It helped us bond.

The stories we shared horrified, shamed, and liberated us! Stories of successful women faced with enormous adversity—abused, beaten, burned, criticized, slapped, punched, assaulted, bruised, stabbed—raising children, working and striving to become economically independent. Never once letting our pain cloud our judgment and retaliating! The survivors’ courage and strength amazed and humbled me! Every story became part of the retreat quilt...a quilt that held us together.

The attachment that developed between many of the women fostered a strong sense of security; acceptance and it increased our self-esteem—something many of us lacked! The bonding that took place during our retreat became one of the most pleasurable components of the whole event and the reason to stick with each other like glue. The peaceful surrounding and the leadership of the organizing team of women helped us all thrive by providing needed support. Just as Alicia provided nourishment for our soul, they provided food for our body and a safe space to be ourselves... to cry... to laugh... to ask questions... to learn and to grow!

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## Milwaukee Brides’ March

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Commenting about the march, Josie Ashton had the following to say: “I met Congresswoman Gwen Moore last year in Washington DC while receiving the award from NOW. She was sitting at my table and she mentioned that she wanted to do the march in Wisconsin. I smiled and encouraged her. I never heard from her again. I received a phone call from her office on September 12, inviting me to the march on September 17.”

“It is amazing to think that a small group of people in Washington Heights in a conference room on a late afternoon can have a meeting and change history. We literally changed tragedy into inspiration and sadness into empowerment.”

—*Josie Ashton*

# The Unexpressed Voice

by Jennifer Chavez

I write you this poem to tell you what I am not able to say  
It is important for you to know I teach you something  
new every day  
The lesson may not appear as you think it should be  
But you must trust that the purpose is beyond what you see

I am locked in a body where only my spirit will grow  
And all that it involves is beyond what I know  
I need your help to show me love, compassion and care  
Only the brave at heart is who will truly dare

It takes a special person to provide what I need  
By learning how to do this you are sure to supersede  
The nature of time, distance and space  
Taking a moment to consider the truth we all face

The lesson is this--simple as it may seem  
Consciousness just as real as a mid-morning dream  
We all live in the same place with a purpose that is true  
The only reality is this--I dared to choose you

I needed some guidance to help me become stronger  
And I will continue to need your help a little bit longer  
The challenge is difficult--this I do know  
But remember, through the challenge is how we all  
learn and grow

A challenge is what I live with each and every day  
The difficult act of articulating what I wish I could say  
I may never be able to do the things that you think I should do  
And my unwillingness to comply is not intended  
to make you feel blue

Learning to find meaning is what appears to be a trial  
Will only come if we move to acceptance from denial  
Nothing worth everything has ever been proclaimed to be mild  
What more is there in life than the ability to help mold a child

The lesson I deliver to you is unconditional love  
That only comes from guidance up above  
Although the task at hand may sometimes  
appear rather distressing  
I write this message to remind you that  
your work with me is a blessing

Try to find laughter in the things I do and I say  
Make a conscious decision to teach me something  
small every day

I do not promise that things will become easier right away  
And I acknowledge that your guidance is delivered  
in your own special way

There is no right way for me to learn or for you to teach me  
Simply follow your heart because that is where the answer will be  
If you take my advice and give service with good intention  
You will always receive guidance and clear direction

Thank you for taking time to be part of my day  
For guiding me and teaching me in your own special way  
I don't know what tomorrow or the future will hold  
But I do know that your time with me is worth its weight in gold

*Jennifer is a Special Education Teacher in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and teaches grades 3, 4, and 5. When she wrote the poem, she worked as a Behavior Management Specialist.*

## Allstate Survivor Leadership Retreat

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While Alicia helped us understand how early experiences intrude on our mind, relationships, emotions, adjustment and self-concept as adults... we kept nurturing our inner self. We became eager to speak and to let our voice come out. We all felt like new women... we started the healing process. We forgave! We started letting go of the blame, the shame and started affirming our strong sense of faith, our strong sense to thrive, our unbroken spirit, and our desire to love!

We connected, and together, we are ready to use our voices to end domestic violence. We the women present at the Survivor Leadership Retreat are ready to shape our neighborhoods, our communities, our states and our world. We are ready to show the

world our strength, our resilience, and our vision for a world without violence.

The Allstate Foundation Domestic Violence Program, which was launched in 2005, is a partnership between Allstate and the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) Fund. Its aim is to help survivors connect to resources that will help them live more safe and secure lives. The Program provides a comprehensive network of services for survivors and advocates, including: Direct Services, Thought Leadership, and Public Awareness.

For more information on this initiative go to: [www.nnedv.org](http://www.nnedv.org) or call NNEDV at (202) 543-5566 or log on to [www.allstate.com/foundation](http://www.allstate.com/foundation).

**If you are in immediate crisis or need resources in your area please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-SAFE.**

## ALIANZA 2005 CONFERENCE

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From l to r: Antonieta Gimeno, Alianza Director of Training & Technical Assistance; Jane Madrigal, muralist; Patricia Castillo, Alianza Board member; Sandra Garcia, Alianza Consultant; and José Cosme, muralist, stand in front of the mural the students painted at the local San Antonio College. The mural depicts local and national Latino community activists and leaders

women getting the assistance and support they needed through their respective crisis situations.

The workshops were the core of the conference. They were divided into two major theme sets: the first assessed the obstacles and challenges to doing violence prevention, and the second addressed innovative approaches, strategies or solutions that have worked or that could be created. Participants were actively engaged. Experienced presenters focused on themes such as *La Familia: Myths and Realities*;

*Latino Family, a Model for Relationships or a Site for Conflict?* In another session, *La Pareja What's Love Got to Do with It?* Presenters and participants explored the issues of violence in intimate relationships, which included looking at heterosexuality as a norm.

Written evaluations included many encouraging quotes and suggestions for improvements. Some comments:

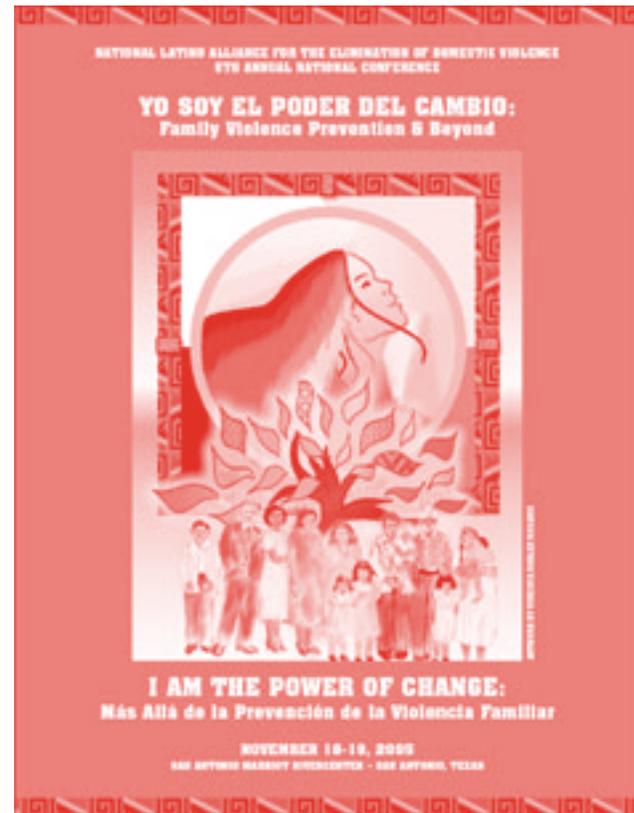
- I really appreciated that the conference was fully bilingual; the Listening Project and the Opening Ceremony were amazing;
- I loved the care and thoughtfulness that went into the conference, I felt held, like I mattered, what I had to say counted, I don't get that out in the world;
- The binder of materials will be useful as reference and the opportunity to network with others was very valuable;
- Poets and muralists drew the connections between oppressive forces and domestic violence.

At the closing, the participants made a circle and shared some of the things they took with them. One woman said: "I take with me new knowledge. I was transformed right here in this conference."

Alianza hopes that the old and new connections made between

presenters and participants helped to feed their spirits and strengthen their resolve to challenge themselves and find new ways to carry out innovative and exciting family violence prevention strategies.

Alianza will issue a report of the conference proceedings later this year.



## Latino Youth as Researchers

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to explore these issues, using data from the current program evaluation as well as previous studies with this population. The results were put into a Power Point presentation and presented at national and local meetings.

Additionally, five Latino youth (ages 12-17) from Caminar Latino conducted a participatory action research study on resilience factors in youth witnesses of domestic violence. The youth and research team members presented their findings during a plenary session at a national conference on youth and domestic violence sponsored by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, last April. The conference participants were very moved by the presentation and it was a very positive and affirming experience for the youth researchers.

Those working with the children and youth have found that youth witnesses of domestic violence are well aware of what is happening in their homes and are often affected by its occurrence, but seldom have the opportunity to give voice to their questions and concerns. Research suggests that children who witness domestic violence can be very resilient, but they can also have psychological and social difficulties. Their questions give us a glimpse of their experience and provide rich material as context to our understanding of domestic violence and as a blueprint for future studies. The youth researchers provide an invaluable contribution to our understanding of this important social justice issue.

This project was partially funded by a small grant from the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence through the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence. For more information about the study, visit the Research program area on Alianza's website at [www.dvalianza.org](http://www.dvalianza.org).

## New Publications and Other Resources Available

Alianza's latest publication: **Defensa y Promoción de la Mujer Latina: Trabajando con Comunidades Latinas para Eliminar la Violencia Familiar**, 2005. Only in Spanish. Available online at [www.dvalianza.org](http://www.dvalianza.org).



**Domestic Violence at the Margins: Readings on Race, Class, Gender, and Culture**, edited by Natalie Sokoloff with Christina Pratt. Foreword by Beth E. Ritchie, Rutgers University Press, 2005. This groundbreaking anthology reorients the field of domestic violence research by bringing long-overdue attention to the structural forms of oppression in communities marginalized by race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, and class. An essential text for courses in sociology, criminology, social work, and women's studies. It also provides critical information and resources for professionals working in domestic violence services, advocacy, social work, and law enforcement.



**Dating Violence 101: Educating Youth about Dating Violence and Healthy Relationships** is an innovative dating violence prevention curriculum developed by Break the Cycle for teachers, community members, and social service providers to educate

teens about dating and domestic violence. It comes with an instructor's manual, flash cards, activities, and visual aids to provide an interactive educational experience. Go to: [www.breakthecycle.org](http://www.breakthecycle.org). To place an order, please contact Break the Cycle at 310-286-3366 or [orders@breakthecycle.org](mailto:orders@breakthecycle.org).



**Research Brief: Curbing Teen Dating Violence, Evidence from a School Prevention Program.** This research brief summarizes a survey about the effectiveness of programs from Break the Cycle, a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing and fielding dating-violence prevention programs. For more information, please visit [www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9194/](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9194/)



**A Survivor's Story** is Olga Trujillo's powerful first hand and insightful video documentary of the impact of violence in her life. Presented in four ten-minute segments (Witnessing, Childhood, Adolescence, and Healing), this insightful work has proven a powerful training tool and a lifeline for those beginning their own journey towards survival. DVD or VHS in English and Spanish. Go to: [www.ortsolutions.org/pages/resources.htm](http://www.ortsolutions.org/pages/resources.htm)



**Stepping into Latino Realities.** A training video for groups interested in learning more about working with Latino families. Comes with a Facilitator's Guide. Order at Casa de Esperanza's online store: [www.casadeesperanza.org](http://www.casadeesperanza.org)



There is a healthy development in the human service professions these days. At community clinics, private practices, and universities around the country mental health professionals and service providers are working with increased awareness of the toxic effects of social inequities in the lives of people they aim to help. Quietly, by acting out their beliefs on justice and equality, clinicians are redressing the balance between professing our craft as clinicians and professing our humanity as citizens.

**Advancing Social Justice Through Clinical Practice** edited by Alianza's board member Etiony Aldarondo, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates 2007, is a comprehensive volume that bridges the gap between the psychosocial realities of clients and the dominant clinical practices. It offers an array of conceptual and practical innovations to address both individual suffering and social inequities fueling this suffering. This is an empowering tool and a must read for mental health professionals. The accessible writing style also makes it ideal for teachers and students in the field. Filled with hope, critical analysis, and uncommon clinical wisdom, this is a book like no other in the field. To order call 1-800-926-6579 or visit LEA's web site: [www.erlbaum.com](http://www.erlbaum.com).

### PLEDGE CARD TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

I \_\_\_\_\_, understand the necessity of stopping violence against women and eliminating domestic violence in our homes, communities and cities. From today forward I make a commitment to take one or more of the following actions to make this become a reality:

1. Listen to a survivor of domestic violence and offer support
2. Talk to a relative, friend or co-worker who is being abusive or violent
3. Encourage a relative, friend or co-worker to seek help
4. Organize or give one class or workshop for youth about domestic violence/ building healthy relationships
5. Give one sermon on domestic violence at my place of worship
6. Write one article, op ed piece or letter to the editor on the issue of on domestic violence, in a local newspaper or magazine
7. Read literature about domestic violence
8. Organize a gathering to examine how men resolve conflict
9. Make a donation to support Alianza's Public Awareness Activities.

Attached is my check or money order (tax deductible contribution) in the amount of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please keep/add my name to your mailing list so that I can continue to receive your newsletter and mailings about conferences and other Alianza events and activities.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your Pledge Card to: National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence, P.O. Box 672, Triborough Station, New York, NY 10038.

## LATINA/O ADVOCATES

# Let Your Voices Be Heard on Policy Matters

The work that you do to serve members of the Latino community affected by domestic violence is very important and we want your voices to be heard and your experiences and needs to be taken into account when policies are being made and when resources are being allocated.

One of the goals of the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence (Alianza) is to advocate for policies that will prevent and help end domestic violence in Latino communities. This includes helping to ensure that adequate resources are made available to provide culturally and linguistically specific services to Latina/o families and communities.

Alianza has hired a new Director of Policy, Rosie Hidalgo, who will be based in the Washington, D.C. area to assist us in carrying out this important part of our mission and represent Alianza on different national domestic violence policy committees. Additionally, she will monitor and disseminate information about changes in domestic violence policies and legislation that affect Latina/o communities.

In order to better represent your organization and the needs of Latina/o families and communities we would appreciate it if you would take a few moments to complete a survey about federal funding issues. Please visit the policy section of Alianza's website ([www.dvalianza.org](http://www.dvalianza.org)) to complete the survey or send an email to [rhidalgo@dvalianza.org](mailto:rhidalgo@dvalianza.org).

The National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence (Alianza) is a growing network of Latina and Latino advocates, practitioners, researchers, community activists, youth and survivors of domestic violence.



***Alianza's mission is:  
to promote understanding,  
initiate and sustain dialogue,  
and generate solutions  
that move toward the elimination  
of domestic violence affecting  
Latino communities, with an  
understanding  
of the sacredness of all relations  
and communities.***

## ACTIVISTA LATINA/O,

# Déjate Escuchar en Asuntos Políticos

El trabajo que usted realiza proveyendo servicios a las comunidades latinas afectadas por la violencia doméstica es muy importante y queremos que su voz sea escuchada y que sus necesidades se tomen en cuenta a la hora de crearse nueva legislación y cuando los recursos sean distribuidos.

Una de las metas de la Alianza Latina Nacional para Erradicar la Violencia Doméstica (Alianza) es promover iniciativas para prevenir y ayudar a erradicar la violencia doméstica en nuestras comunidades. Esto incluye proveer ayuda para asegurar que haya recursos adecuados disponibles para ofrecer servicios que sean culturalmente apropiados para la familia y las diferentes comunidades latinas que viven en los Estados Unidos.

Alianza ha empleado a Rosie Hidalgo como nueva Directora de Política e Investigación quien está ubicada en Washington D.C. y llevará a cabo esta importante parte de nuestra misión, y representará a Alianza en distintos comités nacionales de política y estrategia relacionadas a la violencia doméstica. Además, la Sra. Hidalgo será monitorea de los cambios en la política y en las leyes de violencia doméstica, y del impacto de estos cambios en nuestras comunidades.

Para que podamos representar mejor a su organización y las necesidades de nuestras familias y comunidades, le agradecemos que tome unos minutos de su tiempo y llene la encuesta adjunta sobre asuntos relacionados a fondos federales. Favor de visitar la sección de "Policy" (política/legislación) en el sitio de Alianza en la red ([www.dvalianza.org](http://www.dvalianza.org)) para completar el cuestionario o envíe por correo electrónico a [rhidalgo@dvalianza.org](mailto:rhidalgo@dvalianza.org).

***La misión de Alianza es:***

***promover el entendimiento, iniciar  
y mantener el diálogo y generar  
soluciones hacia la erradicación  
de la violencia doméstica  
que afecta a la comunidad latina,  
entendiendo cuán sagradas son  
todas las relaciones  
y las comunidades .***

