

**PRESS RELEASE
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ASIAN WOMEN DONORS GRANT \$72,000 TO NEW YORK CITY NON-PROFITS

New York City, NY, June 18, 2008 – In its third year of grant making, the Asian Women Giving Circle (AWGC) will distribute \$72,000 in funding to eight local non-profit Asian American women-led projects in New York City. These outstanding organizations and projects were chosen for their excellence in using the tools of culture, the arts and education to raise awareness and catalyze action around critical issues that impact Asian American communities. Grant checks were distributed at a garden party at the Mertz Gilmore Foundation, where the Giving Circle has an office, during the evening of June 18th.

“Although Asian Americans represent 4% of the US population, we receive only 0.4% of all philanthropic dollars. And Asian American women get only a tiny fraction of that. Our group of 20 women want to do something, some small thing, to address this inequity. We can’t wait for traditional philanthropy or some government entity to step up to the plate. We’ve got to spur some action on our own.” (Hali Lee, Founder of the Asian Women Giving Circle)

Year 2008 recipients are the Asian American Writers’ Workshop, the Center for the Study of Asian American Health at NYU Medical Center, Girls Write Now, labor activist Katie Quan, Sakhi for South Asian Women, Slanty Eyed Mama, documentary filmmaker Ermena Vinluan, and artist Maria Yoon.

The Asian American Writers’ Workshop will produce *Drawing in Color: Empowering Girls*, a mentoring program for teenage girls in which they create their own superheroes and comic books. The girls will meet during out-of-school hours to talk about gender and ethnic stereotypes in mainstream comics. They will work with a professional Asian American woman comic book artist who will encourage them to think critically about these issues in their personal and educational lives while creating their own comic books and superheroes. The project will culminate with a publication of the students’ work, a public reading and a celebration.

The Center for the Study of Asian American Health at NYU Medical Center will launch the *Heart Health Project*, an intergenerational project addressing the Chinese American community’s needs around cardiovascular health. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among elderly Chinese American women. Chinese American senior women and young women will record their lived experiences

regarding diet, exercising, and daily habits using photovoice, a specific photographic technique. The project will be used to develop health education programs as well as to engage policy makers regarding this community's needs.

Girls Write Now is the East Coast's only non-profit to combine mentoring and writing training within the context of all-girls programming. The Giving Circle will support its mentoring program, which pairs professional Asian American writers with Asian American high school girls for after-school and weekend programs.

Katie Quan will collaborate with the **Museum of the Chinese in the Americas (MoCA)** to produce the *Digital Quilt*, a museum art exhibit that will "weave" together untold stories of Asian women labor activists from NY and China into a multi-media show. Katie is a former garment worker, long-time union organizer and district council manager. She and video artist Nancy Tong will train 20 Chinese American female garment workers to record, film, tape each others' stories. The oral histories will be deposited in the archives at the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union collection at Cornell University. The Digital Quilt will premiere at the new MoCA site in NYC, and then embark on a national tour.

Sakhi for South Asian Women will produce an *Arts and Empowering Training*, in collaboration with the **Indo-Caribbean Women's Empowerment Group**. This 10-week interactive workshop will explore issues around domestic abuse through poetry, prose and film. It will culminate with the publication of participants' poetry and a spoken word event in Richmond Hills, Queens.

Slanty Eyed Mama/ Kate Rigg will develop and stage *the Urban Tao*, a next step in this artist's work chronicling contemporary life in America for a wide demographic of Amerasians. *The Urban Tao* will be a multi-media play with live music, poetry and graffiti art. It will be published as a literary work as well as live on the web. Kate envisions her play traveling to college campuses and community centers in the style of Eve Ensler's *Vagina Monologues*.

Tea and Justice, a documentary film by **Ermena Vinluan**, tells the story of three immigrant Asian women New York Police Department (NYPD) officers. The women describe their immigrant families' humble beginnings in this country, their inspiration to choose a non-traditional career, and their experiences confronting sexism and racial stereotyping in their jobs and their communities. The Giving

Circle will fund community screenings of the film as well as a Cantonese dubbed vocal soundtrack or subtitles.

Maria the Korean Bride, an art project by **Maria Yoon**, is a poignant, funny, multi-media solo performance project which draws on the personal experiences and pressures surrounding marriage – from the perspective of an unmarried Asian American women in her thirties. Maria traveled around the country, dressed in full traditional Korean wedding costume, and married a different man in each state. Her theatrical performance includes visual art, film, spoken work, movement and Korean food. The Giving Circle will fund a week-long performance run of her show at the Henry Street Settlement House.

About the Asian Women Giving Circle

The Asian Women Giving Circle is a group of Asian American women pooling their money to fund other Asian women in NYC who use the tools of art to further a social equity goal. We work together to raise resources to support Asian American serving, Asian American women-led social change organizations in New York City's under-served communities. For more information, please visit www.asianwomengivingcircle.org. AWGC is a donor advised fund of Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (www.aapip.org).

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