

HELP & SHELTER

AVON FOUNDATION DONATION OF US\$10,000 FOR ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE

PUBLIC EDUCATION OFFICER'S REPORT - AUGUST 2011

1) CHILD PROTECTION PROJECT

- In-house meeting was held with project staff on Tuesday 9th August 2011 at 2:00pm, next meeting scheduled for 8th September 2011.
- Parenting session done on the 16th and 27th August 2011 at Zeelugt, West Coast Demerara. Visits to other communities to follow.
- Management meeting re-scheduled for first week in September.

2) OTHER MATTERS

- A new brochure was designed for use in the health centers specifically addressing abuse during pregnancy; to be reproduced for distribution. (copy attached)
- Sessions in communities of Good Hope and Kaneville/Diamond were re-scheduled for September due to other activities being conducted by identified groups.
- Training for Trainers facilitation workshop to be held on Saturday 10th & 17th September 2011.
- Work to commence with students and PTA's at the resumption of school in September. Other groups as requested or arranged.

DETAILS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION WORK DONE DURING AUGUST 2011

Date	Organization	No. of Participants	Topic Discussed	Remarks
2.08.11	Parika Baptist Church	6 males	Understanding Self	• Session was done with six teenagers; ages 12-16 years old. • The sessions commenced with an ice breaker "are you good or good-looking" • Next we looked at self-concept, participants were asked to describe themselves and say one thing about themselves they are sure about. Replies were caring, good at sports, willing and helpful etc. • Participants were given a definition of self-concept. • Next question was how you feel about the things you know about yourself • Definition of self-esteem was given

				We then discussed the stages of development, the importance of each stage to our overall development; self- respect; high and low self-esteem; developing a good self-esteem: eating healthy, taking care of self, learning, developing spirituality and socializing.
4.08.11	Parika Baptist Church	12 males 31 females	Dating violence, Drugs & Peer Pressure	- Session was conducted with all the teenagers attending the event. In this session we focused on some issues young people faced with specific emphasis on dating violence, peer pressure and alcohol& drug use and abuse. - To aid the discussion students view two teen documentaries “force, fear and resistance” and “Abstinence”. Participants were allowed to share their views on the messages in the documentaries after which there was discussion on how they can protect themselves from rape and other forms of abuse in dating. Participants were also informed of the effects of alcohol and marijuana and enlightened of other drugs and their effects primarily “date rape drugs. - On the topic of peer pressure, participants identified that peer pressure can be both good and bad for which they were complimented and encouraged to be the influence and not be influenced (negatively). - They were reminded of their uniqueness and their abilities as leaders. - The pastor was very pleased with the sessions as he believes that such things need to be addressed in the church also. - Invitations were extended for us to work with the various groups of the congregation; sessions to be arranged in the near future.
9.08.11	La Penitence Health Centre	3 males 8 females	Abuse during pregnancy	- During this session we discussed the various forms of abuse, mothers were told of the possibilities of abuse either starting or intensifying during pregnancy and about the effects of abuse on the fetus. - Mothers were told why abuse happen during pregnancy, reasons include: Unplanned pregnancy Anger that the new baby has come too soon after the last Jealousy of the baby - Also we looked at kinds of abuse which occur before pregnancy, some of which are sexual assault, coercion or refusal to engage in sex, refusal or allowance to use contraception, forced use of contraception and refusal to use protection to prevent STD’s - Persons were particularly curious to learn the effects of alcohol and

				drug use by the fathers on the child. I provided some info on possible effects. • One man ask about the possibility of children becoming addicts when exposed in this way and about three persons shared their knowledge in this area where it was agreed that the possibility is great. • Sessions to continue in looking at abuse upon conception and during pregnancy
10.08.11	Windsor Forest Health Centre	10 females 1 male	Services of H & S Cycle of Violence	• Mothers were told of the services Help & Shelter provides and we went through the cycle of violence. This was done to show persons why it is important to seek counseling even though the abuse may not be physical, also to show how other experiences that persons may be have had earlier in their lives and in past relationships, how these may contribute to present challenges in their relationships. • Persons enquired of the confidentiality of our services, possible opportunities for skills training at our shelter, reasons why women don't leave the abusive situation to which answers were given. • Brochures were distributed and persons were asked to read and pass on to someone who may need help. All persons said there was someone they knew that needed the help, however they were not willing to share any information in this regard • Two peace-corps volunteers who were present requested information on volunteering with H & S, they were asked to come in, which they did and spoke with the coordinator. Hopefully they can be of assistance to the Child Protection project as they reside on the West Coast of Demerara and have experience in working with children.
15.08.11	East La Penitence Health Centre	12 females 1 male	Abuse and Pregnancy cont'd	• At this session we looked at the kinds of abusive behaviors occurring at conception and during pregnancy which include: Abuse upon conception Force her to have an abortion Injure her with the intent of causing her to lose the baby Injure her so that she has a miscarriage Force her to continue an unwanted pregnancy Abuse During Pregnancy Start , continue or change the pattern of abuse Control, limit, delay or deny her access to prenatal care Use her pregnancy as a weapon in emotional abuse by:

				Refusing sex Denying responsibility for the child Refusing to give support during pregnancy Refusing to support her during the birth Financially abuse her by refusing her access to money to buy food and supplies Restrict her access to food Threaten to leave her or report her as an unfit mother Force her to work beyond her endurance during pregnancy - For mothers who were pregnant before, many identified with some of the areas identified. One mother reported that her husband gets very angry when she rejects his sexual advances and wanted to know how she can deal with the situation, she was encouraged to share the information with him, so he can understand how his behavior not only affects her but also the child and also the availability of counseling provided by H & S. - Another question was what effect a forced abortion would have on an individual. The young woman further revealed that a relative who became pregnant as a teenager was forced to abort the child by her mother, now she is older and would like to have children but is not conceiving and it is destroying her relationship with her mother as she blames her for this. Two things were suggested (1) to visit a doctor to find out if any physical damage was done or to check for possible infections that might cause same. (2) to seek counseling as she may be suffering with post-traumatic stress which may also affect her ability to become pregnant.
16.08.11	Zeelugt	7 females	Parenting	- The discussion on parenting began with a reflection in which persons were allowed to share information about them. The next aspect was identifying things persons like and dislike about themselves. These exercises were done to help parents recognize how impacting certain experiences are and also to help them to understand how important it is for persons to deal with issues affecting them and become comfortable with themselves before parenting or acting as care-givers for children. - The next activity involve looking at growth and development of children, areas covered were biological, cognitive, psychosocial and spiritual development. We went through each identifying things that parents were already doing on which they were complimented and

				encouraged to continue and also things that they were doing or not doing that can result in harm of the child/children or contribute to slow development. • We also look at reasons for some behaviors in children and suitable forms of discipline. The parents were very interested in the discussion and participated in the discussion by sharing their views and experiences. • Some concerns of parents are: The number of children in the area that are involved in gambling and smoking marijuana: some as small as eight years old. Parents who are present at the gambling place aiding their children so as to get money to buy food. The number of women being abused daily by their partners and the poor response by the police to reports. Violence in the schools which parents get no satisfaction (one parent disclosed that her son some-time ago was cut in his back by another student: an injury which he received six stitches for and nothing was done about it) Another parent reported that persons in the area are in the habit of hitting her children and she is helpless in addressing same. Persons have also disclosed that a particular law enforcement officer is in the habit of taking bribes from both men and women in domestic violence matters and is also demanding sex from abused women. Parents were encouraged to relate these issues to H & S counselors working in the area and also to make reports to other stations if they are not being assisted where they are going presently. • Note: Session to be conducted with PTA at the resumption of school in September (Child Protection team) • Also I hope to arrange sessions for students.
17.08.11	Den Amstel Health	10 females	Abuse and Pregnancy	• Mothers were told of the services provided by Help & Shelter and

	Centre			how they can receive help. - Mothers were informed of the statistics of abuse during pregnancy; the various forms of abuse and some reasons for abuse during pregnancy. One mother acknowledged that pregnant do experience the forms of abuse identified, even though others did not say from their expressions and body language it was evident that they felt the same way. - Mothers were encouraged to seek help if they or someone they know is in an abusive relationship. Also discussed was the recent murder on the West Coast and the possible causes for same. - Sessions to continue.
18.08.11	Mother's Action Group	8 females	Gender Socialization, Cycle of Violence Web of Abuse	The mother's action group is resident in Leonora and is part of a larger group from Sophia. It is a group of women (about 22) who are working with women addressing social and other issues. The session was done to sensitize them on domestic violence. The areas identified were discussed. The women were pleased with the information shared and would like follow-up sessions. These are to be arranged.
23.08.11	East La Penitence Health Centre	10 females	Effects of Abuse during pregnancy Cycle of Violence	- We identified the effects that abuse during pregnancy would have on the woman and suggested some dangers that can result both to the woman and the unborn child and even to the child after birth - The cycle of violence was done with very good participation from the mothers: in this we looked at expectations in relationships, the importance of using positive words when speaking to each other in relationships - We also looked at how suppressed emotions can contribute to violence in relationships, while going through the various stages of the cycle. - The importance of counseling in helping persons to address issues in a non-violent manner. - Mothers were encouraged to seek counseling if needed and to tell others they know who are faced the similar problems where help is available
24.08.11	Windsor Forest Health Centre			None of the mothers were present for clinic that day. The nurse indicated that this was due to then nearing delivery and probably visiting private hospitals.
25.08.11	Den Amstel Health Centre	8 females	Abuse and Pregnancy cont'd	We continued to look at reasons for abuse during pregnancy.

27.08.11	Zeelugt Community	13 females 2 males	Parenting Session	• Reporting session on the work being done in the community under the child protection project • Questionnaire was done to evaluate the work done so far and to check its effectiveness • Parents were encouraged to work on developing better relationship with the schools PTA for the sake of their children as this was a challenge presently experienced. • Was formally introduced to the community representatives
30.08.11	East La Penitence Health Centre	11 females 1 male	Web of Abuse	• Discussion was very good, many persons were able to identify with different aspects of the web, the interaction was healthy with most persons sharing their experiences and views. Persons revealed that they now have a better understanding of the things that occur in abusive relationships and are now more informed of how to spot abusive behaviors • More importantly persons were able to associate the behavior not only with partner relationships but also in how parents respond to their children and how same can contribute to abusive behavior in their adult life and relationships. • Many parents also disclosed that they have taken the approach of talking more to their children rather than hitting as they are now aware of the damages caused.
31.08.11	Grove Health Centre	8 males 14 females	Services of Help & Shelter Reasons for abusive behavior	• Session was done with persons of varying age-range who were visiting the clinic for chronic illnesses. • Participants were briefed on the services of H & S and they can receive help for abusive situations. • Many questions were asked ranging from police response to abuse particularly from men to reasons for unfaithfulness in relationships. These we discussed with everyone being allowed to have an input. • The participants expressed gratitude for the information and were very appreciative of the brochures and the numbers; many also indicated the need to have counseling for themselves and for relatives.

Submitted by: Kevin Massiah