

November 25, 2007



# Association of Haitian Women in Boston

## Special Issue:

### International Day against Violence on Women

November 25, 2007

#### Our Mission

AFAB's mission is to empower Haitian women by helping them develop individual and collective capacity to improve their social, economic and political status and thus effect positive changes in their lives and the lives of their families.

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#### Dear Friends,

At AFAB, we began the year 2007 by revisiting our journey in a bid to assess our achievements and renew our strength to confront challenges that lurk ahead. One of the first great outcomes of this strategy was our successful International Women's Day event. In our official declaration for that day, we reaffirmed our mission in a very powerful language. In particular, we stated that as Haitian women, *"we find strength in the spirit of our Haitian heroines to face the challenges of inequality as we fight for a fair and just society. More importantly, as we focus on the specificities of immigrant women's challenges, we must make clear connections with overall women's efforts that are linked to the larger global vision of women and community empowerment."*

Inspired by this progressive statement, we've strengthened our programs, particularly our domestic violence program. And today, as we acknowledge the International Day against Violence on Women- November 25, 2007, we salute all the women throughout the world who are fighting for social and economic justice. We call on oppressed and exploited women to apply their collective wisdom and force in order to overcome their dire circumstances and conditions.

The harsh reality remains that human rights are violated in the United States and throughout the World. In Haiti, the ever-ending political and economic



#### Domestic Violence Forum August 2007

conflicts have resulted in inhuman conditions from rampant rape to harsh physical violence, health deprivation, and the most miserable form of prostitution for survival to name a few. In the US, Haitian women continue to face the brutal immigration war, job insecurity, domestic violence, exploitative wages, housing problems, unattainable work permits, high cost of health care, etc.

AFAB has been conducting social justice work addressing many of the above issues as a result of its members' passion, commitment and determination. We intend to continue working for social and economic justice; however, we need your help to pursue efficiently this noble cause. Today, we appeal to you for financial support to enhance the work of the organization.

Together, we continue to make a difference!

Respectfully,  
Carline Desiré

## Domestic Violence Prevention Program

A cornerstone of AFAB's mission, the Domestic Violence program provides essential support to affected families. AFAB Domestic Violence (DV) strategy stems from a human's rights and women's rights perspective in conducting: advocacy, education, outreach, the Haitian Roundtable on Domestic Violence and other coalition building work.

For the past five years, AFAB has had the privilege to work with several organizations/projects in the Greater Boston Area focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention in the Haitian Community. The Metro Boston Haitian REACH 2010 project, headed by the Center for Community Health Education and Research (CCHER), made it possible for AFAB to continue with its domestic violence prevention through the Haitian Women's Working Group. In a six session workshop, AFAB was able to conduct the last two sessions:

### Session V/ Domestic Violence:

- Understanding Domestic Violence
- Recognizing the signs of DV
- Why women stay in DV relationships
- Myths and facts of DV
- Statistics on DV
- Resources on DV

### Session VI/ Link between HIV/AIDS and DV:

- Risk factor of DV, STI's and HIV/AIDS
- Gender and Power Dynamic
- Cultural Empowerment
- Safer Sex Negotiation
- Assertiveness and Communication
- Personal Empowerment Plan

From June 2002 to June 2007, our DV Program Director, Carmelle Bonhométre conducted 90 workshops on domestic violence and linking DV to HIV. The outcomes of the workshops include:

- Increase knowledge on domestic violence
- Women eager to take charge to protect themselves from contracting HIV
- Increase in the number of referrals for domestic violence services
- Increase in the distribution of condoms by AFAB (from 1,000/yr to approximately 10,000/yr)
- Increase in the number of women getting tested for HIV

The workshop participants completed several evaluations and expressed the following:

- Domestic violence CANNOT be only a women's problem
- Training in sex negotiation skills and safer sex practices need to be developed and implemented
- There is a strong need to reinforce risks for Casual sex and serial monogamy practices
- There is a need for additional domestic violence services (in Haitian Creole) in other areas outside of Boston, particularly in Brockton
- There is a need to develop a scale to test gender power dynamic and equip Haitian women with safer sex negotiation tools
- Finally, there is a need for more comprehensive community development to address job creation, cultural promotion and immigration issues.

AFAB expresses its gratitude to all the Metro Boston Haitian REACH 2010 Group and the Center for Community Health Education and Services (CCHER). Special thanks to the members of the Haitian Women's Working group that compiled and presented the report at AFAB's annual fundraiser on October 20, 2007. They include: Gisselène Beauplant from Supporting Parents and Resilient Kids at Boston Medical Center, Ketly Thimoléon and Dr. Jonhy M. Veillard from the Massachusetts Community Health Services, Marques Laforest from Cambridge Health Alliance and Carmelle Bonhométre from the Association of Haitian Women.

***From November 2006 to October 2007 AFAB provided domestic violence advocacy for a 129 people including 29 Haitians at the Dorchester Court House***

***For more information on domestic violence call: 617-287-0096***

## Domestic Violence Program Calendar of Events

- **Haitian Roundtable on Domestic Violence**, every 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month from 12:30 to 2:00 PM
- **Boston Multi Disciplinary Advocacy Support**, bi-monthly meeting from 9:30 to 11:00 AM (Next meeting in January)
- **Annual Domestic Prevention Forum:** August 16, 2008
- **Condom's distribution:** Monday to Friday from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM
- **ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) and Haitian Creole Literacy:** Tuesday and Thursdays-Morning 10-12PM and Evening 6-8 PM (**Economic Literacy** 1 to 2 times/yr depending on funding)
- **Haitian Women's Support Group** (Spring, Winter and Fall sessions)
- **International Women's Day Event:** Saturday, March 8, 2008- location to be announced
- **Annual Clergy Breakfast:** June 14, 2008- location to be announced

For more information regarding the Domestic Violence program, please contact: **Carmelle Bonhomère**,  
Program Director:  
(617) 287-0096  
[cbonhometre@afab-kafanm.org](mailto:cbonhometre@afab-kafanm.org)

**Anie Sergile**, Civil Legal Advocate:  
Monday-Wednesday-Friday  
(617) 288-9500 Ext: 251  
Tuesday-Thursday  
(617) 779-2151  
[asergile@afab-kafanm.org](mailto:asergile@afab-kafanm.org)

## The Love Poem (Ayiti Demen summer 2007)

Take a heart  
Take a person  
Take a family  
Take care  
Take friends

Take letters, emails, mail  
Valentine's cards, Birthday cards  
Mother's day cards, Father's Day cards  
Mix it all in a community bowl  
Community is a group of people  
Who try to make things better

Put it back in your heart  
Believe in it  
Believe in your ancestors  
This is a love sandwich

In the love sandwich  
There is no fighting  
No being mean  
No bad words, swears  
This is a love sandwich

Take a person  
Take a family  
Take care  
Take friends  
This is a love sandwich

By: *Alexandra René, 5*  
*Emmanuella René, 5*  
*Izaiah Dimanche-Silva, 9*  
*Zhanée Dimanche-Silva, 6*

**AYITI DEMEN**  
**Children & Youth Program**  
**Available to community youth**  
**Arts, Culture, Violence Prevention,**  
**fieldtrips, lots of fun and more**  
**Meets 2 Saturdays a month at**  
**KAFANM**  
**330 Fuller St. Dorchester**  
**For more info & registration:**  
**call 617-287-0096**

**AFAB****WISH LIST**

Computer  
Computer software  
Monitor  
Printer

**VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED**

Office Support  
Special Events  
ESL Instructors  
Program Evaluator

**Kèk chif sou vyolans sou fanm  
nan kontèks mondyal**

- Vyolans kont fanm se krim ki pi kouran sou latè men se krim yo bay mwens enpòtans tou.
- Yo estime kantite fanm yo vann pou pwositisyon sou latè nan yon ane ant 700,000 ak 4,000,000. Benefis moun k ap fè trafik sèks sa yo chita ant 7 ak 12 bilyon dola ameriken chak ane.
- Omwen youn sou chak twa fanm gen pou li pran baton osnon yo fè kadejak sou li pandan l sou latè. Anpil fwa moun k ap abize l la se yon mamb fanmi l oubyen yon moun li konnen. Vyolans domestik se pi gwo fòm abi fanm ap sibi sou latè, li travèse tout baryè peyi, kilti, gwoup etnik, edikasyon, klas ak relijyon.

***Atansyon! Atansyon!***

*Dine Anyèl ak Selebrasyon  
20<sup>e</sup>m Anivèsè AFAB  
18 oktòk 2008*

**Some statistics on global violence  
on women**

- Violence against women is the most common but least punished crime in the world.
- The number of women forced or sold into prostitution is estimated worldwide at anywhere between 700,000 and 4,000,000 per year. Profits from sex slavery are estimated at seven to twelve billion US dollars per year.
- At least one out of every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Usually, the abuser is a member of her own family or someone known to her. Domestic violence is the largest form of abuse of women worldwide, irrespective of region, culture, ethnicity, education, class and religion.

***Save the Date***

*AFAB's Annual Fundraiser  
20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration  
October 18, 2008*

**AFAB-KAFANM SERVICES:**

**HOUSING AND HOUSING ADVOCACY:** KAFANM provides six housing units and a community center. AFAB assists newly arrived Haitian immigrants in applying for public housing benefits and facilitates workshops on housing issues such as tenant rights, home buying, etc.

**ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS:** Our adult education programs provide individuals with the fundamental skills necessary to secure gainful employment and to better integrate themselves into society.

**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:** Our youth programs enrich the lives of our students through the delivery of solid academic and social skills. They prepare students to face life's challenges and bridge generational and cultural gaps within the Haitian community.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION:** AFAB affirms the right of abused women to be safe and to prosecute their offenders when necessary. A cornerstone of our mission, the domestic violence prevention program provides essential support to domestic violence survivors and their families while they attempt to regain control of their lives. The Haitian Round Table on Domestic Violence meets every first Wednesday of the month with different providers joining forces in the fight against domestic violence.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH:** Outreach: The outreach program focuses on a large number of individuals who normally don't participate in community events. Legal Services Project: Our pilot legal project provides advocacy clinics on general legal immigration issues and seeks to establish a pro-bono panel of lawyers in the Haitian community.