



Sakhi for South Asian Women: Achievements in 2008

Sakhi exists to end violence against women. We unite survivors, communities, and institutions to eradicate domestic violence as we work together to create strong and healthy communities. Sakhi uses an integrated approach that combines support and empowerment through service delivery, community engagement, media advocacy, and policy initiatives.

In fulfilling our critical mission we continued to offer a wide array of innovative programs and services in 2008, and, despite a difficult economic environment, served a record number of new survivors while enhancing our impact in more underserved communities. Sakhi's 2008 key achievements include:

:: Direct Services ::

- Responding to a record 731 new requests for support—more than triple the number of survivors we reached in 2001. (See full statistics here: <http://sakhi.org/learn/sakhistats.php#a2008>.) Fielding about 12.7% of new requests from men, almost 80% of whom were contacting us on behalf of a loved one, such as a sister. This represents an increase compared to 2006, when men comprised about 8% of new requests for support.
- Significant success in enabling survivor self-sufficiency. Of the 137 survivors we assisted with economic empowerment last year, 21 secured jobs (nearly 47% of those who applied for jobs), 17 obtained public benefits, SSI benefits, or unemployment benefits, 7 secured non-emergency housing, 5 opened bank accounts, 10 completed classes and certificate programs, 7 received job training, 2 began medical residencies, 6 received translation of international degrees, 48 received training in interviewing or resume-writing, and 53 received support with checking their credit, budget issues, and taxes.
- Holding computer training workshops and one-on-one mentoring in our newly established in-house computer lab, sponsoring a total 75 hours of training.
- Facilitating budgeting workshops to assist survivors with emergency planning and cost-cutting; one unemployed survivor who lives in a shelter and has a three-month-old child noted, “I realized that I could make cuts. Right now my situation is bad. Though I get very little money, I realized that I should save some...The workshop helped me set financial goals and made me want to work towards them.”
- Expanding our reach into the isolated Indo-Caribbean and Punjabi communities of Richmond Hill, Queens, holding weekly support groups on domestic violence and faith.

:: Community Engagement and Media Advocacy ::

- Breaking new ground in community education by co-presenting a research project on the under-examined links between domestic violence and mental health at a key annual conference held by the American Public Health Association, and also by presenting at a panel discussion on court interpretation at the National Legal Aid & Defender Association.
- Addressing a diverse audience both locally and nationally, speaking to students, experts, allies, and community members across the spectrum through a combination of 36 presentations, 11 tabling sessions, 11 networking sessions, 7 group facilitations, and 4 discussions.
- Providing extensive resources digitally. From February to December 2008, Sakhi's website saw a total of 187,931 sessions, or unique hits from different computers, for a monthly average of 17,084; the site's traffic ranking is higher than that of any other U.S.-based South Asian women's organization.
- Beginning an online monthly newsletter to keep community supporters informed of our mission and programs; it consistently registered among the top 10 to 15 most-visited destinations on our website each month.
- Fielding a volunteer pool of 75 active members who assisted Sakhi through community outreach, direct services, and development activities, placing Sakhi in the cutting-edge category of the 18% of service providers that, according to a 2007 National Network to End Domestic Violence report, have more than 40 volunteers. In 2008, our volunteers gave an equivalent of one year and seven months worth of time.
- Achieving community recognition. In honor of Sakhi's sustained and impressive community impact, our executive director of seven years, Purvi Shah, received the SONY Social Service Achiever of the Year Award.
- Co-sponsoring the Indo-Caribbean Women's Empowerment Summit in collaboration with the Jahajee Sisters, in Richmond Hill, Queens, featuring workshops, panels, artwork, poetry, and dance.

:: Policy ::

- Disseminating, collecting, and analyzing results of our groundbreaking national survey of 157 court interpreters as part of our efforts to gauge gaps in the court system and remedy inequities that prevent equal access to justice. "Sakhi is a prudent observer that shares its perspective on issues of equal language access and survivors of domestic violence with the interpreting profession in an effort to effectively address the very delicate nature of domestic violence, the interpreter and the law," interpreter Lionel Bajana observed, adding, "Sakhi's research on Court Interpreting is mostly unprecedented and I'm sure will contribute to a new, but growing, area of research." (View preliminary report here: <http://www.sakhi.org/CIP/NationalCourtInterpreterSurveyPreliminaryReport.pdf>.)
- Sharing survey results and preliminary findings during a May panel sponsored by the New York City Bar Association and addressed by the Hon. Judge Ann Pfau. (See our newsletter article and video clip here: <http://www.sakhi.org/JuneNewsletter/Policy.php>.)
- Presenting on Sakhi's unique work on court interpreters during at the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators 29th Annual Conference, held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, as Domestic Violence Program Advocate Kajori Chaudhuri highlighted data from both the 2008 survey and a 2007 survey conducted by Justice Speaks of 171 court users which demonstrated the need for further language access measures and reform. (View 2007 report here: <http://sakhi.org/learn/documents/JusticeSpeaks2007ConvenientSamplePreliminaryFindings.pdf>.)