

SAWERRAA

News Letter ♦ Volume I, Number 4

“What happened?”

"I do not know. Someone from the church called and told me. They were such a nice couple. He was a quiet man.

“It is not good news. It's a case of domestic violence which has been going on for a long time.”

Mary Mathew, a South Asian immigrant from Kerala was murdered by her husband on July 10, 1997, just before her fiftieth birthday. The police found her battered body in the bedroom. Their children, a 21 year old son and a 17 year old daughter were home that terrible day, when their father beat their mother to death.

This was not the first time the police had been called to the Mathew's residence. Two weeks before the tragic incident police had come to investigate a domestic dispute. No charges were filed at that time. A few days later, Thomas was arrested for his wife's murder. Mary died as a result of internal injuries caused by severe beating. Thomas Mathew was convicted of Mary's murder. He is currently in prison, serving a 17 ½ year sentence.

Thomas had lost his job so Mary worked double shift at the hospital. They lived in a middle class neighborhood and attended services at the South Asian church. Mary's increased responsibilities left her with little time to socialize and increased the isolation she lived in. Yet some friends and co-workers knew she was being abused. She had sought help from the police and met with a counselor but that did not save her from her abuser.

Points to ponder:

- *Mary's children, and some friends and co-workers, knew she was being abused. Why didn't they intervene?*
- What effect do you think their father's abuse of their mother had on the children?
- Why did Mary remain in such a violent environment?
- Did the police and counselor fail her? What could / should they have done?
- Were there any circumstances that may have aggravated the abuse

Domestic violence destroys families

Helpline: 1-877-SAWERRAA. 1-877-729-3722. www.saweraa.org

What is an Order of Protection (OP)?

OP is a legal document issued by the judge. The judge may issue a temporary OP called an Ex Parte which is valid until the next court date. Ex Parte may later be converted to a permanent OP.

OP can do the following although it is not foolproof :

- Protection from further abuse
- Bar the abuser from the home so that the victim and the children can remain there safely
- Order the abuser to pay child support, maintenance and legal expenses
- Award child custody and visitation
- Order the abuser to undergo counseling under certain circumstances

My First Impression

Gayatri Rajkumar

I was booking movie tickets thru www.myilaaka.com when I came across SAWERAA's web page (www.saweraa.org). Next thing I knew, I was calling them. SAWERAA 's volunteer said, "Come! Come to our 2nd Anniversary Celebration!"

I entered the Gandhi Center rather hesitantly. All those unknown faces made me feel nervous but friendly smiles and 'hellos' soon put me at ease. I listened to the panel discussion intently. The panelists' backgrounds and qualifications were impressive! Each member shared her expertise on the topic "Sadness, Silence and Secrets". I was surprised to see a few men in the audience and even more surprised to see them enthusiastically participate in the discussion. It was quite thought-provoking! The dedication and commitment exhibited by SAWERAA's Board Members and volunteers touched my heart. I could tell, from the professional backgrounds of the board members that SAWERAA is in capable hands. They were so inspiring. Now I am a SAWERAA volunteer too!



Comments from the "The Bats" story group

- "Very interesting –learned a lot about a subject that is not discussed enough"
- "Opens up a lot of questions"
- "It was a good introduction to women's studies, in particular South Asian Women"

Thank you to all who attended!

Your varied and insightful contributions led to a lively discussion.



Name our newsletter!

SAWERAA's newsletter needs a name.

We welcome your suggestions. Put on your creative thinking hats and share your ideas with us.

We will announce the name of the person whose suggestion will be chosen.

Send your ideas by June 20th to:

P.O.Box 31753, St. Louis, MO 63131

Or email : info@saweraa.org

SAWERAA's 2nd Anniversary

Celebration a Big Success!

SAWERAA thanks the South Asian community and all who attended our 2nd anniversary celebration for your support and encouragement. With your help, we hope to continue to provide critical assistance to South Asian victims of domestic violence and their families. We extend special thanks to the respected ladies who prepared delicious snacks for our guests and young volunteers who helped us in preparing for the event. Thanks to the panelists, the presentations and question-and-answer session were informative and interesting. Thanks, everyone!



Join us to watch a movie followed by a discussion

Astitva

(existence)

*Story of a family forced by events to confront its
existence and question each of the family member's identity*

A movie by Mahesh Manjrekar

Sunday, June 19, 2005

2:00 PM —5:00 PM

Washington University, Saint Louis. MO

George Warren Brown School of Social Work

Brown Lounge

For directions: http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/gwb_map.html

Points for discussion.....

Why we as a society have different

expectations of women and men when they marry ?

Why do we judge women and men differently when they deviate from our expectations?