

# People and Events

## Peace Over Violence to receive \$1 million grant for building healthy teen relationships

LOS ANGELES – Peace over Violence announced today they are to receive a \$1 million grant from Blue Shield of California Foundation (BSCF), as part of a national four-year initiative focused on preventing intimate partner violence, Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships. Peace Over Violence, formerly known as the Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women (LACAAW), is a non-profit organization dedicated to building healthy relationships, families and communities free from sexual, domestic and interpersonal violence. Their “Teens Over Violence” initiative was selected for this grant from among more than 500 applicants nationwide.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and its California partner Blue Shield of California Foundation (BSCF) are investing \$18 million to prevent teen dating violence and abuse. With 11 sites from around the country, the Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships (BHTR) initiative will enable communities to create and evaluate comprehensive models of prevention of this serious public health issue. RWJF has selected the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF), one of the nation’s leading organizations working to prevent domestic and sexual violence, to serve as the national program office for BHTR. In partnership with RWJF, the Family Violence Prevention Fund helped to design the BHTR initiative and will direct its implementation.

RWJF will fund ten sites and as the California partner for BHTR, BSCF will fund one California site. This philanthropic partnership leverages dollars in California, while combining the complementary expertise of both foundations to advance collective learning on how to prevent teen dating violence and abuse. Working collaboratively with the 11 local sites, FVPPF will create a learning community to prevent teen dating violence and sexual abuse, sharing its expertise in leading national initiatives and creating social change, as well as providing guidance and technical assistance to the sites.

“Engaging youth is a crucial element of our work to end domestic violence in California,” said Crystal Hayling, BSCF’s President and CEO. “We are honored to partner with RWJF on this initiative, and look forward to seeing the positive impact of Teens Over Violence on the Los Angeles community.”

Peace Over Violence will collaborate with local partners including USC Institute for Multi-media Literacy, El Centro de Pueblo, and Los Angeles Unified School District on their “Teens Over Violence” initiative. The program will work in and around two middle schools and aims to impact 4,300 students, 90% of which are Latino, and 85% very low income and chronically exposed to violence.

Elements of the “Teens Over Violence” initiative include curricula and peer education to engage students in school settings, while addressing gender specific issues and a partnership with El Centro del Pueblo’s Parent Center and Family Resource Center to involve teen influencers. Youth will participate in the development of the program through focus groups, planning sessions and retreats to de-

sign new approaches to problems they have identified. The direct involvement from older students from Miguel Contreras Learning Complex, most of who are engaged in the school’s TDV programs, will help bring in role models, mentors, and siblings. The new media component implemented will reach teens that are not directly involved in this project, and will also bring in college and graduate students as role models, mentors and teachers. The media campaign will use internet forums, blogs and digital storytelling to reach the wider youth community.

“Peace Over Violence is thrilled to have been selected among such a highly qualified applicant pool for this nationwide initiative,” Patricia Giggans, Executive Director of Peace Over Violence said. “We have been involved in implementing innovative curricula on teen dating abuse in California for many years and now we have an opportunity, and the resources to expand our work in a community-wide program to achieve even greater results.”

Each of the 11 nationwide community partnerships will implement a community-wide prevention program targeting 6th to 8th grade youth designed to reduce relationship violence and promote positive relationship skills. These community-based initiatives will simultaneously engage parents, teachers, peers and older teens as well as integrate social marketing and communications strategies to reinforce attitudes that strengthen healthy relationships. The core of the effort is to inspire and empower teens to lead and sustain initiatives that reinforce the importance of building healthy teen relationships.

The program will be directed by the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) as the National Program Office (NPO), working closely with RWJF. The FVPPF oversaw the entire application review process and will provide ongoing programmatic direction and technical assistance to all eleven program grantees. RTI International, an independent research group, will conduct a national evaluation of Building Healthy Teen Relationships that will run concurrently with the program. This national evaluation team will work closely with the FVPPF, to identify best practices from each community partnership and evaluate program impact and effectiveness. All BHTR sites, including Peace Over Violence will participate in this evaluation.

“We are excited to be a part of this groundbreaking initiative that will impact thousands of young people across the country,” said Esta Soler, President of the Family Violence Prevention Fund. “By focusing on comprehensive, community-wide prevention, we can ensure that healthy relationships are a strong and growing reality for every young person.”

About Blue Shield of California Foundation  
Blue Shield of California Foundation, one of the largest healthcare grant making organizations in California, has committed a total of over \$22 million in the past six years to ending domestic violence in the state. For more information, please visit the Web site at [www.blueshieldcafoundation.com](http://www.blueshieldcafoundation.com).

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## A Cappella

by JON MELEGRITO

IT’S Saturday night, live, in the Springfield home of Ben and Gloria Caoile. The place is boisterous with raucous laughter and endless chatter. Feasting on crabs, ‘lechon,’ ‘pancit’ and ‘adobo,’ a rowdy bunch of revelers has converged in this quiet neighborhood, bent on letting their hair down.

Leading the charge is 69-year-old Greg Macabenta of Daly City, California. A veteran PR man, prolific writer of more than 200 Filipino movie scripts, publisher of *Filipinas Magazine* and owner of Minority Media Services, Inc. (among many other titles), the newly-elected national chairman of NaFFAA is belting out songs tonight. The repertoire includes Tagalog and Visayan ballads, Negro Spirituals, Broadway hits and popular favorites.

The Karaoke machine is broken, which is just as well. This is not the time for solo performances. Singing a cappella is more in the “Yes We Can” spirit of the day. And with the chairman setting the tone, it didn’t take long before everyone else piped in, with the more gifted tenors, baritones, altos and sopranos raising their voices with unbridled passion.

A capella. Passion. And the “Yes We Can” spirit. That about sums up a long day of serious discussion, sober deliberation and prompt resolution.

Meeting in the Philippine Embassy’s Romulo Hall, the 30 NaFFAA board of officers and a couple dozen other leaders had just spent nine hours going over a 3-page agenda. Enough to blow your mind. They had flown in the night before from as far away as Hawaii and California. Carloads drove in from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Fittingly, these leaders were wine and dined by Philippine Embassy officials who had to give up Friday20evening and all-day Saturday to play hosts.

That Greg Macabenta was able to bring all of them at all to a face-to-face meeting a week before Thanksgiving is a feat in

itself. The synergy was obvious from the start.

And this time there was not much pointless talking. The Chairman saw to that. “What’s the point?” he’d cut them off, discouraging any grandstanding or posturing.

Like his power point presentation, the day scrolled down in bullet points. “Let’s all agree in principle,” the chairman made it very clear. “Let’s not waste time debating. Over-analysis only leads to paralysis.”

And so it went, boom, boom, boom.

On coalition building: “It’s all about relationships. Without the credibility of this coalition, we will not get a single penny.”

Problem-solving: “If you run into a wall, dig around it or under it. If that doesn’t work, break down that damn wall.”

NaFFAA’s role and relationships: “We never intended to be the umbrella organization, but to link all the various autonomous groups, so we can have a one clear, powerful voice in advocating our issues to government, business and to the American public.”

On being National Chair: “I don’t consider myself ‘the boss,’ but the coordi nator, integrator and facilitator. I like to think of myself as a community worker and volunteer.”

NaFFAA’s Mission: “It’s been said that we’re perpetual tourists living in a Filipino enclave, not in Mainstream America. We need to be active participants as Americans, contributing to this country’s well being. But we must also help the Philippines and be engaged in Filipino issues. It’s not an either/or.”

Fundraising: “Developing fundable programs is the key. That’s the only way we can get corporate sponsorships. We are their principal access to the purchasing power of our community, which is now 4 million strong. They may not all be US citizens but they are consumers like everybody else.”

Political Action: “We have to be politically savvy, politically connected and politically empowered. That means being able

to endorse candidates and raise money for their campaigns. But to be serious about this, we have to create a separate, formal entity. Otherwise, we will not be credible as a voting bloc.”

On the old Philippine Chancery: “We need to rehabilitate this building and turn it into a Philippine museum to show case our art, history and culture.”

Youth Leaders: “Us old men need to step aside already. It’s time for you to take over, more sooner than later. Emilio Aguinaldo was 28 when he founded the Katipunan. Gregorio del Pilar was 21 when he led his troops in Tirad Pass. You have to fight your way and demand to be recognized.”

Responding to the challenge, Matteo Fernandez, a young professional from Los Angeles, interjected: “Our generation is well positioned in corporate America. We have colleagues who can champion revenue-driven projects. This work force of 30-something professionals can make it happen. But you have to create a structure for them within NaFFAA.”

Applause. “Done!” the chairman nodded approvingly. “I know we have a lot of brains and managerial capacity in this organization.”

It was that kind of day. Sang in a cappella. No instrumentations to muffle or distort the sound of one, clear voice. Just pure passion. And “Yes We Can” spirit.

It’s been 11 years since NaFFAA was formed. Three national chairs have come and gone. When the fourth chairman took over last September, NaFFAA’s coffers were literally empty. As promised, he raised close to \$15,000 in two months.

He’s into finding solutions, right away. “We will not violate our by-laws,” he quips, “but we will find a creative way around it.”

Just like tonight. The Karaoke machine not working didn’t stop him from singing, and getting the others to sing with him. He may have forgotten the words to “Impossible Dream,” but there’s no doubt the passion is there to reach the unreachable star – pure and raw in a cappella. ■

## ‘Tis the season to be efficient using Southern California Edison’s energy-saving tips

ROSEMEAD, Calif. – Everyone is trying to save money in this tough economy – especially with the holidays approaching – and Southern California Edison (SCE) offers ways to help its customers save energy, which can lead to savings on their bills.

“People are unaware of how much energy they’re wasting,” said Lynda Ziegler, SCE senior vice president, Customer Service. “The little things add up – home electronics with internal clocks still consume power when they’re

on standby mode, and chargers use energy whenever they are plugged into an outlet. When you add regular incandescent holiday lights to the mix, your electric bill can really start to go up. We want people to understand that there are easy ways they can conserve, such as plugging devices into a power strip that can be turned off when they’re not being used.”

SCE urges its residential and business customers to keep these tips in mind this holiday season. These helpful hints are located at

[www.sce.com/tips](http://www.sce.com/tips).

Remember that every appliance or electronic device has two price tags: what you pay to take it home and what you pay for the energy it uses. Look for items with the ENERGY STAR label, because they use up to 50 percent less energy than standard models, and the savings will show up in lower bills.

Beginning Feb. 17, 2009, the nation will shift to digital-only television broadcasts. Those with

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