



Mission Statement

SURVIVORS of Torture, International exists to:

- be a healing resource for survivors of torture and their families;
- raise awareness among the general public and educate the professional communities about torture; and
- be an instrument to end torture.

Inside this Issue

<i>SURVIVORS' Healing Club</i>	2
<i>Director's Reflections</i>	3
<i>High Tech — High Touch</i>	3
<i>Vicarious Trauma Support</i>	4
<i>Evelyn Cohen Recognized</i>	4
<i>Mental Health Funding</i>	5
<i>Client Demographics</i>	5
<i>Goods & Services Support</i>	6
<i>Join the Healing Trust</i>	6
<i>Financial Supporters</i>	7
<i>Survivors of Torture is</i>	8

Can You Share Your Home with a Survivor?

SURVIVORS hopes to find one or two individuals or families who would like to offer a room to a client who needs a place to stay for 6 to 12 months while seeking asylum. Matches are made with careful screening and preliminary meetings, and include pre-agreed-upon duties in exchange for housing. You can get the details about the Shared Housing Program from case manager Beatriz Ledezma at (619) 278-2402. The best way to learn about this opportunity may be to hear from the participants in the housing matches we have made so far.

A Word from the Chair

Bill Radatz - Chair, Board of Directors

A recent news story told how a four-year-old knew to call 911 when he saw his father collapse in their apartment. We all know 911 as a number to call for help. We also know 9/11 as a date that generates a flood of images and feelings about something we never want to see or feel again.

In 1997, the United Nations declared June 26 the date to annually remember persons who have been tortured. In some ways, commemorating June 26 is a call to remember the capacity of the human race for evil in order to guard against becoming what we abhor. More importantly, we are called to remember the strength of the human character, which is capable of not only surviving, but of overcoming that evil. June 26 is a call to stand with those who have experienced the worst that we are capable of, and to stand against ever allowing such evil to dominate or define us.

Like 911, 6/26 is a call to help and to heal. We invite you to join us this day for our special event to answer that call.

SAVE the DATE

Come commemorate
the United Nations International Day in Support of Torture Victims
with Survivors of Torture, International

Sunday, June 26, 2005

1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

The Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice
University of San Diego
5998 Alcalá Park, San Diego, CA 92110

Live Musical Performances

by Deborah Liv Johnson and Peter Sprague
Traditional African Drumming and Dancing Performed
by Abaa Koma of Ghana

Chocolate and Cabernet Reception to Follow

Cost: \$50.00 Tickets are Limited RSVP Today

SURVIVORS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
Your donation is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

**SURVIVORS of Torture,
International**

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SURVIVORS Welcomes Karen Abuzahra, Psy.D.

Karen Golden Abuzahra, Psy.D. joined Survivors of Torture, International's clinical team in December 2004 and will be working with us for a year as a registered psychologist. As with other internship and trainee positions, Karen works in an unpaid position and earns required hours towards her licensure while serving our clients and learning our style of work. Karen is providing individual, family, and group psychotherapy as well as assisting in developing training materials. She has played a key role in the development of the Vicarious Trauma Support Program.

Karen received her doctorate in clinical psychology from Alliant International University in San Diego in March 2004. Her dissertation examined resilience in Muslim-American Immigrant Women, combining her interests in immigration, trauma recovery, cross-cultural psychology, women, the Arabic language, and Muslim clients and culture. Her previous experience includes work in psychiatric settings and volunteering in a school and a women's shelter. We are pleased to have Karen working on our team and sharing these many relevant skills and interests.

Thanks to Mark Berger, Ex-Board Member

SURVIVORS' board of directors has reluctantly bid farewell to Mark Berger, M.S.W. Mark became acquainted with **SURVIVORS** in 2001, when, as a consultant, he led a wonderful staff-board retreat on strategic planning. Moved by **SURVIVORS'** mission, Mark went beyond his contracted responsibilities to support the organization's growth. He became a board member in 2003 and immediately took on a leadership role in fund development. Drawing on 25 years of experience as a nonprofit management professional, Mark frequently gave dynamic educational presentations to the board that helped it to become a more effective leadership body.

In 1998, after serving for 18 years as western area director of a national organization, Mark established his own consulting firm. He is a senior consultant for Nonprofit Management Solutions and a faculty member of Chapman University and CSU San Marcos. In February, Mark was appointed CEO of Partnerships With Industry, a nonprofit that creates employment opportunities in the community for adults with developmental disabilities. Mark's new responsibilities preclude his continuing on **SURVIVORS'** board, but he has graciously offered his ongoing support. With deep gratitude for Mark's service at **SURVIVORS**, we wish him well in his new position.

Elizabeth Michel, Secretary, Board of Directors



Happy Birthday SURVIVORS!

On Friday, February 25, **SURVIVORS** celebrated its eighth birthday. Board members, staff, clients, healthcare providers, attorneys, volunteers and friends stopped by **SURVIVORS'** office for an afternoon of festivities in recognition of the day. The informal atmosphere allowed all to relax and enjoy good conversation and great refreshments. Everyone agreed that one of the highlights of the event was the treats prepared by **SURVIVORS'** cooking class; few could resist sneaking seconds (or even thirds)! The party was also special because **SURVIVORS** was able to introduce its new office wing, featuring several new work spaces, a client library and additional therapy rooms, all completely furnished by Callaway Golf Company and Price Legacy Corporation. Everyone was especially grateful for the added space given the large number of party attendees. Thank you all for eight wonderful years. Our hopes are for many, many more!



Mark Berger, Sarak Suon and Amy Okamura enjoy **SURVIVORS'** birthday party.

SURVIVORS' Healing Club

Every month an open invitation goes out to **SURVIVORS'** clients to participate in the Healing Club. The club's monthly activity might be to visit a sunny park for a picnic, or to spend a day at the beach for a friendly game of soccer. Sometimes a guest speaker joins our group and treats us to a special activity like a personal tour of a local museum. San Diego is a beautiful city that offers newcomers connections to their new community in enjoyable ways, through its natural beauty and extensive cultural exhibits. The Healing Club shows survivors how to explore and learn about San Diego within the arms of a safe and familiar group setting.

Last month, in honor of the Cesar Chavez holiday, **SURVIVORS'** clients visited Chicano Park. They learned about Cesar Chavez and the struggle of the Chicano community through the beautiful and moving murals that surround the park. They discussed the process of how disenfranchised groups can come to own a piece of the American dream. The struggle is a familiar one to survivors and their families. The Chicano community is a good example of how a group of people integrates into a community and is able to thrive.

In these post-9/11 years, we in the United States are faced with new challenges and ongoing opportunities. We are challenged to continually oppose the use of torture and we are given the opportunity to care for those who have been tortured.

To that end, I was in Washington, D.C., in April to meet with our legislators about Senate Bill S.365, the Torture Victims Relief Act (TVRA). I strongly urged our California senators and San Diego congresspersons to support the reauthorization of the TVRA. I also testified in front of the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations that even in these difficult budgetary times, it is critical that Congress fully fund the TVRA.

As this newsletter goes to print, I am pleased to share with you that Senators Boxer and Feinstein, and Representatives Davis and Filner have agreed to be original co-sponsors of the bill. Please send them letters and thank them for their unwavering support.

Please also send letters to Congressmen Cunningham and Hunter to strongly encourage them to co-sponsor the TVRA. Your action and their commitment is more than ever vital to the health and well-being of torture survivors.

Together, all of us – supporters, legislators, care providers – can meet the post 9/11 challenges and make a meaningful difference in the lives of torture survivors.

Director's Reflections

Kathi Anderson, Executive Director

High Tech–High Touch Sets the Stage for Hope

They arrive in San Diego County with hope held tightly in their hands. Like the rest of us, they hope for a safe place to live, to feel well, and to be productive. If they have children, they hope that they will lead normal, happy lives. These are tall orders for men, women, and children who have had their previous lives broken in their homelands ... and it's up to Survivors of Torture, International to set the stage for those hopes.

Setting the stage for hope requires two basic elements for organizational effectiveness – new technology and an ancient, yet evolving understanding of human nature.

This High Tech-High Touch approach to effectiveness is front and center at SURVIVORS. Thanks to a grant from The California Endowment, SURVIVORS will overhaul its client confidentiality and technology procedures to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements. We are taking this prudent step now to give greater security assurance to clients and to become compliant before being told to. It's a basic High Tech–High Touch action.

More must happen. Most critical is being able to refer about 120 clients per year to medical doctors, dentists, psychiatrists, and alternative medical practitioners. At the juncture between an injured, scared client and these services is SURVIVORS' medical coordinator, Sarak Suron. He is a trained physician's assistant who, most of the time, must allay clients' fears that these professionals are not the same doctors who oversaw their torture. He trains the members of his network to serve survivors of torture who need to understand every action the doctor will take before it's taken and that there is an open door. He also lines up interpreters and transportation. Many clients would not see doctors if it weren't for Sarak.

Sarak's technology tracks the more than 2,000

(Continued on page 7)

SURVIVORS Contributes to the **Field of Torture Rehabilitation in Mexico**

Survivors of Torture, International welcomed Marta Vazquez as a visiting fellow through a program of Freedom House (a worldwide democracy-building, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in Washington, D.C.) for four weeks in April. Marta is a psychologist who works for ACAT (Acción de los Christianos para la Abolición de la Tortura) in Mexico City. She has expressed interest in learning and applying psychological treatment for victims of torture and wanted the opportunity to meet and learn from other psychologists in the United States who have been working in this field for years. She stated she wanted to apply models of centers viewed in the United States to ACAT as well as improve the mental health services by ACAT. SURVIVORS was pleased to open our doors to Marta, ACAT and Freedom House, and we look forward to future collaborations across cultures, languages and programs as together we serve torture survivors.

The following are Marta's words about her experience at SURVIVORS:



Marta Vazquez

"My time at Survivors of Torture, International has been a great opportunity to get to know, analyze, and learn about the defense of human rights and the care of survivors of torture. Overall, it has been a marvelous experience of human communication,

no matter the language, with those who dedicate their knowledge, skills and time to other human beings with a very professional approach to a difficult job, a work plan developed carefully by the staff consistent with the agency mission, and most of all with a friendly smile. I take with me new knowledge and new friendships that now form part of my own commitment to the belief that in my country we can continue defending the rights of those who have suffered tor-

SURVIVORS Expands Vicarious Trauma Support

From the beginning, **SURVIVORS** has paid conscious attention to the issue of vicarious trauma (VT) in our work. This past winter, Ron Osborne and Gale Barlow, students from the SDSU Rehabilitation Counseling Program, took on the project of assessing the VT support needs of our partnering therapists, healthcare workers, attorneys and interpreters. Building on their research, we have expanded our Vicarious Trauma Support Program.

Vicarious trauma is a natural process whereby the helper experiences emotional stress in her or his own life through exposure to and empathy with the painful traumatic experiences of others. When we open our hearts to hear someone's story of torture, loss, devastation, or betrayal, in our caring we often also feel the pain of that story. This well-documented phenomenon occurs in all types of trauma workers; e.g., emergency room staff, firefighters and police, child abuse counselors, and torture treatment workers. And it can appear as pessimism, increased sensitivity to violence, nightmares, feeling disconnected from friends and loved ones, intrusive images of trauma, memories of trauma from one's own past, or feeling anxious, sad or tired.

We also know that there are tried and true ways to prevent, manage, and transform the negative impact and enhance the positive impact of trauma work – recognizing VT, acknowledging that it is normal, and dealing with it through peer support and a healthy lifestyle. The Vicarious Trauma Support Program assists this healing process.

Almost all the partners responding to the SDSU students' survey said they would like to receive e-mail information about VT and how to manage it. David Gangsei and Karen Abuzahra have created a twice monthly e-mailing of information and inspiration that goes out to our providers and partners. In addition, we have provided specialized trainings to attorneys and therapists and individual consultations on the topic. Staff member Crystal Green and volunteer professionals Dave Nesvig and Jim Economu have contributed their skills to this process. Therapists and interpreters are encouraged to debrief with each other at the end of sessions. And **SURVIVORS'** clinical staff provides *ad hoc* support at those moments when a provider wants to share his or her experience.

Dealing effectively with the pain of facing torture allows providers to stay connected to the great satisfactions of our work. All of this is part of the fight against torture – building a community where brutality is replaced by understanding, caring and support.

SURVIVORS Recognizes Evelyn Cohen For Her Humanitarian Spirit and Service

"She's a very kind person. She has the qualities of a saint, I would say." Those words flowed easily from one of **SURVIVORS'** clients who has benefited from the generosity, imagination and determination of Evelyn Cohen.

Whether you think "saint," "sister," or "fairly godmother," Evelyn has brought friendship, safety, and joy into the lives of four **SURVIVORS'** clients and their families on a remarkable scale. As the pioneer of shared housing, she has provided a home for two clients who needed a place to stay while they were going through the long and difficult process of seeking asylum. Her first housemate, a Muslim professional woman from the Middle East, stayed with her for a year and describes the experience warmly: "This wonderful woman accepted me with open arms in her house. Her endless kindness helped me to heal my wounds and restore my strength. I felt loved in a way that I had never felt from my own mother and sisters. She helped me to build up my confidence again. Without her and without this opportunity to sleep under a safe roof in her house, I would have never been in the position that I am now." This client now has her own apartment, attends college full time, and is active in several cultural and service organizations.

Evelyn's second housemate, a scientist from central Africa, recalls, "You remember my situation. I was living in a homeless shelter. I could not work. Evelyn is a very nice woman. I live in her house like with my own family. She helped me with the rest of my life." Now, months later, he has won his asylum case, has a good job using his language skills, and plans to get a car and his own apartment.

Beyond sharing her home, Evelyn's big heart and social work skills got activated again when she learned about other survivors who had completed the asylum process and were now working to bring their children to the United States to reunite their families after years of

painful separation. In these cases, a main obstacle was money. Evelyn organized her friends, who organized their friends, who organized their friends around the country on two separate occasions to raise funds to pay for airfare and settlement expenses – the result being two mothers each reunited with two children. One of those moms recalls: "I met my children much earlier than I would have. Otherwise I'd still be saving. It makes you feel you're not alone. There are other people who are concerned that you're with your children. Before, half of me was there in Africa and half of me was here. But now I'm here to stay. I feel very happy being with them. Before the children came, I had just short term goals. Now I have long term goals. It's not something I planned. It just happened." The second mom describes her experience similarly. Before she got her kids, "I was just a body without a soul. Now I'm a body plus a soul. I was half there and half here. I kept thinking, 'Whose fault is it? Is it me, or the politics, or the immigration?' But Evelyn gave me the answer. She is an angel."

With characteristic modesty, Evelyn focuses on what she gets from these friendships. "They're very enriching because they bring new things to me. I learn from each one. With [her first housemate], we found we had many things in common – love of family, stories about raising children, sense of humor, and I learned all about Persian cooking. When she left, she was ready to fly on her own, but I wasn't ready. I miss her."

New Groups Serve SURVIVORS' Clients

SURVIVORS' services program have expanded this year with the addition of a women's Discovering Our Strengths group and a pain management class. We are fortunate to have the leadership of experts in both fields to guide the creation of these programs.

The women's Discovering Our Strengths group was co-founded by Mei-I Chang, Psy.D. and Karen Abuzahra, Psy.D. and is now led by Karen and Lynn Frances, MFT. The group creates a space for women to share positive experiences and coping strategies and explore personal goals in a supportive environment. The group also benefits from **SURVIVORS'** ongoing collaboration with the City Heights Wellness Center, which provides a location for the meetings in Mid-City.

The pain management class was co-founded by Sara Maltzman, Ph.D. and Karen Abuzahra and meets bi-weekly at **SURVIVORS'** office. The class is primarily educational, built on the established principle that members can get back to doing the things that make life satisfying even if their physical pain doesn't go away completely. Topics include the nature of chronic pain and nonmedical methods for managing it.

Clients who want more information about these programs can call Karen at (619) 278-2416.

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

17 new clients from 10 countries
were served

January through March 2005

Countries of Origin

Eritrea — 1	
Ethiopia — 2	
Iran — 2	
Iraq — 4	
Mexico — 1	
Russia — 2	
Somalia — 3	
Sudan — 1	
Uganda — 1	

Ages

0 - 20 — 2
21 - 30 — 6
31 - 40 — 5
41 - 50 — 2
51 - 60 — 0
61 + — 2

Gender

Females — 9
Males — 8

You Can Support Mental Health Funding For Torture Survivors

San Diego County will be receiving up to \$40 million per year for new and improved mental health services as a result of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA or Proposition 63).

One of the specific mandates of the MHSA is to serve unserved or underserved groups. It is important for planners at the state and county level to know that survivors of torture are a large population in need of appropriate services from the public mental health system, and that they have significant support from residents of San Diego County.

Both San Diego County's and the State of California's mental health administrations are seeking input from residents to help determine the mental health services that are most urgently needed. They have set up phone and e-mail lines specifically to encourage comments from the public. The planning process is well underway. To be effective, we urge you to make your contacts right away, by June 15 at the latest.

SD County: E-mail – MHSPop63.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov

Telephone – call the comment line at (619) 584-5063 or (888) 977-6763.

California: E-mail – mhsa@dmh.ca.gov

Telephone – (800) 972-6472

Choose two or three points, or add your own. Together, we will cover all the issues.

1. There are an estimated 11,000 survivors of politically motivated torture living in San Diego County, who have come from dozens of countries to seek a safe place to protect and rebuild their lives. They are here in our community, but often invisible.

2. Many torture survivors suffer from severe and disabling mental health problems. These problems affect their quality of life and ability to function and can lead to inability to work, family problems, substance abuse, homelessness, and even suicide.

3. The effects of torture spread to the family, down through generations, and to the community, increasing risks of school failure, family violence and anti-social behavior in later generations.

4. Survivors are strong and resilient. They can recover and lead productive lives if mental health problems can be overcome or prevented.

5. Early intervention, culturally competent services, and specialized training of providers are key elements of the services needed by torture survivors.

6. Torture survivors need and should qualify for individualized mental health support and recovery services.

To learn more about the Mental Health Services Act for the State of California, go to www.dmh.cah.gov/mhsa. For San Diego County, go to www.networkofcare.org, click on Mental Health, then click on San Diego.

GOODS & SERVICES SUPPORT

SURVIVORS is grateful to the following individuals and companies who have provided generous contributions of products and services during the period from January 1, 2005, through March 31, 2005. Thank you for your support

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Amnesty International U.S.A.
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 Philip B. Smith, O.D. & Associates
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 Price Legacy Corporation
 Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church – La Mesa
 Southwestern College School of Dental Hygiene
 Starbucks Coffee Company Store #511 – Pacific Beach
 Vineripe Market

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 Dorothy Berger
 Greg Buie
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 Ana De Vidia
 Maryann Dean
 Jim Economu
 Nate Goetz
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 Pat Olafson
 Suzanne Popp

We apologize for any errors or omissions
 and extend our gratitude to donors who may not have been recognized.

JOIN THE HEALING TRUST

- COMMIT TO HEALING TORTURE SURVIVORS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY
- BECOME PART OF A VISIONARY GROUP
- MAKE COMPASSION YOUR PRACTICE



YOUR SIMPLE COMMITMENT TO CONTRIBUTE MONTHLY TO SURVIVORS OF TORTURE, INTERNATIONAL WILL PLACE YOU IN **THE HEALING TRUST**.

YOU WILL RECEIVE PERIODIC E-MAIL ARTICLES ON THE TRAUMA AND TREATMENT OF TORTURE SURVIVORS.

JOIN **THE HEALING TRUST** BY RETURNING THE ENCLOSED CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPE INDICATING THE AMOUNT OF YOUR MONTHLY CONTRIBUTION AND YOUR **MASTERCARD / VISA CREDIT CARD**, OR BY CALLING **ALEXEY KIRILLOV** AT (619) 278-2406 TO ARRANGE FOR AN ELECTRONIC TRANSFER.

SURVIVORS' Financial Supporters

January 2005 - March 2005

Healing broken hearts and restoring the spirits of torture survivors in San Diego County is the work of our financial supporters. Without you, the men, women and children who are survivors would not be able to rebuild their lives. We are grateful.

Foundations, Corporations, and Organizations

- Grossmont Healthcare District
- Our Savior's Evangelical Lutheran Church Trust Fund – San Diego
- Starbucks Coffee Company Giving Program
- The California Endowment
- Presbytery of San Diego
- Presbyterian Women – First Presbyterian Church of Oceanside
- United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture
- Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church

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SURVIVORS gratefully acknowledges the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement – (Grant # 90ZT0040) – for its generous support.

High Tech — High Touch

(Continued from page 3)

client and medical network contacts he makes yearly. Along with client demographics, he can tell you what services each has received, when, where, and with what result. His database informs proposals and reports to SURVIVORS' largest government and foundation funders.

Foundation funding for Sarak's High Tech-High Touch medical coordinator position will end in October, 2005.

The medical coordinator position is only one example of the High Tech-High Touch needs at SURVIVORS. More exist in clinical services, finance, human resources, and development.

Help set the stage for hope. On behalf of torture survivors in San Diego County, Survivors of Torture, International appeals to **you** to support its High Tech-High Touch needs. The contribution envelope enclosed in this newsletter gives you the vehicle to make this happen.

THANK-YOU TO OUR NEWSLETTER VOLUNTEERS

SURVIVORS would like to thank all the volunteers who helped prepare the February newsletter for mailing. Special thanks to Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, the Boy Scouts of America, and the AmeriCorps* VISTA volunteers for their continued support.

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
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e-mail: ssuon@notorture.org**Doctors of the World****Marianne Reiner**

Phone: 619-278-2405

e-mail: reiner@dowusa.org**Job Openings**

SURVIVORS is seeking two Americorps*VISTA members to begin in August. One position is as a Fund Development/Communications VISTA and one as a Clinical Team VISTA.

Americorps*VISTA members volunteer full time in nonprofit organizations serving the poor. Members serve for 12 months and receive a living stipend and an end of service educational award.

For more information about these positions or for information about how to apply, please e-mail Kathi Anderson at kanderson@notorture.org

SURVIVORS of Torture . . .

. . . was incorporated in February 1997 in response to a need in our community to bring assistance to that segment of the population which struggles with the wounds of politically motivated torture.

Since then, SURVIVORS has engaged a caring network of professionals — board members, attorneys, therapists, physicians — and all of YOU in the community who give faithful support and encouragement in many ways.

We serve survivors who reside in the greater San Diego and Southern California area, but are prepared to assist the legitimate needs of all survivors of politically motivated torture.

For information about SURVIVORS, or to participate in our mission — please visit our website: www.notorture.org — or contact us by e-mail at: survivors@notorture.org .

**SURVIVORS OF TORTURE, INTERNATIONAL**

P.O. BOX 151240

SAN DIEGO, CA 92175-1240

Address Service Requested