

# point PACIFIC

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

global perspectives on HIV/AIDS

*point PACIFIC is a publication of the Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team and aims to provide Asia-specific HIV/AIDS-related news summaries, in addition to client narratives.*



## WORLD UPDATES

**November 2005 >>** The U.N.

Office on Drugs and Crime finds that some drug users in Cambodia sell their blood to finance heroin and methamphetamine addictions. An ongoing need for blood and donor shortage compel some hospitals to neglect rigorous blood supply testing, all contributing to a supply of questionable safety. Cambodia has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the region. (Associated Press)



**December >>** A Switzerland-based organization has helped spread an HIV prevention education program that uses barbers to disseminate health information. Started in Delhi in 2001, the Barbers Intervention Project provides referrals to testing sites and hands out free condoms. The latter is predominantly cited as a reason for not practicing safer sex. (BBC)

**January 2006 >>** Indian activist Jahnabi Goswami, who has advocated for soon-to-be-hitched couples substituting astrology predictions for HIV tests, is asked by the ruling Congress to contest state elections in the state of Assam. The controversial figure contracted the virus from her husband, who has since died, lost a child to AIDS, been kicked out her house over ten times because of discrimination, and now welcomes her public role as an advocate for HIV-positive Indians. (AFP)



**February >>** The Thai Network Youth Against AIDS (TNYA) starts a reduced-price condom campaign. Citing youth concerns about the availability of cheap but quality condoms, the nonprofit organization has enlisted 800 TNYA members to dispense the condoms. (The Nation Multimedia-Thailand)

Compiled by Marie Auyong

## APAIT's Client Advisory Board

By Jimmy Rodriguez

The newly coalesced Client Advisory Board (CAB) reinvigorated APAIT's Day Room, a socialization event for HIV-positive clients. Since its formation in August 2005, the CAB has helped to develop new ideas and activities for the Day Room program. Such activities have included a Halloween Party, Thanksgiving Feast, Valentine Games Day, and a Chinese New Year Celebration.

These CAB members also attend monthly meetings; recruit clients, friends, and family for event attendance; volunteer for other APAIT-related events; and go to the L.A. County Commission on HIV Health Services meetings. Their voluntary participation is a testament to their commitment to HIV/AIDS services.

The Board's members are a diverse group, which reflects the changing demographics of APAIT clients. The newest addition to the CAB, Mario Scott, is of African-Latino descent. Nam Nguyen, another member, is the veteran of the bunch who lends his experience of being a client and then graduating. Nam continues to attend Day Room regularly, like Jordan Young, a newer APAIT client. Jordan states that being on the Board "offered [him] the kind of affirmation that [he] needed." Two other clients, who asked to remain anonymous, round out the CAB membership.

The formation of the Client Advisory Board not only fortifies the Day Room Program by unifying both clients and the CARE



Nam Nguyen, Jordan Young, and Mario Scott of the Community Advisory Board

Service Unit, but also reinforces the principle of client-centered services. With Board input, the agency can ensure that APAIT services can meet our clients' changing needs.

Would you like to share your experiences about Asia and HIV-related information in Asia? Contact Marie Auyong at [mariea@apaionline.org](mailto:mariea@apaionline.org) for submission guidelines.