

# ywca SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

# our voice



943 No. Grand Ave.  
Covina, CA 91724  
(626) 960-2995  
www.ywcasgv.org

SENIOR SERVICES  
YWCA Intervale  
24-Hour Message Line:  
(626) 214-9465

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
YWCA WINGS  
24-Hour Help Line:  
(626) 967-0658

## eliminating racism empowering women

## July 2010

**OUR MISSION** • *To eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.*

### CAR RAFFLE EXTENDED TO NOVEMBER 1, 2010



### WIN A 2010 NISSAN ALTIMA VALUED AT OVER \$30,000

\$20/ticket or 3 for \$40

Order tickets online [www.ywcasgv.org](http://www.ywcasgv.org)  
or call 626 214-9442

All proceeds benefit YWCA San Gabriel Valley's programs for victims of domestic, senior citizens, and teens.

If you have already purchased tickets we will contact you to give you more details.

Visit our [facebook](#) page and become a fan of the YWCA SGV!



### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LISA BRABO Ratify CEDAW

CEDAW – The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women – is a landmark international agreement that affirms principles of fundamental human rights and equality for women around the world. It offers countries a practical blueprint to promote basic rights and to open opportunities for women and girls in all area of society.

CEDAW was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly and entered into force in 1981. To date, 186 of 193 countries have ratified the treaty. The United States is one of only seven countries – including Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Nauru, Palau and Tonga – that have not yet ratified CEDAW.

If you'd like to join the effort to get CEDAW ratified by the United States you can go to [www.cedaw2010.org](http://www.cedaw2010.org) to:

- Contact President Obama and urge him to support CEDAW.
- Support CEDAW grassroots activities in the United States.



### Local Gas Company Staff Volunteer at Shelter

During tough economic times, employees at the Gas Company decided to forgo their annual holiday party, and instead, decided to put the money and their efforts into helping others. This year, the YWCA SGV's domestic violence shelter was chosen as the beneficiary of the LA area employees' generosity.

Last month, 17 employees from local offices spent the day painting, assembling furniture and getting everything ready for the shelter's new media center. A \$3,000 donation to the shelter from the Gas Company went to purchasing a new computer and furniture for the facility, which houses more than 300 abused women and their children annually.

Christy Velasco, the YWCA SGV's family services manager notes that the media center will provide a place for shelter families to be educated and entertained.

Kerry Johnson, who organized the volunteer day, says she and her fellow employees gained much more than they gave.

"I could not imagine how I would deal with the fear that these women have to live with every day. It's good to know that there is a place for these women to step away from that fear and collect their bearings," says Kerry.

## COMING EVENTS

### YWCA SGV Annual Meeting July 28, 2010

6:00pm at 943 N. Grand Ave.  
Covina, CA 91724

The Agenda includes a review of  
2009-2010

Activities and plans for 2010-2011

Contact Lisa Brabo at  
626 214-9442 or [info@ywcasgv.org](mailto:info@ywcasgv.org)  
for more information or to RSVP.

### YWCA SGV Programs

**Services for Domestic Violence Victims:** Shelter and support services so that adults and children can be safe, healthy, and lead violence-free lives.

**24-Hour Helpline 626-967-0658**

**Teen Education Program:** Presentations in schools about healthy relationships to prevent teen dating violence and provide assistance to teens in need.

**Services for Seniors:** Nutritious meals and care management so that elders can live in their own homes with independence and quality of life.

**24-Hour Message Line 626-214-9465**

**Leadership Development Opportunities** for women, girls and older adults

If you'd like to help  
the YWCA SGV save money  
and communicate more  
efficiently with you,  
please sign up (via one of the three  
options below)  
for our free email newsletter.

**Sign up instantly at**  
[www.ywcasgv.org](http://www.ywcasgv.org)

**Email us at [info@ywcasgv.org](mailto:info@ywcasgv.org)**  
**Give us a call at (626) 214-9440**

Cruz Ramirez, another Gas Company volunteer, says he was happy to contribute to such a valuable community cause. "We can all contribute, even if it's just in some small way," he adds.

The YWCA SGV Domestic Violence Shelter has been in operation at its present location for 30 years. Additional help from the community is always welcomed. For information, contact Christy at [christyvelasco@ywcasgv.org](mailto:christyvelasco@ywcasgv.org) or (626) 960-2995. ■

## Three New Grants Keep Critical Programs Running

The YWCA SGV has recently been awarded significant grants for operating funds by three private foundations. The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation grant of \$40,000 and the Orange County Community Foundation grant of \$25,000 will enable the WINGS Domestic Violence Program to maintain services to more than 100 women and 225 dependent children annually, including an emergency hotline, shelter, meals, counseling and referrals.

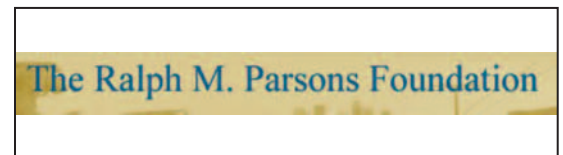
And to enable the YWCA SGV to continue providing almost 400,000 meals annually to needy senior citizens, the California Wellness Foundation granted \$150,000 over three years. That was especially good news for folks like "Sarah," whose parents, ages 97 and 87, recently began receiving home-delivered meals through the YWCA's Meals on Wheels program. Last month, she wrote Don Herring, senior services director, to tell him how happy her mother and father are to have delicious hot meals brought to their door daily.

"The domestic violence services grants will help us continue to operate at the capacity we need to accommodate abused women and their kids from across the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys," notes Edie Norris, program director. "We'll be able to help more troubled youngsters, like 7-year old Johnny, who, when he entered our shelter last year with his mother, did not speak. He was able to express himself only through screaming and crying."

According to Edie, shelter staff comforted "Johnny" by engaging him in therapeutic play, such as drawing his favorite movie characters. He also bonded with his mother through baking and reading together at the shelter. "Slowly, he began to interact with other children and developed positive relationships with his counselor and other staff. He began smiling and shortly before he and his mother moved to transitional housing, he found his voice and spoke for the first time," recalls Edie.

"But the most valuable part of this has been to help them see that in accepting help, they are actually able to remain more independent, rather than lose their independence, as they had feared," she says.

For the Senior Services grant, Don notes that aside from optimal nutrition, the Meals on Wheels and group dining programs provide opportunities for senior citizens to increase socialization, and access information and referrals. "We really could not continue to do what we do without the generosity of our donors," says Don. "With an aging population, the demand for our services continues to grow." ■



## VIRGINIA SHULI

### Women of Achievement



She may seem to be a social worker, counselor, spiritual mentor, taxi driver and minister all in one. Professionally, however, Virginia Shuli is none of these. Yet through a lifetime of compassion and caring, she embodies all of these traits.

Virginia has improved the lives of hundreds of people. Although she gives loving attention to the youth of her church, her special focus is lonely, elderly shut-ins—mostly women who have outlived their husbands.

Virginia began weekly visits to shut-in people 62 years ago, as a passion she shared with her husband. Today, driving her station wagon, she delivers reading material, flowers, food, cookies, and other small items that might bring joy to people who need human contact and kindness. And she gives her time, sitting with those she visits and talking with them about everything and nothing at all. When these people are hospitalized, she visits them there.

Every month for 19 years, she has hosted a “friendship lunch” at her home. Everyone is invited and a core group of about 25 people attend. Guests share the highlights of their month, and Virginia offers words of inspiration and goodwill. After each lunch, she writes a Friendship Letter summarizing what was said, which she sends to all of her shut-ins, members who were unable to attend, and members who have moved.

Through love, attention, and intention, Virginia has created a network of friends for people who might otherwise be isolated and lonely. ■

## Veteran TV Team Capture Memories for Families



If you’ve ever thought you would love to tell your life story or the story of a loved one in pictures and words, *Captured Memories* has an easy and classy way to do just that.

The company, started last year by award-winning TV journalist Tracie Savage and veteran videographer Hernan Vazquez, created the 30-minute DVD profiling each of 11 nominees in the YWCA SGV’s 2010 Women of Achievement Awards. The presentation, shown last month at the awards luncheon at Cal Poly Pomona, focused on the professional achievements and community contributions of the women honored.

But the main focus of the business is to capture life stories on DVD—self-narrated video diaries of memories told through the words of a family member, usually a grandparent. Tracie says today’s technology makes it possible to capture forever, the image and words of loved ones for generations to come.

“Everyone has a family story to tell—and we can help you capture those memories in a format that will never fade or deteriorate,” says Tracie. The Creative Memories team typically spends three hours with the interview subject, including one hour to set up, one hour for the interview, and one hour converting to digital format old photos and videos that will be edited into the final presentation. In the post-production process, the video and still photos are edited into a 20-30 minute DVD, including background music.

“What I love about what we do is we focus on the wonderful stories each person has to share,” says Tracie. After 20 years as a TV and radio journalist reporting on crime and current events, she says it’s a delight to help clients capture their family stories. Project rates start at \$500.

For information, go to [www.capturedmemoriesnow.com](http://www.capturedmemoriesnow.com). ■

## Actively Living the Vision: What a Conference!

by Diane Solis, Conference Participant



If I were an anthropologist looking back at our civilization, wanting to know what members and groups in our society contributed to healing, learning, and growing on the planet, I think I’d be deeply inspired to see the snapshots and hear the conversations from the brilliant “Life and Leadership in a Diverse and Changing World Conference and Women of Achievement Awards Luncheon,” presented by the San Gabriel Valley YWCA. It was truly a day of wonder and awe.

I’ve attended a number of conferences in my days in business, education, science and engineering, human resource development, and the list goes on. But I have to tell you, this was the warmest, most inviting, and truly nurturing day of learning I think I’ve ever spent at such an event, and that includes attending a number of retreats and religious seminars.





## Grace Whitcomb Women of Achievement

**M**inority small business owners face numerous challenges that require courage and determination. As the Diversity Manager in the Equal Opportunity Department of Southern California Edison, Grace Whitcomb admires and encourages their persistence. She uses her considerable energy, business savvy, and coaching skills to help these businesses navigate Edison's complicated procurement process.

"I equate my role of a business advocate to that of a physician. I diagnose each business case, inform my clients of their condition, and provide appropriate treatment," she explains. When she sees value in a diverse business vendor, Grace goes beyond the call of duty to remove road blocks, offer guidance, and help build their competitive edge. She works hard to match their products and services with contracting opportunities at Edison.

Her career represents numerous success stories. For example, she helped an Asian-owned business demonstrate its ability to provide reliable, quality computer maintenance service. With her assistance, another vendor proved its qualifications as a women- and minority-owned business. She surveyed 129 Edison division offices to identify a need for computer cleaning services from a female African American-owned business. The business secured a contract to assist several garage facilities, and as a result of Grace's recommendation, it was featured on the "Making It" television show.

Recognizing that not all diverse businesses are corporate-ready, Grace also developed a Business Edge Workshop Series with the idea that Edison could provide business tools to help small businesses become more efficient and ready for future opportunities.

Grace is an empathetic and influential advocate who is committed to empowering small diverse businesses. ■

Everywhere I looked and listened, Eliminating Racism and Empowering Women, the hallmarks of the YWCA, were clearly evident throughout the day, in the rich diversity of keynote speakers, presenters, and their very important workshop topics (see the topic list below); in the wonderfully diverse groups of participants and their lively conversations at the main conference room and breakout sessions; in the marvelously diverse array of dignitaries and their representatives who took the time to attend or in some meaningful way contributed to the success of the conference; through the lovely and loving stories from a rich palette of honorees and their contributions, which include visiting the elderly, providing meals to shut-ins, inspiring young women to pursue careers in science, waging war on hunger, proactive crime prevention, donating time and resources to building shelters for the homeless, and more; in the richness and variety of the gifts and talents depicted through the walk of vendors and on the page of sponsors; and very touchingly in the diversely gifted staff, board members, and volunteers, whether introducing speakers, assisting participants with directions, selling "opportunity" tickets or generally ensuring that everyone had a such wonderful time.

Through it all, in subtle but obvious and specific ways, the whole atmosphere communicated how the YWCA is hard at work to be a source of light by directly helping to meet the basic human (humane) needs of women, children, and elders, providing critical resources related to safety, education, shelter, food, medical services, and more—and hard at work to influence others to add their light to the sum of light too. Like YWCAs across the nation, clearly and consistently, this conference represents one way the members and supporters of the San Gabriel Valley YWCA aren't just talking about a vision of eliminating racism and empowering women, but actively living it.

If I were an anthropologist looking back, more importantly, as I am a woman of color looking forward, it's thrilling to experience a conference like this and marvel at the contributions and opportunities blossoming for us all through the actions of an amazingly gifted and gifting community of sisters and brothers who are painting a beautiful picture of HOPE.

**Workshop Topics.** Women of Power: Being a Leader in a Diverse World; Stay a Step Ahead: Current Legal and Financial Issues for Women; Feeling Sandwiched? Child Care, Elder Care, and Living Your Potential; The Art of Negotiation: How to Use Your Influence to Get What You Want; Second Acts and New Beginnings: Resources for Starting a Business or Non-Profit Corporation; Career EKG: Is Your Professional Health What it Should Be? What it Could Be?; Transformation to a Better World: Change Making Through Community and Political Involvement. ■