



Amigas Board of Directors – Front row: Marina, Norma, Karen, Aurora, Mary; Back row: Evette, Lydia, Gaby, Urzula; not pictured: Edith – © M. Ferrand

Meet the First Amigas Latinas Board of Directors

As many of you know Amigas Latinas became an official 501c3 nonprofit organization last May. This was a big step in our evolution and this designation allows us to apply for grants without a fiscal sponsor, be exempt from federal and state tax and allows our donors to deduct donations from taxes.

One big change is also moving from a Steering Committee structure to a Board of Directors with by-laws and very specific financial and governance responsibilities. This summer we worked with a consultant, Mary Morten, to determine officers and additional members.

While we were saddened to lose co-founding member **Mona Noriega**, we thanked her for her dedication and long-time service to the Latina lesbian/bisexual community and Amigas, and will continue to work with her in her

capacity as Midwest Regional Director for Lambda Legal. (We partnered with Lambda for the Creating Familia forum last year and will again partner with them and ALMA for Creating Familia II during Pride month). We also said goodbye to another co-founding Steering Committee member, **Alicia Amador**, who is also a founding member of Mujeres Latinas en Accion. We will miss Alicia's keen sense of structure, policy and accountability but will continue to work with her and Mujeres' staff through our work with ¡Proyecto Basta!

The loss of these two great women allowed us to bring on fresh voices and perspectives as we transitioned into a Board of Directors. Three women from the membership were identified and recruited. Two honored us by accepting appointments as board members.

In honor of a promising new year, 2004, we are very proud to introduce to you the first official Board of Directors of Amigas Latinas:

Co-directors: Norma Seledon & Evette Cardona

Recorder: Karen Rothstein

Treasurer: Lydia Vega

Members: Gaby Caro
Aurora Pineda
Mary Torres
Edith Torres
Urzula Urzua
Marina Vasquez



Mary Torres

Amigas board member, has been named Volunteer of the Year by the Lesbian Community Cancer Project and will be awarded for her commitment and hard work at their annual Coming Out Against Cancer gala dance Saturday, Feb. 7. Join your Amigas to help honor her that evening. For tickets check www.lccp.org or 773.561.4662

Miembra de la Junta Directiva, ha sido nombrada Voluntaria del Año de la organizacion *Lesbian Community Cancer Project*. Se le reconocera su compromise y dedicacion durante la celebracion y gala annual, "Coming Out Against Cancer" el dia Sabado, Feb. 7, 2004. Unete con tus Amigas para que le ayudemos a Mary a celebrar. Para comprar boletos llame a 773-561-4662 o www.lccp.org

Junta de Directoras

Quizas se han dado cuenta que en Mayo de 2003 Amigas Latinas se establecio como organizacion de no-lucro (501c3). Este fue un paso mayor en nuestro desarrollo. Esta designacion nos permite solicitar apoyo economico sin necesidad de un patrocinador, exempcion de pagar impuestos federales y estatales y finalmente permite que nuestros contribuidores dedujan sus donaciones de sus impuestos.

Otro cambio mayor es el hecho de que nuestro comite directive ahora se convierte en una junta de Directoras. Esto significa que ahora nos gobernara una serie de reglamentos estrictos con respecto a nuestras responsabilidades financieras y administrativas.

Este verano trabajamos con Mary Morten, especialista en organizaciones sin fin de lucro. Ella nos ayudo a determinar quienes de nosotras tomariamos puestos administrativos. Tambien nos ayuda a identificar nuevas miembras.

Mientras con tristeza vimos partir a una de nuestras fundadoras, **Mona Noriega**, le agradecemos su dedicacion y largo servicio a la comunidad Lesbica/Bisexual y ha Amigas Latinas. Seguiremos colaborando con ella, ya que tiene el puesto de Directora del Medioeste de la organizacion Defensa Legal Lambda. (El año pasado colaboramos con Lambda en el for "Creando Familia", sobre los derechos de padres/madres de familia del mismo sexo. Este año volveremos a co-patrocinar, "Creando Familia II" en Junio.)

Tambien nos despedimos de otra fundadora **Alicia Amador**. Ella tambien a tomado una parte principal en le desarrollo de la agencia Mujeres Latinas en Accion. Hecharemos mucho de menos los talentos de Alicia, principalmente su sentido de estructura, desarrollo de polizas y su habilidad de mantenernos responsables a nuestras metas.

Ella y su agencia, sin embargo, seguiran colaborando con

nosotras atravez de nuestro trabajo en el *Proyecto ¡Basta!* La perdida de estas gran mujeres nos permitio expandir nuestra junta de directoras.

Nuevas miembras trajeron consigo mismas nuevas voces y perspectivas. Tres mujeres se reclutaron. Dos nos hicieron el honor de aceptar su nuevo papel como directoras.

¡Orgullo!

En honor al Año Nuevo, nos llena de orgullo presentarles a nuestra primer Junta de Directoras:

Co-directoras: Norma Seledon y Evette Cardona

Tesorera: Lydia Vega

Secretaria: Karen Rothstein

Miembros: Gaby Caro
Aurora Pineda
Mary Torres
Edith Torres
Urzula Urzua
Marina Vasquez



Jira, Paola & Marina enjoy the Aixa Diaz Fund Scholarship Dinner © M. Noriega

4th Annual Aixa Diaz Scholarship Fund Dinner

Nearly 200 friends and extended family members came out Saturday November 22 for our fourth annual Aixa Diaz Scholarship & Gift Fund Dinner at the beautiful Lago Banquets. We raised close to \$9,000 equaling

last year's event. Given the economy that is a very good thing!

This year Amigas welcomed its first corporate sponsor, the Northern Trust Company, who underwrote the cost of the invitations and a very special community sponsor, the Puerto Rican Federal Affairs Administration, who donated \$500. Our thanks go out to **Sue Connolly**, Vice President at Northern Trust and **Maddi Amill**, Regional Director for the PR Federal Affairs office for their incredibly generous support.

This year's festivities included a delicious dinner, open bar, fabulous silent auction that raised over \$3,000, and a powerful and raucous program of poetry and song. Two poets graced us with their incredible voices. Rochell L. Durr, a poet from Los Angeles, kicked off the program with two poems and she was followed by Stephanie Fernandez-Gentry, a 2003 Aixa Diaz Scholarship winner who performed her piece "Amerika." Stephanie has graciously allowed us to reprint the poem in our newsletter for your enjoyment. (see pg.3) She is currently a student at the University of Illinois at Chicago studying gender and Chicana/o studies and is focusing energies on Chicana queer history. We are very proud of Stephanie and were honored she and her girlfriend, Araceli, could join us.

Following the spoken word portion of the program things got funky! Two acts donated their talents to the dinner – Gina, a.k.a. Diana Ross, and the "Marmalade Girls" -- sang, strutted, did splits and cart-wheels and worked the crowd song after song. Needless to say it was quite a show for the price of admission and we are very appreciative of their talents and time. After the show the dancing continued to the sounds of resident **DJ Wanda Rodriguez** and her apprentice Meredith.

The night ended too soon but the floor was still crowded with Amigas and friends still dancing. The party supposedly continued down at Lolita's but the committee

was too tired to even think about it and thanked Abel, owner of Lago's and his great crew, and went home dreaming of next year's dinner.

We thank everyone who attended and especially those who donated even if they were unable to attend. We hope to see everyone again next year and every one who missed it this year. We also hope to see everyone at the 2004 GLSEN Youth Scholarship Awards that will be held **May 18th** at Jones Magnet High School when Amigas will again award scholarships to Latina lesbian/bisexual students who are fighting homophobia in their schools. Please save the date and visit our web site for nomination information!

**Cumpleaños, Butizos,
Graduaciones, Ceremonia de
Compromiso?
Birthday? Baptism?
Graduation? Commitment
ceremony?
Llame a Abel para
reservaciones/
Call Abel to book
Lago Banquets
6121 W. Diversey
773-745-8146
Tell him Amigas sent you!
Digale que Amigas Latinas le
recomendo.**

4a Cena Anual del Fondo de Becas Aixa Diaz

Cerca de 200 familiares y amigos se reunieron el sabado 22 de Noviembre en el bello salon de Banquetes Lago para nuestra 4a Cena Anual en honor de Aixa Diaz. Donde reunimos cerca de \$10,000 igualando asi al evento del año anterior y dada la economia actual esto fue muy bueno.

Este año Amigas le dio la bienvenida a su primer auspiciador corporativo, la Compañia Northern Trust quien costeo el pago de las invitaciones y a nuestro muy especial auspiciador comunitario,

La Administracion de Asuntos Federales Puertorriqueña quien nos dono \$500. Nuestro agradecimiento a **Sue Connolly** Vice-Presidenta en Northern Trust y a **Maddi Amill**, Directora Regional de la Administracion de Asuntos Federales Puertorriqueña por su increíble y generoso apoyo.

Las festividades de este año incluyeron una deliciosa cena, barra libre, y una subasta silenciosa que reunio mas de \$3,000, asi como un poderoso y variado programa de poesia y musica.

Dos poetas nos agraciaron con sus increíbles voces. Rochell L. Durr, una poetisa de Los Angeles, fue quien le dio el inicio a la noche con dos poemas, y fue presidida por Stephanie Fernandez-Gentry, una de las ganadoras de la Beca Aixa Diaz de este año, quien nos ofrecio su pieza "Amerika", Stephanie muy amablemente nos ha permitido reproducirla en nuestro boletin de este mes para su deleite. Ella esta actualmente estudiando en la Universidad de Illinois en Chicago (UIC). Estamos muy orgullosas de ella y nos sentimos muy honradas de que nos haya podido acompañar junto con su novia Araceli.

La siguiente parte del programa se puso emocionante, con dos actos que nos donaron su talento -- Gina como "Diana Ross" y las Chicas Mermelada -- quienes cantaron, bailaron, e hicieron maromas y piruetas, entretuvieron asi a la multitud entre cancion y cancion. No hay necesidad de decir que fue un maravilloso show por el precio de la admision y les agradecemos profundamente por su talento y su tiempo. Despues del Show continuo el baile con los sonidos de la **DJ Wanda Rodriguez** y su aprendiz Meredith.

Como es usual la noche termino, pero la pista de baile seguia llena con Amigas y amigos que querian seguir bailando. La fiesta supuestamente continuo en Lolita's, pero las miembros del comite estaban muy cansadas para siquiera considerar la oferta. Le queremos agradecer tambien a Abel dueño del Salon de

Banquetes Lago y a su increíble equipo. Asi fue que nos fuimos a casa a soñar con la cena del año proximo.

Les damos las gracias a todos los asistieron y especialmente a todos aquellos que muy amablemente hicieron donativos aun si no les fue posible estar presentes. Esperamos verles de nuevo el año siguiente asi como a aquellos que se lo perdieron este año. Tambien nos gustaria verles en la entrega de las becas (2004 GLSEN Youth Scholarship Awards) que se llevara a cabo el **18 de mayo del 2004** en la escuela secundaria, Jones Magnet, donde se le dara reconocimiento a una Joven Latina Lesbiana o Bisexual que este luchando activamente contra la homofobia en sus escuelas. Asi es que reserven la fecha y visiten nuestro website para mas informacion acerca de las nominaciones.



Stephanie Fernandez-Gentry © M. Ferrand

**Amerika, by Stephanie Gentry
Fernandez, 2003 Aixa Diaz
Scholarship Fund winner**

*Caught in the cloak of labels
Politically correct and otherwise
You make me a burrito spic
And then quickly a pinche guera
But the tracks of my train of
thought
Know no border patrol
And my dreams have no fences.*

*Tripping between languages and
races,
Between brown and white,
Between barrio and parish,
I fall before I can even open my
mouth.*

*And a jumbled Spanglish
sentence
Hits deaf ears to those who can
only
See my skin
Instead of hearing my voice.*

*My innocent parents believed
It would be perfectly okay
To raise biracial children
In an irish-catholic neighborhood
That commits more hate crimes
Than any other neighborhood in
the country.*

*The slap in the face they received
Stings them daily
As my brother and I strive to prove
An identity that we can't even
define
Since the bubbles to claim your
idea of race
Say only white
And Hispanic, non-white
And saying we're mixed race
doesn't do justice
When our brown blood pulses
through our veins
So thickly
Our heartbeats
Keep us
Awake
At night.*

*Amerikkka has lied to us, mami.
Dad, we will never be as Amerikan
as you.
There are too many times we were
singled out,
Forced to pencil in either one or
the other
And just white would be
A sunbleached, washed-out
version of
Tamales and tamarindo, quetzal
feathers,
Rosa mexicana, jade, mariachi
music,
La virgen de Guadalupe.*

*We would be displayed like circus
freaks
During cultural festivals
The only chicanos in the school
As the smiling white and black
faces
Would call my heritage spicy
And then ask me to do their
Spanish homework.*

Amerikkka, land of opportunity

*Melting pot clichés of acceptance
And tolerance
And success
That I never see
When we go to the barrios.*

*And for all the hype the paisanos
give
About la raza and being accepted
I still get shocked stares whenever
They hear me speaking Spanish.*

*I'm tired of this spell checker
Slashing red gashes into my page
Whenever I write in my mother
tongue
As if there was something wrong
With the language I speak
That needed to be corrected.*

*So just who is Amerikan?
I have the right papers,
The right skin color,
I even grew up in the right
neighborhood
In a nice house
With lots of white people all around
me.
And yet I am never made to feel
Like this is my home.
I am never made to feel that
Amerikkka is my home
As a Mexican-amerikan.
I am never made to feel that
Mexico is my home
As a gringa pinche guera*

*And I'm tired of being homeless.
Uprooted, another immigrant
Half-breed she's not from here
Well she's not from here
You ask me why I'm angry
You ask me why I'm angry
But never stop and realize that it
gets lonely
When no one ever tries to
understand
Your language.*

*Amerikkka, where will you put me?
Amerikkka, just let me be
Why did you lie to me?
American is not me
Mexican is not me
When all I ever hear
Is can't.*

*© Stephanie Fernandez Gentry,
2003 Aixa Diaz Scholarship Fund
awardee*



Bobbie, Aracely y Domingo at the December Family Holiday Brunch

Familia

*"I just wanted to thank everyone for last Sunday's gathering. Thank you Mabel for hosting the event and thank you to the board members for organizing it. I guess it took a little bit of courage to invite my mother. I'm so glad I did! I never knew she felt that way about me and her feelings about people being gay. Gracias – I look forward to future events."
- by D.A., new Amigas member*

Amigas hosted its first family holiday brunch Sunday, Dec. 14, at the home of Mabel, the incredibly talented artist featured at our summer Anniversary Celebration! Thirty-five people packed her large living room and helped welcome four wonderful parents – Aurora Pineda's mother and father, Karen Rothstein's father, Dina Ahsman's mother and Araceli Alvarez and Bobbie Briefman's really cool 11-year-old son, Domingo -- who shared their stories and thoughts about their children and families. Much laughter and tears were shared as we learned that sometimes being lesbian isn't the issue and other times it seems to be the only issue.

One father spoke of his wife's inability to share in their lesbian daughter's life or to even acknowledge her relationship with her partner. Although he felt he had lost faith that his wife would ever change many encouraged him to not lose faith and that we all looked forward to meeting her one day. Several Amigas then told

their own stories of how their parents and children had changed and learned or decided to be a part of their lives.

Board members in attendance also shared their anxiety and fear of bringing family members to the brunch even though we are all out to our parents and children. The thought of being in a room full of lesbians was overwhelming for family members and for ourselves and most decided to wait until next time.

Another mother said she knew of her daughter's identity and never thought anything about it as long as her daughter was happy. Simple, yet powerful words that even the daughter said she was surprised to hear.

We hope the afternoon was inspiring and encouraging for those in attendance. It was suggested that for a New Year's resolution we should all tell our families that this brunch was successfully held and that Amigas will host it again next year in the hopes that even more women will want and be able to bring a family member.



Dina and her mom

Platica Familiar

*"Quisiera agradecer a todos por la platica del Domingo pasado. Gracias, Mabel, por server como anfitriona del evento. Gracias a la Junta Directiva por organizarlo. Honestamente tomo mucha valentia de mi parte inviter a mi Mama. Pero mo me arrepiento! Nunca me hubiera imaginado lo que ella sentia acerca de mi y de personas gay. Gracias – espero con anhelo futuros eventos!" – escrito por D.A., **miembra de Amigas Latinas***

Amigas organizo su primer platica familiar el Domingo, Dic. 14, en la casa de Mabel, artista extremadamente talentosa y cuyo trabajo se expuso este verano en la celebracion de Aniversario de Amigas.

Treinta y cinco personas cupieron en la sala de Mabel y ayudaron a dar la bienvenida a cuatro maravillosos padres – Madre y Padre de Aurora Pineda, Padre de Karen Rothstein, Madre de Dina Ahsmann and el hijo magnifica de Araceli Alvarez and Bobbie Briefman – todos compartieron sus historias y pensamientos acerca de sus hijas y sus familiares.

Se compartieron muchas sonrisas y lagrimas mientras compartimos que en veces el ser lesbiana es el problema con nuestros familiares y otras veces existen otras barreras de comunicacion que se esconden detras de nuestra identidad.

Un Padre hablo de la dificultad que su esposa tenia para compartir en la vida de su hija lesbiana; hasta le es dificil reconocer que ella tiene una pareja. Aunque el sentia que ya no tenia fe en que su esposa cambiara, muchos de los alli presente le dieron aliento y expresaron que les gustaria algun dia conocerla. Varias Amigas despues relataron sus historias de como revelaron su orientacion a sus padres, hermanos u otros familiares y como esta revelacion habia cambiado sus vidas..

Miembros de la Junta Directiva tambien compartieron sus miedos y ansiedades de invitar a sus propios padres, aun sabiendo ellos la orientacion de sus hijas. Saber que vendrian a un hogar repleto de lesbianas les asusto a muchos de ellos, muchas de nosotras decidimos esperar otra oportunidad para volverles a invitar.

Otra madre compartio que ya sabia acerca de la orientacion de su hija pero no le importaba, siempre y cuando su hija fuera feliz. Palabras sencillas pero poderosas—que la hija dijo que nunca habia escuchado.

Esperamos que la tarde haya sido inspiradora y animadora para todos. Se sugirio que todos compartieramos con nuestras familias que el evento habia sido exitoso y que se repitira el año entrante con la esperanza de que mas mujeres traigan a sus familiares.



Virginia & Carmen – suave!
© M. Ferrand

Dia de Los Reyes Noche de Las Reinas

En una fria noche de enero 80 mujeres, hombres, lesbianas, gay, heteros, de todos los colores y culturas y en una variedad de edades llegaron a la **Galeria Las Manos** en Andersonville a la celebracion de Amigas 'Dia de los Reyes / Noche de las Reinas'.

Mil gracias a **Michelle Peterson Albanoz** por su enorme generosidad al abrimos sus puertas otra vez. Su hermano y cuñada estaban en la ciudad y se nos unieron para las festividades y un muy buen rato de acuerdo a Michelle y su Pareja Cindy.

Abrimos la noche con una lectura de Poesia candente y de frente, a cargo de Gabriela, Mary y Rosa. Gabriela y Mary, miembros de la junta directiva, leyeron poesia erotica para "calentar" el ambiente, especialmente con la pieza original de Gabriela titulada "I". El libro de poemas eleccion de Mary fue la revista "Tongues" (Lenguas) de Los Angeles www.tonguesmagazine.org

Despues Rosa asombro a la audiencia con dos piezas que le escribio a un viejo amor – que al parecer el amor se convirtio en dolor y el dolor se volvio una reclamacion de poder. Fue la primera vez que Rosa leia en publico y aunque dijo haberse sentido nerviosa, hizo un muy buen trabajo. Le fascino a la audiencia, sigue adelante Rosa!


Despues de que termino la lectura de poemas, movimos las sillas y habrimos la pista de baile, bajamos las luces y las DJs Wanda y Meredith tocaron de todo, desde salsa, bachata, merengue a house y hip-hop y hasta un poco de musica hablada (muy interesante!)

Se llevo a cabo una rifa con objetos de la tienda erotica “**Early 2 Bed**” (Temprano a la cama!) localizada en la Av. Foster y la Sheridan, quien nos dono un dildo transparente de 6” Crystal Jellies, barreras dentales, “condones” para los dedos y tatuajes temporales. Esto junto con un certificado de regalo por \$25 que se lo gano Liz M., quien se fue de la fiesta con una bolsa de regalos en mano y una enorme sonrisa. Otros articulos incluyeron una coleccion de 5 libros de los comics “*Dykes to Watch Out For*”, un CD “*Fandango de la Calle 18*” de Sones de Mexico y un paquete de entretenimiento “*Chasing Papi*” (que incluye un certificado de regalo para un restaurante, una botella de vino, una caja de chocolates, velas, un DVD de “*Chasing Papi*” y CDs de musica erotica).

Asi como tambien unas generosas donaciones cortesia de **Lamba Legal** -- 2 boletos para su Lambda Launch abordo del Spirit de Chicago el proximo Julio- y a **LCCP (Proyecto de la Comunidad Lesbica contra el Cancer)** --2 boletos para su Baile de Gala, Feb. 7th en el South Shore Cultural Center, donde se honrara a nuestra Mary Torres con el Premio como La Voluntaria del Año.

Y la noche termino cuando muchas de las Amigas y amigos se dirigieron a **Stargaze** y a la

Fiesta de Capricornio para continuar con la celebracion en grande. Les agradecemos a todos por habersenos unido este año. Nos encanta ver todas esas caras, familiares y nuevas que muy valientemente enfrentaron el frio para celebrar nuestra cultura e identidad. Feliz Año Nuevo y Feliz Dia de los Reyes!



Check out DJ Wanda, Amigas' official DJ! Thursdays & Sundays at Steve's Bar, 9pm 3524 W. North Ave. and book her for your next party! 773-316-8021

Noche de Las Reinas

On a cold January night 80 women, men, lesbian, gay, straight, all colors and cultures and a range of ages flocked to **Las Manos Gallery** in Andersonville to celebrate Amigas annual Dia de Los Reyes/Noche de Las Reinas. Many thanks to **Michelle Peterson Albanoz** for her generosity in opening her doors once again for us. Michelle's brother and sister-in-law were in town and joined the festivities and had a great time according to Michelle and her partner, Cindy.

We opened the evening with some hot and in-your-face poetry by Gaby, Mary and Rosa. Gaby and Mary, Amigas board members, read erotica to get everyone "warmed" up, especially with Gaby's original piece entitled "I". Mary's poetry book of choice was *Tongues Magazine* out of Los

Angeles, California.

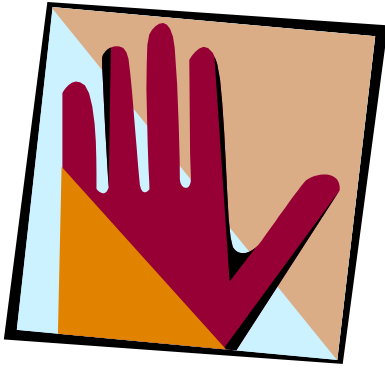
(www.tonguesmagazine.org)

Rosa then wowed the audience with two pieces she wrote to an old love - though it seemed the love had turned to pain and the pain had turned to a reclamation of power. It was Rosa's first time reading and while she said she was nervous she did a fabulous job. The audience loved her! Keep it up Rosa!

After the poetry finished we moved chairs to open up the dance floor, dimmed the lights and DJ Wanda and Meredith spun everything from salsa, bachata and merengue to house, hip-hop and even a little spoken word music (very interesting!).

A wonderful raffle was held with items from **Early 2 Bed** erotica shop on Foster and Sheridan, who donated a Crystal Jellies 6-inch dildo, dental dams, finger cots and body tatoos. That along with a \$25 gift certificate was won by Liz M. who left the party with shopping bag in hand and a smile on her face. Other items included a 5-book collection of *Dykes to Watch Out For*, a CD, *Fandango on 18th Street* by Sones de Mexico and a *Chasing Papi* evening entertainment package (restaurant certificate, bottle of wine, box of chocolates, candle, *Chasing Papi* DVD and erotic music CDs). Generous donations were also given by **Lambda Legal** - two tickets to their Lambda Launch aboard the Spirit of Chicago this July - and the **Lesbian Community Cancer Project** - two tickets to their upcoming **Feb. 7th** gala ball at the South Shore Cultural Center where they will be honoring our very own **Mary Torres** with a **Volunteer of the Year Award**.

As the night ended many Amigas and friends headed over to **Stargaze** and the **Capricorn Party** to keep the celebration going strong. We thank everyone for joining us this year. We love seeing all the familiar and new faces that brave the cold to celebrate our culture and identity. Happy New Year and Feliz Dia de Los Reyes!



¡Proyecto BASTA!

Gay domestic violence on the rise

On November 16, Amigas hosted a brunch/platica entitled "Stopping Violence in Our Lives" at the home of Blanca and Ivy on Chicago's southwest side.

The platica is part of Amigas' "Proyecto BASTA" series of educational workshops for our membership and service providers done in collaboration with national LLEGO (www.llego.org).

About 20 women attended, helping infuse good women energy into Blanca and Ivy's new home (which was being renovated and painted) and to share and discuss how violence affects our lives, our relationships and especially our sense of self.

Women shared their personal stories of triumph over violence. Several talked about how long it took to realize they were in an abusive relationship given that the abuse they experienced was never physical. Being controlled, being told what to do, what to wear, and how to act were just a few of the ways the women were treated by both male and female partners.

These experiences are unfortunately being experienced by more and more Latina women who partner with women, many often repeating patterns they have experienced with men or family members. Coming out is often such a long and painful process that when women find women partners they assume they are safe and free from abuse and violence.

¡Proyecto BASTA! is designed to help provide awareness, education and resources to Latina lesbian/bisexual women and to service providers who work with Latinas to help them take back control of their lives.

Below is an excerpt from an article about the rise of same-sex violence and one of Amigas' information handouts produced for *¡Proyecto BASTA!* Look for the complete *¡Proyecto BASTA!* handout series on our web site in early 2004.

(This article appeared in the November 22, 2002 issue of The Washington Blade)

Over 5,000 cases of domestic violence in the homes of gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered people or people living with HIV/AIDS were reported in 2001, according to a report released by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, which addresses violence committed against and within those groups.

This is the group's sixth such annual report compiling information contained from Anti-Violence Projects and 11 other agencies from nine regions across the country, including the Asian Woman's Shelter in San Francisco, the Colorado Anti-Violence Program, the Horizons Anti-Violence Program in Chicago and the Network/La Red in Boston.

As in domestic violence between heterosexual couples, gay domestic violence cuts across boundaries of class, age, gender and race, said Rachel Baum, NCAVP's coordinator of domestic violence programs.

The victims were almost equally divided between male (49 percent) and female (43 percent). Less than four percent of victims identified as transgendered, and the report notes that it's possible that some people who identify as transgendered were included in the male and female categories.

Just over a quarter of the victims were white (26 percent); 15 percent were Hispanic; 10 percent were African-American; and three percent Asian/Pacific Islander. Race was unspecified in 39

percent of cases that were reported. But, victims of domestic violence aren't just statistics, experts warn.

The nature of abuse in gay domestic violence cases is similar to that of our straight counterparts. It can be verbal, emotional, financial or physical and can involve withholding, manipulation and isolation. But certain types of abuse are specific to gays, she said, including outing people who aren't open about their sexual orientation or gender identity to their families, religious communities or employers.

¡Proyecto BASTA! Reporte sobre la violencia domestica lesbiana y gay

El domingo 16 de noviembre, Amigas sostuvo una platica titulada "Deteniendo la Violencia en Nuestras Vidas" en casa de Blanca en el suroeste de la ciudad. La platica es parte del "Proyecto Basta" el cual consta de una serie de talleres educacionales que Amigas Latinas en colaboracion con la organizacion nacional LLEGO (www.llego.org) provee a su membresia, asi como a proveedores de servicios.

Cerca de 20 mujeres asistieron, ayudando a dar buena energia dentro de la nueva casa de nuestra anfitriona (la cual esta siendo renovada y pintada) y ayudarnos a discutir como la violencia afecta nuestras vidas, nuestras relaciones y en especial a nosotras mismas. Las mujeres compartieron sus historias personales de triunfo sobre la violencia.

Algunas hablaron de cuanto tiempo les tomo darse cuenta que estaban en una relacion abusiva dado que en su experiencia nunca hubo abuso fisico. Ser controladas, haciendo lo que les mandan hacer, diciendoles que ropa usar, y como actuar, fueron solo una de las pocas maneras en las cuales estas mujeres fueron tratadas

tanto por sus parejas ambas masculinas y/o femeninas.

Estas experiencias desafortunadamente estan siendo experimentadas por mas y mas mujeres latinas que se emparejan con otras mujeres, muchas de ellas usualmente repiten los patrones de conducta que han experimentado con hombres u otros miembros de sus familias.

Salir del closet es usualmente un proceso largo y doloroso; que cuando las mujeres se emparejan con otras mujeres, asumen que estan a salvo y libres del abuso y la violencia. El ¡Proyecto BASTA! esta diseñado para ayudar a proveer consciencia, educacion y recursos a las mujeres latinas lesbianas/bisexuales y a los servidores de servicios que trabajan con latinas a ayudarlas a retomar el control de sus vidas.

A continuacion esta una recopilacion de un articulo acerca del aumento de la violencia entre parejas del mismo sexo y uno de los folletos informativos de Amigas producido para el Proyecto BASTA!. Busquen la serie de folletos completos del Proyecto BASTA! en nuestra pagina de internet a principios del 2004.

(Este articulo aparecio en la edicion del 22 de noviembre del "The Washington Blade")

Mas de 5,000 casos de violencia domestica fueron reportados en los hogares de gente gay, lesbiana, bisexual o transgenero y/o gente viviendo con VIH/SIDA, de acuerdo con un reporte publicado por la coalicion nacional de programas anti-violencia, el cual da atencion a la violencia cometida en contra y dentro de estos grupos.

Este es el sexto reporte anual de este grupo, que recopila la informacion contenida en los Proyectos Anti-vViolencia y otras 11 agencias de nueve regiones a traves del pais, incluyendo; el Asilo de Mujeres Asiaticas en San Francisco, el Programa Anti-Violencia de Colorado, el Programa Anti-Violencia de Horizons en Chicago y the Network/La Red en Boston.

Asi como la violencia domestica entre parejas heterosexuales, la violencia domestica gay corta a traves de barreras de clase, edad, genero y raza, segun comento Rachel Baum, coordinadora de programas de violencia domestica para el NCAVP.

Las victimas estan casi igualmente divididas entre los hombres (49%) y mujeres (43%). Menos del 4% de las victimas se identifico como transgenero, y los reportes notan que es posible que algunas personas identificadas como transgenero hayan sido incluidas en las categorias de genero masculino y femenino.

Un poco mas de un cuarto porciento de las victimas eran Blancas (26%); 15% eran hispanas; 10% afro-americanas; y un 3% Asiaticas o de las Islas del Pacifico. La Raza no fue especificada en el 39% de los casos reportados. Pero las victimas de la violencia domestica no son solo estadisticas, advierten los expertos.

La naturaleza del abuso en los casos de violencia domestica gay es similar a aquella de sus contrapartes heterosexuales, puede ser verbal, emocional, financiera o fisica y puede involucrar detencion, aislamiento y manipulacion.

Pero ciertos tipos de abuso son especificos de la comunidad gay, incluyendo "sacar del closet" a aquellos que no hablan abiertamente acerca de su orientacion sexual o a su identificacion de genero hacia sus familias, comunidades religiosas o empleadores.

**10mo. Encuentro
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