

# Give Something More Meaningful This Christmas

ACAS proudly presents its 'Peace' Greeting Cards Set, featuring 5 unique lotus paintings of Lai Tak Ki, local Asian-Canadian artist of Toronto.



GREETING CARDS NOW ON SALE FEATURING  
**THE PAINTINGS OF TAK KI LAI**



All occasion, greeting cards depicting five 5" x 7" lotus paintings of Lai Tak Ki, printed on linen paper with wisdom words promoting peace at the back of each card. The wisdom words were written by Grace Ng Listkowski, ACAS President's Board of Directors

Wisdom words:

When we give unconditional love to all beings, we find peace.  
We see ourselves in all beings and all beings in ourselves.  
Harmony is synchrony between nature and the self.  
In unity lies humanity's greatest strength.  
As the blossom fades, serenity remains in its fragrance.

Each set contains ten 5" x 7" peace cards, consisting of 2 cards each of 5 original lotus paintings, and 10 white envelopes. The inside of the cards are left blank for your own message. The cards are printed on linen paper

Cost: \$20/set plus \$4 shipping

All proceeds go to ACAS program services



# ACAS Newsletter

Volume 1: 12



## Years of Community Service



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# ACAS Launches New Logo

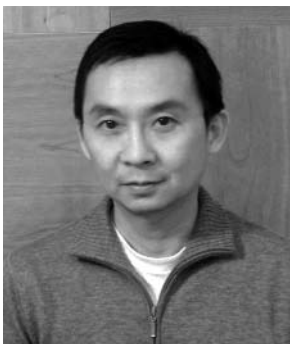
After the 10th anniversary banquet, everything seemed to turn a new leaf. We were talking about branding ACAS, and naturally a new logo was suggested. A logo design contest finally occurred in the early 2006. Among the many entries,



Vitoon Punjanun's was picked as winner by the committee. His original design was a lotus, but after discussing with the board and the committee, he altered the design with our input.

The new logo now features seven heart-shaped petals, because "Love" is the major element of ACAS. Each petal is in a different color which represents the ACAS values - Health, Asian HIV Support, Sincerity, Harmony, Advocacy, safe environment, and leadership. The heart-shaped petal also looks like a person with hands together, and all seven of them pointing towards the center is a symbol of "Togetherness", and joining hands together towards a common goal.

The official logo is in its full color, with or without the text. When text is used, we also make it official to use a font named "London Between", either the full name "Asian Community AIDS Services" or just "ACAS". Also on occasions, we might just use the logo in a monotone color.



About the Artist: Vitoon Punjanun (Lek)

"Vitoon Punjanun (Lek) is a web and graphic designer. He grew up in Bangkok, Thailand, lived in New York for eight years. He completed a certificate course in advertising design at Parsons School of Design in New York in 1996 and received his MS. from the prestigious Pratt Institute in Manhattan in 1999 and came to Toronto in 2002. His career in design includes experience in websites, animation, print material, and new media. He currently is working as an interface and graphic designer in an e-commerce marketing business. Lek started volunteering with ACAS in 2004."

# Banquet of Joy

by Jorge Lee



The Wayson Choy banquet gave me the inspiration to strengthen my commitment for ACAS. The astounding success of the banquet has strengthened my believe in ACAS' ability to pull off such a wonderful event meant to serve the community.

On May 26th, 2006, Wayson Choy's contribution to both Asian and literary communities was recognized in a joint effort by CelebrAsian and ACAS. This well-attended event, hosted by Ariel Vente and Florence Heung, gathered more than 350 guests in Bright Pearl's hall pampered by great food, great entertainment and taste of genuine Asian culture.

As the event unfolded right before my eyes, I knew that the hard work pitched in by dedicated volunteers and staff had paid off. The Raging Asian Women (RAW) gave us an electrifying performance impressing the audience with their strength to operate the drums. Sze-Yang Lam provided as a glimpse of the beauty of Chinese

Dance - his every move was spectacular. I was one of those who laughed and cheered during the auction hosted by Olivia Chow.

But it was the touching speeches of the special guests, including Antanas Sileika and Kerri Sakamoto, gave me a sense of pride of "our" community and a hope to become successful as an immigrant in Canada.

As I walked through the hall of Bright Pearl, I

couldn't help but be proud at ACAS' busy volunteers, the people behind this event, all eager to make this event unforgettable. At the end of the show, volunteers gathered on the stage, equally belong to them, for a photo shoot. I managed to capture all of their smiles on video.



I can say that ACAS is now part of my life. And Wayson Choy's successful, joyful event just made me more proud of this organization.



**What motivated you to start volunteering at ACAS?**

Lilla Watson, an Aboriginal Elder in Queensland, once said, "If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up in mine, we can work together." I participated actively in ACAS because I believed that all the social justice and community empowerment issues addressed by ACAS were issues connected in one way or another to my own life and that of my loved ones, my friends and my community. My liberation is bound up in the liberation of my brothers and sisters in the ACAS community.

**What were your reasons for continuing to volunteer at ACAS for 10 years?**

I always see myself not so much as a volunteer but as a member of the ACAS community where I was given the opportunities to be inspired, to contribute, to learn, to share the good times and the rough times, to get my blood boiling at times and to be calm and peaceful at others.

Volunteer: Josephine Wong



**What motivated you to start volunteering at ACAS?**

ACAS is a special place that is close to my heart. Volunteering at ACAS was an opportunity to make valuable community contributions in the fight against HIV/AIDS. I first became involved at ACAS as a service-user in 1996. As a young, queer asian PHA I experienced multiple forms of discrimination and life challenges. Each time I felt down and defeated, ACAS was always there to provide me with unconditional support. ACAS taught me the value of giving back to the community. My involvement in various committees (board member-2000-2002) was an empowering process. I learned valuable life lessons from other PHAs, developed professional skills, and made life long friendships. The stigma attached to HIV/AIDS is enormous and can negatively impact PHAs, often resulting in dire health outcomes. ACAS provides a safe place to continue to do work to de-stigmatize the disease. I will never feel alone again. I feel it is important to be visible in the community and to extend a helping hand to those living with/affected by HIV/AIDS anyway I can.

**What were your reasons for continuing to volunteer at ACAS for 10 years?**

Despite new developments in medicine that have prolonged life for PHAs, there is still no cure and a lot of work needs to be done to ensure equality of access to these life saving medications, treatment and care. Until there is a cure for AIDS and until there is universal access to treatment and care for all PHAs, my work with ACAS will continue....

Volunteer: Riz Quiaoit



World AIDS Day, which falls on December 1 each year is dedicated to raising awareness of the global pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection. The concept of a World AIDS Day was initiated by UNAIDS in 1998. In 2005 UNAIDS handed over responsibility for World AIDS Day to an independent organisation known as The World AIDS Campaign (WAC).

AIDS has taken more than 25 million lives, making it one of the most destructive epidemics in recorded history. Despite recent, improved access to antiretroviral treatment and care in many regions of the world, the AIDS epidemic claimed an estimated 3.1 million (between 2.8 and 3.6 million) lives in 2005 of which, more than half a million (570,000) were children.

This year's theme, "accountability", is designed to inspire citizens around the

world to hold their political leaders accountable for the promises they have made on AIDS. By supporting a broad movement of civil society organizations in their campaigning around this theme, the World AIDS Campaign hope to develop a sense of joint identity and common purpose and ensure that more people are made aware of the AIDS epidemic this year than ever before.

Asian Community AIDS Services (ACAS) recognizes that people living with HIV and AIDS encounter stigma and discrimination in their everyday life. Thus, accountability means working together to eradicate HIV/AIDS as well as social stigma and discrimination. We hope that on World AIDS Day and every each day, you will join hands with us to fight against AIDS stigma and discrimination.

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# ACAS Programs at a Glance

## Support program

**Coordinator: Patrick Truong**

**Women Support Worker: Eva Sin**

Membership: a 15% increase in clientele

Highlight of the year: Twinning project with Thai National AIDS Foundation; Temple Street Cabaret at IAC 2006

Looking ahead: a new woman support worker to help expand the support program

## MSM program

**Coordinator: Daniel Le**

Membership: 25% increase in the number of contacts (outreach, presentation, and workshop)

Highlight of the year: iRice presentation at IAC 2006. Asian bathhouse events.

Looking ahead: working with VISA students Peer educators

## Youth program

**Coordinator: Yaya Yao**

Membership: 20% increase in participants in social events

Highlight of the year: launch of QAY Zine, Pride Cabaret - QAY Born to be

Looking ahead: HIV testing for youth

### Newsletter Committee:

Tong Chong  
Duncan Lau  
Jorge Lee  
Phuong Nguyen  
Rhonda Pantilinan  
Noulmook Sutdhibhasilp

## Women Program

**Coordinator: Jin Huh**

Membership: With 1 staff and 4 peers, did over 30 outreach activities

Highlight of the year: got grants from Lesbian & Gay community appeal foundation, to do queer Asian women project, and is underway since June.

Looking ahead: Women program is now a full program, many new plans and activities for 2007!

## Volunteer Program

**Coordinator: Lisa Wong**

Membership: 30 new volunteers recruited last Spring.

Highlight of the year: New volunteer training in May, the group was dynamite.

Looking ahead: new volunteer recruit in November and the new program coordinator.

## GenerAsians Understanding Chi-Ching Hui

An extension of GenerAsians Together from 1999 and 2005.

Highlight of the year: Some targeted youth showed up and found the events helpful make this worthwhile.

Looking ahead: The project is done now. We certainly hope to see similar discussion events continue to run in the youth program.

# Volunteering at ACAS



### What motivated you to start volunteering at ACAS?

As a member of Toronto Chinese Health

Education Committee, I am working with the former Sexuality for Over Sea Students, and also supporter of the formation of GAAP, naturally a volunteer of ACAS.

### What were your reasons for continuing to volunteer at ACAS for 10 years?

I am working in the Sexuality field, ACAS provides the opportunity to outreach to needy but invisible groups, through them I can contribute my skills. I also can see how ACAS benefit the community, that keeps me continue....

Volunteer: Anda Li



### What motivated you to start volunteering at ACAS?

ACAS is like my family. I had a really hard time and ACAS always provide good support,

commitment, and was always open for me. I was sitting outside depressed one windy afternoon. Leaves and paper were flying around, and I was kicking them away from me. There was this flyer just keep coming back in front of me. I eventually picked it up and it was a flyer about an event at ACAS. I went, and that's how I started with ACAS.

### What were your reasons for continuing to volunteer at ACAS for 10 years?

Now, I like to give the knowledge back to someone who might have been in my situation before, to give them my view and experience, to give them support.

Volunteer: Suchang Kim

# INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE TORONTO 2006

by Rhonda Pantilinan and Noulmook Sutdhibasilp



Coalition of Asia Pacific Regional Network on HIV/AIDS (Seven Sisters), and Asia Pacific Network of People Living With HIV/AIDS (APN+). The panel discussion focused on knowledge and experience on the challenges faced by PHAs, including comments on how things have changed since the Bangkok Declaration;

ACAS stepped up its leadership role at the XVI International AIDS Conference (IAC) which was held in Toronto in August 2006 to raise awareness that Asians are also infected as well as affected by HIV/AIDS. To prepare for this global scale event, ACAS mobilized a great deal of time and resources.

ACAS fully participated at the IAC by organizing the following activities

A reception party to welcome Asian and international delegates, organized in partnership with Asian Express of Toronto, and the Society for the Intervention of AIDS of Vancouver. The party was held the night before the official opening. Many local supporters and Asian conference delegates attended the party at 5ive.

Satellite Meeting - a plenary session on Leadership of Persons Living with HIV/AIDS in the AIDS Movement in Asia and North America. ACAS co-organized the session with Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP) - Toronto, Asian Society for the Intervention of AIDS (ASIA) - Vancouver, Asian and Pacific Islander Wellness Center (API Wellness Centre) - San Francisco, USA, Therapeutics Research, Education, and AIDS Training in Asia (TREAT Asia),

Effective models fostering PHA leadership and empowerment; and examples of strategies that led to policy and service changes. The session was well-attended with approximately 90 participants.

The Southeast and East Asian Networking Zone at the Global Village area which was open to the general public, conference delegates, community-based organizations from around the world, local and national groups. Much like the world-famous "Temple Street" night market in Hong Kong which provided the inspiration for the backdrop -- from the design, colour, furnishings down to the ambience -- the Networking Zone exuded a joyful and welcoming feeling for curious onlookers and passersby who were drawn to the networking zone by an eclectic mix of performances, workshops, presentations and Q&A panels. Speakers are not only from Toronto and Vancouver but also those belonging to ACAS' international Asian partners in Thailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong, China, Vietnam. Focusing on a population theme daily--women, men having sex with men (MSM), Treatment Access for people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs), and youth--the dynamic range of topics showcased included sexual health, empowerment models, PHA stories,

treatment access inequities, affected orphans, and various comparisons on regional realities both locally and abroad.

An exhibition booth at the Global Village



to showcase the HIV/AIDS prevention/education, and support services for persons living with HIV/AIDS. ACAS volunteer and staff were on hand to answer queries about our work to reduce infection rate and help those who are infected and affected by HIV for the East and Southeast Asian communities.

Publishing the Asian Program booklets highlighting all Asian-related activities and programs at the IAC.

The Basic Interpreters Training for volunteer from AIDS service organizations in Toronto and the IAC Local Host. Our volunteers were able to put their interpreter skills to use at the ACAS exhibition booth and the Networking Zone by assisting staff to converse with international delegates and the media from different parts of Asia.

'My Colour Cabaret' featured sexually diverse Asian youth from Toronto at the Youth Pavillion in the Global village drew huge crowds and was well-received by visitors. Youth volunteers from ACAS and the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention joined hands to organize this

eclectic performance.

The 'Temple Street Cabaret', a variety show as part of the IAC Cultural Program. The Cabaret was put together with The Little Pear Garden Collective, and the Pan Asian Canadian Artists Against Aids. They presented stories of people living with HIV/AIDS through dance, music, spoken word, reading and other performance art. The performances also celebrated and recognized the powerful voices from the marginalized communities.

When it came time to deliver, a total of 35 volunteers doing 83 shifts (or approximately 300 volunteer hours) for the ACAS exhibition booth as well as 28 volunteers (as speakers, performers, or presenters) for programs and activities at



the Networking Zone, the dedicated and hard-working staff and volunteers of ACAS, led by its Executive Director, delivered at the XVI International AIDS Conference.

*Photographs courtesy of Henry Fanuago*

## Message from the President

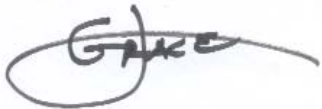


The accomplishments of 2006 for ACAS and the HIV/AIDS community were gratifying. In August 2006, Toronto was host to the XVI International AIDS Conference. This conference brought together a community of over 20,000 participants and delegates from around the world coming to share and to explore research results, personal experiences and innovative ideas. This opportunity allowed individuals to come together to form one global community with one single quest -- to combat HIV/AIDS on the largest scale ever seen.

ACAS was the first and still is, the only non-profit, charitable, community-based organization providing HIV/AIDS education, prevention, and support services to the East and Southeast Asian Canadian communities in Toronto. As ACAS approaches its 13th year, we can look back at our journey and reflect on the many transformations that took place. ACAS is now well positioned both locally and internationally to take on a leadership role in the areas of:

1. Collaborating with other HIV/AIDS service organizations locally and globally to explore opportunities for partnerships and exchange programs;
2. Expanding support & treatment programs for women whose infection rates are increasing at an alarming rate because of the changing landscape of HIV/AIDS;
3. Expanding education and support programs for the trans community;
4. Promoting and encouraging the leadership role of PHAs within Asian communities to effectively contribute to the decision making process of both government and non-government bodies; and
5. Combating stigma, discrimination, and homophobia.

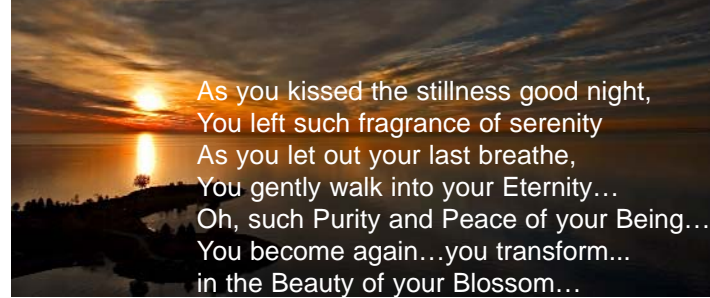
I would like to invite you to welcome World AIDS Day on December 1, 2006. This day will offer all of us an opportunity to reflect on the past 12 years, on how far ACAS has come, and to also ponder about the future ahead of us...



Grace Ng Listkowski  
President, Asian Community of AIDS Services

## Reflection on Transformation

(in Memory of Marcelo)  
by Grace Ng Listkowski



As you kissed the stillness good night,  
You left such fragrance of serenity  
As you let out your last breathe,  
You gently walk into your Eternity...  
Oh, such Purity and Peace of your Being...  
You become again...you transform...  
in the Beauty of your Blossom...

Just as water calms both good and bad,  
And cleanses all impurity and dust,  
Just as the thought of love for friends and foe  
alike...

Only when we give unconditional love for all beings,  
Will we find happiness,  
Will we find peace...

In our interactions with others,  
Gentleness,  
Kindness,  
Respect,  
Are the sources of harmony.

Lovingkindness is to giving others happiness,  
Joy is to removing others' fear and sorrow,  
Compassion is to freeing others from suffering...

Selflessness is a healing herb that brings all  
together  
It is the love for others that is tenderest...  
When it's experienced,  
We see ourselves in all beings, all beings in us...

*Marcelo passed away early this year... He was an ACAS Board Member.  
Photograph courtesy of Henry Fanugao*